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An
EXPOSITION
OF THE
Old Testament

BY

John Gill D.D.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

Vol. II.

LONDON

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1810.

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AN

EXPOSITION

OF

The Old Testament;

IN WHICH ARE RECORDED

THE ORIGIN OF MANKIND, OF THE SEVERAL NATIONS OF THE WORLD,

AND OF

THE JEWISH NATION IN PARTICULAR:

THE LIVES OF THE PATRIARCHS OF ISRAEL;

THE JOURNEY OF THAT PEOPLE FROM EGYPT THROUGH THE WILDERNESS TO THE LAND OF CANAAN, AND THEIR SETTLEMENT IN THAT LAND;

THEIR LAWS,

MORAL, CEREMONIAL, AND JUDICIAL;

THEIR GOVERNMENT AND STATE UNDER JUDGES AND KINGS;

THEIR SEVERAL CAPTIVITIES;

AND THEIR SACRED BOOKS OF DEVOTION:

IN THE EXPOSITION OF WHICH

IT IS ATTEMPTED TO GIVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE SEVERAL BOOKS, AND THE WRITERS OF THEM; A SUMMARY OF EACH CHAPTER, AND THE GENUINE SENSE OF EVERY VERSE; AND, THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE, THE ORIGINAL TEXT, AND THE VERSIONS OF IT, ARE INSPECTED AND COMPARED; INTERPRETERS OF THE BEST NOTE, BOTH JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN, CONSULTED; DIFFICULT PLACES AT LARGE EXPLAINED; SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS RECONCILED, AND VARIOUS PASSAGES ILLUSTRATED AND CONFIRMED BY TESTIMONIES OF WRITERS, AS WELL GENTILE AS JEWISH.

BY JOHN GILL, D. D.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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AN EXPOSITION

OF

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE FIFTH BOOK OF MOSES,

CALLED

DEUTERONOMY.

THIS book is sometimes called *Elleh hadebarim*, from the words with which it begins; and sometimes by the Jews *Mishneh Torah*, the repetition of the law; and so in the Syriac version, with which agrees the Arabic title of it; and when the Greeks, and we after them, call it *Deuteronomy*, it is not to be understood of a second, a new, or another law, but of the law formerly delivered, but now repeated, and also more largely explained; to which are likewise added several particular laws, instructions, and directions; all which were necessary, on account of the people of Israel, who were now a new generation, that either were not born, or not at an age to hear and understand the law when given on Mount Sinai; the men that heard it there being all dead, excepting a very few; and these people were also now about to enter into the land of Canaan, which they were to enjoy as long as they kept the law of God, and no longer, and therefore it was proper they should be reminded of it; and besides, Moses was now about to leave them, and having an hearty desire after their welfare, spends the little time he had to be with them, by inculcating into them and impressing on them the laws of God, and in opening and explaining them to them, and enforcing them on them, which were to be the rule of their obedience, and on which their civil happiness depended. And sometimes the Jews call this book *the book of reproofs*, because there are in it several sharp reproofs of the people of Israel for their rebellion and disobedience; and so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem begin it by calling it the words of reproof which Moses spake, *&c.* That this book was written by Moses there can be no doubt, from ch. i. 1. and xxxi. 4, 9, 24. only the eight last verses, which give an account of his death, and of his character, were wrote by another hand, equally inspired by God, as either Eleazar the priest, as some, or Samuel the prophet, as others; or, as it is the more commonly received opinion of the Jews, Ezra; though it is highly probable they were wrote by Joshua his successor. This book was written and delivered by Moses, at certain times in the last month of his life, and towards the close of the 40th year of the children of Israel's coming out of Egypt. And that it is of divine authority need not be questioned, when the several quotations out of it are observed, as made by the apostles of Christ, in Acts iii. 22. Rom. xii. 19. Heb. x. 30. Gal. iii. 10. out of ch. xviii. 15. and xxxii. 35, 36. and xxvii. 26. and by our Lord himself, Matt. xviii. 16. from ch. xix. 15. Yea, it is remarkable, that all the passages of Scripture produced by Christ, to repel the temptations of Satan, are all taken out of this book, Matt. iv. 4. 7, 10. compared with Deut. viii. 3. and vi. 16, 13. and the voice from heaven, directing the apostles to hearken to him, refers to a prophecy of him in ch. xviii. 15.

CHAP. I.

THE time and place when the subject-matter of this book was delivered to the Israelites are observed by way of preface, ver. 1—5. and it begins with reminding them of an order to them to depart from Mount Horeb, and pass on to the land of Canaan, which the Lord had given them, ver. 6, 7, 8. and with observing the very great increase of their number, which made it necessary for Moses to appoint persons under him to be rulers over them, whom he instructed in the duty of their office, ver. 9—18. and he goes on to observe, that when they were come to the mountain of the Amorites, they were bid to go up and possess the land; but, instead of that, they desired men might be sent to search the land first, which was granted, ver. 19—23. and though these men upon their return brought of the fruits of the land, and a good report of it, particularly two of them; yet being discouraged by the report of the rest, they murmured, distrusted, and were afraid to enter, though encouraged by Moses, ver. 24—33. which caused the Lord to be angry with them, and upon it threatened them that they should die in the wilderness, and only two of them should ever see and enjoy the land, and therefore were bid to turn and take their journey in the wilderness, ver. 34—40. but being convinced of their evil, they proposed to go up the hill, and enter the land, which they attempted against the commandment of the Lord, but being repulsed by the Amorites, they fled with great loss, to their great grief, and abode in Kadesh many days, ver. 41—46.

Ver. 1. *These be the words which Moses spake unto all Israel*, &c.] Not what are related in the latter part of the preceding book, but what follow in this; and which were spoken by him, not to the whole body of the people gathered together to hear him, which they could not do without a miracle; but to the heads of the people, the representatives of them, who were convened to hear what he had to say, in order to communicate it to the people; unless we can suppose that Moses at different times to several parties of them delivered the same things, until they had all heard them: *on this side Jordan;* before the passage of the Israelites over it to the land of Canaan; for Moses never went in thither, and therefore it must be the tract which the Greeks call Peræa, and which with respect to the Israelites when in the land of Canaan is called *beyond Jordan*, for here now Moses was; and the children of Israel had been here with him a considerable time in the wilderness, the vast wilderness of Arabia, which reached hither: *in the plain;* the plains of Moab, between Beth-jeshimoth and Abel-shittim, where the Israelites had lain encamped for some time, and had not as yet removed; see Numb. xxxiii. 49. *over-against the Red sea;* the word *sea* is not in the text, nor is there any thing in it which answers to *Red:* it should be rendered *over-against Suph*, which seems to be the name of a place in Moab, not far from the plains of it, and perhaps is the same with Supheh in Numb. xxi. 14. for from the Red sea they were at a considerable distance: *between Paran, and Tophel, and Laban, and Hazeroth, and Dizahab;* these are names of places which were the boundaries and limits of the plains of Moab, or lay very near them; for Paran cannot be understood of the wilderness of Paran, which was too remote, but a city or town of that name. Tophel and Laban we read of nowhere else; a learned man[a] conjectures Tophel is the name of the station where the Israelites loathed the manna as light bread, because of the insipidness of it, which he observes this word signifies; but that station was either Zalmonah, or Punon, or this station must be omitted in the account of their journeys, and besides was too remote. Jarchi helps this conjecture a little, who puts Tophel and Laban together, and thinks they signify their murmuring because of the manna, which was white, as Laban signifies; but the above writer takes Laban to be a distinct station, the same with Libnah, Numb. xxxiii. 20. and Hazeroth to be the station between Mount Sinai and Kadesh, Numb. xii. 16. But both seem to be too remote from the plains of Moab; and Dizahab he would have to be the same with Ezion-geber, Numb. xxxiii. 35. which he says the Arabs now call Dsahab, or Meenah el Dsahab, that is, *the port of gold;* and certain it is that Dizahab has the signification of gold, and is by Hillerus[b] rendered *sufficiency of gold*, there being large quantities of it here; perhaps either through the riches of the port by trade, or by reason of a mine of gold at it, or near it; so the Vulgate Latin version renders it, *where there is much gold*, and the Septuagint version *golden mines*, Catachrysea; and Jerom[c] makes mention of a place of this name, and says they are mountains abounding with gold in the wilderness, 11 miles from Horeb, where Moses is said to write Deuteronomy; elsewhere[d] he calls it Dysmemoab, *i. e.* the west of Moab, near Jordan, over-against Jericho.

Ver. 2. There are *eleven days' journey from Horeb, by the way of Mount Seir, to Kadesh-barnea.*] Not that the Israelites came thither in 11 days from Horeb, for they stayed by the way at Kibroth-hattaavah, a whole month at least, and seven days at Hazeroth; but the sense is, that this was the computed distance between the two places; it was what was reckoned a man might walk in 11 days; and if we reckon a day's journey 20 miles, of which see the note on Jonah iii. 3. the distance must be 220 miles. But Dr. Shaw[e] allows but 10 miles for a day's journey, and then it was no more than 110, and indeed a camp can't be thought to move faster; but not the day's journey of a camp, but of a man, seems to be intended, who may very

[a] Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 471, &c.
[b] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 67, 300.
[c] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. A.
[c] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. I.
[d] Travels, p 319.

well walk 20 miles a day for 11 days running; but it seems more strange that another learned traveller[f] should place Kadesh-barnea at 8 hours, or 20 miles distance only from Mount Sinai. Moses computes not the time that elapsed between those two places, including their stations, but only the time of travelling: and yet Jarchi says, though it was 11 days' journey according to common computation, the Israelites performed it in three days; for he observes that they set out from Horeb on the 20th of Ijar, and on the 29th of Sivan the spies were sent out from Kadesh-barnea; and if you take from hence the whole month they were at one place, and the seven days at another, there will be but three days left for them to travel in. And he adds, that the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, pushed them forward, to hasten their going into the land; but they corrupting themselves, he turned them about Mount Seir 40 years. It is not easy to say for what reason these words are expressed, unless it be to shew in how short a time the Israelites might have been in the land of Canaan, in a few days' journey from Horeb, had it not been for their murmurings and unbelief, for which they were turned into the wilderness again, and travelled about for the space of 38 years afterwards. Aben Ezra is of opinion, that the 11 days, for the word *journey* is not in the text, are to be connected with the preceding words; and that the sense is, that Moses spake these words in the above places, in the eleven days they went from Horeb to Kadesh.

Ver. 3. *And it came to pass in the 40th year*, &c.] That is, of the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt: *in the 11th month*: the month Shebet, as the Targum of Jonathan, which answers to part of January and part of February: *in the first day of the month, that Moses spake unto the children of Israel according to all that the Lord had given him in commandment unto them*: repeated to them the several commandments, which the Lord had delivered to him at different times.

Ver. 4. *After he had slain Sihon the king of the Amorites, which dwelt in Heshbon*, &c.] Either Moses, speaking of himself in the third person, or rather the Lord, to whom Moses ascribes the victory; of this king, and his palace, and the slaughter of him, see Numb. xxi. 24, 25, 26. *and Og the king of Bashan, which dwelt at Ashtaroth in Edrei*: or near Edrei; for Edrei was not the name of a country, in which Ashtaroth was, but of a city at some distance from it, about six miles, as Jerom says[g]; hither Og came from Ashtaroth his palace to fight with Israel, and where he was slain, see Numb. xxi. 33. Ashtaroth was an ancient city formerly called Ashtaroth Carnain, and was the seat of the Rephaim, or giants, from whom Og sprung, Gen. xiv. 5. see the note there, and Deut. iii. 11. Jerom says[h] in his time there were two castles in Batanea (or Bashan) called by this name, nine miles distant from one another, between Adara (the same with Edrei) and Abila; and in another place he says[i] Carnaim Ashtaroth is now a large village in a corner of Batanea, and is called Carnea, beyond the plains of Jordan; and it is a tradition that there was the house of Job.

Ver. 5. *On this side Jordan, in the land of Moab*, &c.] On that side of Jordan in which the land of Moab was, and which with respect to the land of Canaan was beyond Jordan; this the Vulgate Latin version joins to the preceding verse: *began Moses to declare this law*: to explain it, make it clear and manifest: namely, the whole system and body of laws, which had been before given him, which he *willed*[k], as some render the word, or willingly took upon him to repeat and explain unto them, which their fathers had heard, and had been delivered unto them: but before he entered upon this, he gave them a short history of events which had befallen them, from the time of their departure from Horeb unto the present time, which is contained in this and the two next chapters: *saying*: as follows.

Ver. 6. *The Lord our God spake unto us in Horeb*, &c.] The same with Sinai, as Aben Ezra observes; whilst the Israelites lay encamped near this mountain, the Lord spoke unto them: *saying, ye have dwelt long enough in this mount*: or near it; for hither they came on the first day of the third month from their departure out of Egypt, and they did not remove from thence until the 20th day of the 2d month in the 2d year, Exod. xix. 1. Numb. x. 11. so that they were here a year wanting ten days; in which space of time the law was given them, the tabernacle and all things appertaining to it were made by them, rulers both ecclesiastical and civil were appointed over them, and they were numbered and marshalled in order under four standards, and so ready to march; and all this being done, they must stay no longer, but set forward for the land of Canaan. It is well for persons that they are not to stay long under the law, and the terrors of it, but are directed to Mount Zion; see Heb. xii. 18—24.

Ver. 7. *Turn you and take your journey*, &c.] That is, remove from Horeb, where they were, and proceed on in their journey, in which they had been stopped almost a year: *and go to the mount of the Amorites*; where they and the Amalekites dwelt, in the south part of the land of Canaan, and which was the way the spies were sent, Numb. xiii. 17, 29. and xiv. 40, 43. *and unto all* the places *nigh thereunto*: nigh to the mountain. The Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret them of Moab, Ammon, Gebal, or Mount Seir: *in the plain, in the hills, and in the vale*: such was the country near this mountain, consisting of champaign land, hills, and valleys: *and in the south*: the southern border of the land of Canaan, as what follows describes the other borders of it: *and by the sea-side*: the Mediterranean sea, the western border of the land, which Jarchi out of Siphri explains of Ashkelon, Gaza, and Cæsarea, and so the Targum of Jonathan: *into the land of the Canaanites*: which was then possessed by them, the boundaries of which to the south and west are before given, and next follow those to the north and east: *and unto Lebanon*: which was on the north of the land of Canaan: *unto the great river, the*

[f] Pococke's Description of the East, vol. 1. p. 157.
[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 87. I.
[h] Ibid. E.
[i] De loc. Heb. fol. 89. M.
[k] הואיל voluit, Montanus; placuit, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; statuit, Tigurine version.

river Euphrates: which was the utmost extent of the land eastward, and was either promised, as it was to Abraham, Gen. xv. 18. or enjoyed, as it was by Solomon, 1 Kings iv. 21.

Ver. 8. *Behold, I have set the land before you,* &c.] Described it to them, and set its bounds, as well as had given them a grant of it: *go in and possess the land, which the Lord sware unto your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give unto them and their seed after them;* and which being thus made sure unto them, they had nothing more to do than to go and take possession of it.

Ver. 9. *And I spake unto you at that time,* &c.] About that time; for it was after the rock in Horeb was smitten, and before they encamped at Mount Sinai, that Jethro gave the advice which Moses took, and proceeded on it, as here related; see Exod. xviii. *saying, I am not able to bear you myself alone:* to rule and govern them, judge and determine matters between them. Jethro suggested this to Moses, and he took the hint, and was conscious to himself that it was too much for him, and so declared it to the people, though it is not before recorded; see Exod. xviii. 18.

Ver. 10. *The Lord your God hath multiplied you,* &c.] Which was the reason why he could not bear them, or the government of them was too heavy for him, because they were so numerous, and the cases brought before him to decide were so many: *and, behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude;* whereby it appeared that the promise to Abraham was fulfilled, Gen. xv. 5. they were now 600,000 men fit for war, besides women and children, and those under age, which must make the number of them very large.

Ver. 11. *The Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times so many more as ye are,* &c.] This prayer he made, or this blessing he pronounced on them, to shew that he did not envy their increase, nor was any ways uneasy at it, but rejoiced in it, though he gave it as a reason of his not being able to govern them alone: *and bless you, as he hath promised you;* with all kind of blessings, as he had often promised their fathers.

Ver. 12. *How can I myself alone bear your cumbrance, and your burden, and your strife?*] His meaning is, that he could not hear and try all their causes, and determine all their law-suits, and decide the strifes and controversies which arose between them; it was too heavy for him, and brought too much trouble and incumbrance upon him.

Ver. 13. *Take ye wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes,* &c.] Not only whose persons were well known, but their characters and qualifications, for their probity and integrity, for their wisdom and prudence in the management of affairs, for their skill and knowledge in things divine and human, civil and religious, and for their capacity in judging and determining matters in difference; see Exod. xviii. 21. *and I will make them rulers over you:* the people were allowed to choose their own officers, whom they were to bring to Moses, and present before him, to be invested with their office. A like method was taken in the choice and constitution of deacons in the Christian church, when the secular affairs of it lay too heavy upon the apostles, Acts vi. 3.

Ver. 14. *And ye answered me and said,* &c.] As the speech of Moses to the people is not expressed before, so neither this answer of theirs to him: *the thing which thou hast spoken is good* for us *to do;* to look out for and present persons to him as before described; this they saw was for their own good and profit, as well as for the ease of Moses, and therefore readily agreed to it.

Ver. 15. *So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known,* &c.] The principal persons among them, that were remarkable and well known for their wisdom and understanding, whom the people presented to him: *and made them heads over you;* rulers of them, as follows: *captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, and captains over fifties, and captains over tens;* see Exod. xviii. 21—25. *and officers among your tribes;* which Jarchi interprets of such that bind malefactors and scourge them, according to the decree of the judges, even the executioners of justice; and so the Jews commonly understand them to be, though some have thought they were judges also.

Ver. 16. *And I charged your judges at that time,* &c.] When they were appointed and constituted, even the heads and rulers before spoken of; this charge is also new, and not recorded before: *saying, hear* the causes *between your brethren;* hear both sides, and all that each of them have to say; not suffer one to say all he has to say, and oblige the other to cut his words short, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it; but give them leave and time to tell their case, and give the best evidence they can of it: *and judge righteously;* impartially, just as the case really appears to be, and according to the evidence given: *between every man and his brother;* between an Israelite and an Israelite: *and the stranger that is with him;* between an Israelite and proselyte, whether a proselyte of the gate, or of righteousness; the same justice was to be done to them as to an Israelite.

Ver. 17. *Ye shall not respect persons in judgment,* &c.] Or pass judgment, and give sentence according to the outward appearances, circumstances, and relations of men; as whether they be friends or foes, rich or poor, old or young, men or women, learned or unlearned; truth and justice should always take place, without any regard to what persons are: but *you shall hear the small as well as the great;* persons in low life, and in mean circumstances, as well as great and noble personages; or little causes and of no great moment, as well as those of the utmost importance; all must be attended to, a cause about a *prutah* or a farthing, as well as one about a hundred pounds, in which Jarchi instances, and if that came first it was not to be postponed: *ye shall not be afraid of the face of man;* of the frowns and threatenings of rich men, and of such as are in power and authority; not be awed or intimidated by them from doing justice; see Job xxxi. 34. *for the judgment is God's;* judges stand in the place of God, are put into their office by him, and act under him and for him, and are accountable to him; and therefore should be careful what judgment they make, or sentence they pass, lest they bring discredit to him, and destruction on themselves: *and the cause that is too*

hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it; which is said for their encouragement, as well as was an instruction to them not to undertake a cause too difficult for them; see Exod. xviii. 22, 26.

Ver. 18. *And I commanded you at that time all the things which ye should do.*] Delivered to them all the laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which were then given him at Mount Sinai.

Ver. 19. *And when we departed from Horeb*, &c.] As the Lord commanded them to do, when they were obedient: *we went through all the great and terrible wilderness*; the wilderness of Paran, called *great*, it reaching from Mount Sinai to Kadesh-barnea, eleven days' journey, as Adrichomius[1] relates; and *terrible*, being so hard and dry as not to be ploughed nor sown, and presented to the sight something terrible and horrible, even the very image of death; to which may be added the fiery serpents and scorpions it abounded with, ch. viii. 15. *which ye saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites*; that is, in the way that led to the mountain: *as the Lord our God commanded us*; to depart from Horeb, and take a tour through the wilderness towards the said mountain: *and we came to Kadesh-barnea*; having stayed a month by the way at Kibroth-hattaavah, where they lusted after flesh, and seven days at Hazeroth, where Miriam was shut out of the camp for leprosy during that time.

Ver. 20. *And I said unto you, you are come unto the mountain of the Amorites*, &c.] Which was inhabited by them, and was one of the seven nations the Israelites were to destroy, and possess their land, and which lay on the southern part of the land of Canaan: *which the Lord our God doth give unto us*; not the mountain only, but the whole country of that people, and even all the land of Canaan.

Ver. 21. *Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee*, &c.] The land of Canaan, on the borders of which they then were; see the note on ver. 8. *go up*; the mountain, by that way of it which was the way the spies went, and up to which some of the Israelites presumed to go when forbidden, they not complying with the call of God: and *possess* it, *as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee*; as in ver. 8. *fear not, neither be discouraged*; though the people of the land were numerous and strong, and their cities large and walled.

Ver. 22. *And ye came near unto me every one of you*, &c.] Not every individual of them, but the heads of their tribes, that represented them; this is not to be understood of the present generation personally, but of their fathers, who all died in the wilderness, save a very few of them; but they being the same people and nation, it is so expressed: *and said, we will send men before us*; that is, they thought it was proper and prudent so to do, and came to Moses to consult him about it; for we are not to suppose that they had determined upon it, whether he aproved of it or no: *and they shall search us out the land*; that they might know what sort of land it was, whether good or bad, fruitful or not, and whether woody or no: see Numb. xiii. 19, 20. *and bring us word again by what way we must go up*; or, *concerning the way*[m] *in which we must go*; which is the best way of entering it, most easy and accessible, where the passes are most open and least dangerous: *and into what cities we shall come*; which it would be the most proper to attack and subdue first.

Ver. 23. *And the saying pleased me well*, &c.] Taking it to be a rational and prudent scheme, not imagining it was the effect of fear and distrust: *and I took twelve men of you out of a tribe*; whose names are given in Numb. xiii. 4—15.

Ver. 24. *And they turned and went up into the mountain*, &c.] As they were ordered and directed by Moses, Numb. xiii. 17. *and came unto the valley of Eshcol*; so called from the cluster of grapes they cut down there, as they returned: *and searched it out*; the whole land, and so were capable of giving a particular account of it.

Ver. 25. *And they took of the fruit of the land in their hands*, &c.] Besides the cluster of grapes, which was carried between two men on a staff, even pomegranates and figs, Numb. xiii. 23. *and brought it down unto us*; who lay encamped at the bottom of the mountain: *and brought us word again*; what sort of a land it was: *and said, it is a good land which the Lord our God doth give us*; that is, Caleb and Joshua, two of the spies, said this, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, and so Jarchi; yea, all of them agreed in this, and said at first that it was a land flowing with milk and honey, Numb. xiii. 27.

Ver. 26. *Notwithstanding, ye would not go up*, &c.] And possess it, as the Lord had bid them, and Moses encouraged them to do, as well as Joshua and Caleb, who were two of the spies sent into it: *but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God*; disregarded the word of the Lord, and disobeyed his command, and thereby bitterly provoked him, which rebellion against him, their King and God, might well do.

Ver. 27. *And ye murmured in your tents*, &c.] Not in a private manner; for though the murmurs began there, they having wept all night after the report of the spies; yet it became general and public, and they gathered together in a body, and openly expressed their murmurs against Moses and Aaron, Numb. xiv. 1, 2. *and said, because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt*; a strange expression indeed! when it was such a plain amazing instance of his love to them, as could not but be seen by them; being done in such a remarkable and extraordinary manner, by inflicting judgments on their enemies in a miraculous way, giving them favour in their eyes, to lend them their clothes and jewels, and bringing them out with such an high hand, openly and publicly in the sight of them, where they had been in the most wretched slavery for many years; yet this is interpreted an hatred of them, and as done with an ill design upon them, as follows: *to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us*; which now, under the power of their fears and unbelief, they thought would be quickly their case; see ch. iv. 37.

Ver. 28. *Whither shall we go up?* &c.] What way

[1] Theatrum Terræ, p. 116.

[m] את הדרך, de via, Noldius, p. 117. No. 594. so the Arabic version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

can we go up into the land? where is there any access for us? the mountain we are come to, and directed to go up, is possessed by the Amorites, a strong and mighty people, who keep and guard the passes, that there is no entrance: *our brethren have discouraged our hearts*; ten of the spies; for Joshua and Caleb encouraged them with very powerful arguments, which had they listened to, it would have been well for them: *saying, the people is greater and taller than we*; more in number, larger in bulk of body, and higher in stature: *the cities are great, and walled up to heaven*; an hyperbolical expression; their fears exaggerated the account of the spies; they told them they were great, large, and populous, walled, and strongly fortified; which appeared in their frighted imaginations as if their walls were so high as to reach up to heaven, so that it was impossible to scale them, or get possession of them: *and, moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there*; the giants so called from Anak, the son of Arba, the father of them; their names are given, Numb. xiii. 22, 23. see Josh. xiv. 15. and xv. 13, 14.

Ver. 29. *Then I said unto you, dread not, neither be afraid of them.*] With such-like words he had exhorted and encouraged them before the spies were sent, and he still uses the same, or stronger terms, notwithstanding the report that had been made of the gigantic stature and walled cities of the Canaanites. This speech of Moses, which is continued in the two following verses, is not recorded in Numb. xiv. 5. it is only there said, that Moses and Aaron fell on their faces, but no account is given of what was said by either of them.

Ver. 30. *The Lord your God, which goeth before you*, &c.] In a pillar of cloud by day, and in a pillar of fire by night: *he shall fight for you*; wherefore, though their enemies were greater and taller than they, yet their God was higher than the highest; and cities walled up to heaven would signify nothing to him, whose throne is in the heavens: *according to all that he did for you in Egypt before your eyes*: which is observed to encourage their faith in God; for he that wrought such wonders in Egypt for them, which their eyes, at least some of them, and their fathers, however, had seen, what is it he cannot do?

Ver. 31. *And in the wilderness*, &c.] Where he had fed them with manna, brought water out of rocks for them, protected them from every hurtful creature, had fought their battles for them, and given them victory over Amalek, Sihon, and Og: *where thou hast seen how the Lord thy God bare thee as a man doth bear his son*; in his arms, in his bosom, with great care and tenderness: *in all the way that ye went, until ye came into this place*; supplying their wants, supporting their persons, subduing their enemies, and preserving them from every thing hurtful to them: and therefore having God on their side, as appeared by so many instances of his favour to them, they had nothing to dread or fear from the Canaanites, though ever so mighty.

Ver. 32. *Yet in this thing ye did not believe the Lord your God.*] That they might go up and possess the land at once, and that he would fight for them, and subdue their enemies under them; or notwithstanding the favours bestowed upon them, and because of them, they did not believe in the Lord their God, and which was a great aggravation of their unbelief, and was the cause of their not entering into the good land, Heb. iii. 19.

Ver. 33. *Who went in the way before you, to search you out a place to pitch your tents in*, &c.] For when the cloud was taken up they journeyed, and when that rested, there they pitched their tents; and hereby they were directed to places the most convenient for water for them and their flocks, or for safety from those that might annoy them: *in fire by night, to shew you by what way ye should go*; which otherwise they could not have found in dark nights, in which they sometimes travelled, and in a wilderness where there were no tracks, no beaten path, no common way: *and in a cloud by day*; to shelter them from the scorching sun, where there were no trees nor hedges to shade them, only cragged rocks and hills.

Ver. 34. *And the Lord heard the voice of your words*, &c.] Of their murmurings against Moses and Aaron, and of their threatenings to them, Joshua and Caleb, and of their impious charge of hatred of them to God for bringing them out of Egypt, and of their rash wishes that they had died there or in the wilderness, and of their wicked scheme and proposal to make them a captain, and return to Egypt again: *and was wroth, and sware*; by his life, himself; see Numb. xiv. 22, 28. *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 35. *Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see the good land*, &c.] The land of Canaan; not only not one of the spies that brought the ill report of that land, but of that body of people that gave credit to it, and murmured upon it: *which I sware to give unto your fathers*; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; see ver. 8.

Ver. 36. *Save Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, he shall see it*, &c.] Enter into it, and enjoy it: *and Joshua* also; who was the other spy with him, that brought a good report of the land; see ver. 38. *and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children*: not the whole land of Canaan, but that part of it which he particularly came to and searched; and where the giants were, and he saw them, and notwithstanding was not intimidated by them, but encouraged the people to go up and possess it; and the part he came to particularly, and trod on, was Hebron, Numb. xiii. 22. and which the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, interpret of that; and this was what was given to him and his at the division of the land, Josh. xiv. 13, 14, 15. and xv. 13, 14. *because he hath wholly followed the Lord*; see Numb. xiv. 24.

Ver. 37. *Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes*, &c.] Not at the same time, though, as some think, at the same place, near 38 years afterwards, they provoking him to speak unadvisedly with his lips; see Numb. xx. 10, 11, 12. Psal. cvi. 32, 33. *saying, thou shalt not go in thither*; into the land of Canaan; and though he greatly importuned it, he could not prevail; see ch. iii. 25, 26, 27.

Ver. 38. But *Joshua, the son of Nun, which standeth before thee*, &c.] His servant and minister, which this phrase is expressive of: *he shall go in thither*; into the good land, instead of Moses, and as his successor, and who was to go before the children of Israel, and introduce them into it, as a type of Christ, who brings

many sons to glory: *encourage him;* with the promise of the divine Presence with him, and of success in subduing the Canaanites, and settling the people of Israel in their land; and so we read that Moses did encourage him, ch. xxxi. 7, 8. *for he shall cause Israel to inherit it;* go before them as their captain, and lead them into it; fight their battles for them, conquer their enemies, and divide the land by lot for an inheritance unto them; so the heavenly inheritance is not by the law of Moses, and the works of it, but by Joshua, or Jesus, the Saviour, by his achievements, victories, and conquests.

Ver. 39. *Moreover, your little ones, which ye said should be a prey,* &c.] To the Amorites, into whose hands they expected to be delivered, ver. 27. see Numb. xiv. 3. *and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil;* not being at years of understanding, and which is a common description of children; it is particularly expressed *in that day,* for now they were the very persons Moses was directing his speech unto, and relating this history, it being 38 years ago when this affair was, so that now they were grown up to years of discretion: *they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it;* the relation of which now might serve greatly to encourage their faith, as well as it would be a fulfilment of the promise of the land made unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, which was not made of none effect through the unbelief of the Israelites, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, since their posterity was to enjoy it, and did.

Ver. 40. *But as for you, turn ye,* &c.] From the mountain of the Amorites, the border of the land of Canaan: *and take your journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red sea:* see Numb. xiv. 25. Jarchi says this wilderness was by the side of the Red sea, to the south of Mount Seir, and divided between the Red sea and the mount; so that now they drew to the side of the sea, and compassed Mount Seir, all the south of it, from west to east.

Ver. 41. *Then ye answered, and said unto me,* &c.] Not being willing to go into the wilderness again, though they wished they had died in it; nor to go the way of the Red sea, which was their way back again to Egypt, though they had been for appointing a captain, and returning thither; but now they repented of what they had said and done: *we have sinned against the Lord;* by murmuring against his servants, and disobeying his commands: *we will go up and fight according to all that the Lord our God hath commanded us;* which is more than they were bid to do; they were only ordered to go up and possess the land, and it was promised them the Lord would fight for them: *and when ye had girded on every man his weapon;* his sword upon his thigh; a large number of them, for all of them were not so disposed, though many were: *ye were ready to go up unto the hill;* though before backward enough, when they were bid to do it. De Dieu, from the use of the word * in the Arabic language, renders it, *ye reckoned it easy to go up unto the hill;* before it was accounted very difficult, by reason the passes were kept and guarded by the Amorites; but now there was no difficulty, when they were bid to go another way, but were ready at once to go up, which comes to the same sense; he further observes, that the word, in another conjugation in the same language, signifies to make light of, or despise *; and so may be rendered, *and ye despised;* that is, rejected and despised the order given them to go into the wilderness by the way of the Red sea in the preceding verse, by their attempting to go up the hill; though the word so taken will bear another sense, agreeable to the first, that they now made a light matter of it, as if it was nothing, and there was no difficulty in it to go up the hill, which before was too hard and heavy for them.

Ver. 42. *And the Lord said unto me,* &c.] When the people had armed themselves, and were in motion, or ready to set forward to ascend the hill: *say unto them, go not up, neither fight;* neither go up the hill, and if they did, contrary to this order, and should meet with enemies, not fight them, but retreat: *for I am not among you;* the ark of the covenant, the symbol of his presence, was then among them, but it did not go with them, it continued in the camp, Numb. xiv. 44. nor did the Lord exert his power, or shew himself present with them, or to be on their side, but left them to themselves, and to their enemies: *lest ye be smitten before your enemies;* God not being with them to fight for them, protect and defend them, and give them victory.

Ver. 43. *So I spake unto you,* &c.] The words, the orders he had received from the Lord to deliver to them: *and ye would not hear;* so as to obey them, and act according to them: *but rebelled against the commandment of the Lord:* as before, by not going up when he would have had them gone, and now by attempting it when he forbid them: *and went presumptuously up into the hill;* that is, of themselves, in their own strength, disregarding the commandment of God, and what they were threatened with; this they endeavoured to do, for they were not able to effect it; the Amorites, perceiving them to make up the hill, came pouring down upon them in great numbers, and stopped them, and obliged them to retreat; see Numb. xiv. 45.

Ver. 44. *And the Amorites which dwelt in the mountain,* &c.] Elsewhere called Canaanites, being one, and a principal one of the seven nations of Canaan, and who were joined and assisted in the attack by the Amalekites, Numb. xiv. 45. *came out against you, and chased you, as bees do;* which being disturbed in their hives come out in great numbers, and with great fury and ardour (for, though a small creature, it has a great deal of spirit); and pursue the aggressor, and leave him not till they have stung him, though thereby they lose their stings, and quickly their lives, at least their usefulness; so these Amorites, being irritated at the approach of the Israelites on their borders, came out in great numbers and with great wrath, and fell upon them and smote them, and pursued them a long way, as is after expressed, though these in the issue were destroyed themselves. The Syriac version renders it, *as bees that are smoked;* or irritated by smoke; which is a method that has been used, and was anciently, to dispossess them of their hives, and get their honey, as

* هان levis et facilis fuit res, Golius, col. 2593.

* Contempsit, ib.

Bochart[r] from various writers has shewn, as from Virgil[s], Ovid[t], and others; and when they are too much smoked become exceeding angry, as Aristotle[u] and Pliny[w] observe; and which same writers take notice of the strength and force of their stings, as that they will kill with them the largest animals, even horses have been killed by them; and, though such small feeble creatures, are not afraid to attack men and beasts; yea, sometimes people have been obliged to quit their habitations, and have been driven out of their country by them, of which Ælianus[x] gives an instance; all which shews the aptness and propriety of this simile; see Psal. cxviii. 12. *and destroyed you in Seir, even unto Hormah*: pursued them as far as Mount Seir, even to another place on the borders of Edom, which was called Hormah, either from the destruction now or afafterwards made here; see the note on Numb. xiv. 45. though some take it not to be the proper name of a place, but an appellative, and render it, *even unto destruction*: so the Jerusalem Targum; that is, destroyed them with an utter destruction.

Ver. 45. *And ye returned and wept before the Lord*, &c.] Those that remained when the Amorites left pursuing them, returned to the camp at Kadesh, where Moses and the Levites were, and the rest of the people; and here they wept at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and hence said to be *before the Lord*; they wept because of the slaughter that had been made among them, and because of their sin in going contrary to the will of God, and because they were ordered into the wilderness; and very probably they cried and prayed unto the Lord, that they might not be turned back, but that he would go with them, and bring them now into the promised land: *but the Lord would not hearken to your voice, nor give ear unto you*; was inexorable, and would not repeal the order to go into the wilderness again, where he had sworn in his wrath their carcasses should fall; the sentence was irrevocable.

Ver. 46. *So ye abode in Kadesh many days*, &c.] Yea, some years, as some think: *according to the days that ye abode* there; that is, according to Jarchi, as they did in the rest of the journeys or stations; so that as they were 38 years in all at several places, they were 19 years in Kadesh; the same is affirmed in the Jewish chronology[y]; Maimonides says[z] they were 18 years in one place, and it is very probable he means this; but Aben Ezra interprets it otherwise, and takes the sense to be, that they abode as many days here after their return as they did whilst the land was searching, which were 40 days, Numb. xiii. 25. but without fixing any determinate time, the meaning may only be, that as they had been many days here before this disaster, so they continued many days after in the same place before they marched onward into the wilderness again.

CHAP. II.

In this chapter Moses goes on with his account of the affairs of the people of Israel, and what befell them, how they turned into the wilderness again; but passes over in silence their travels there, till they came to Mount Seir, where having been some time they were bid to depart, ver. 1, 2, 3. and were directed not to meddle with the Edomites, or take any thing from them, but pay them for what they should have of them, since they lacked not, ver. 4—8. nor to distress the Moabites, of whose country, as formerly inhabited, and also of Edom, some account is given, ver. 9—12. when they were bid to go over the brook Zered, to which from their coming from Kadesh-barnea was the space of 38 years, in which time the former generation was consumed, ver. 13—16. and now passing along the borders of Moab, they were ordered not to meddle with nor distress the children of Ammon, of whose land also, and the former inhabitants of it, an account is given, ver. 17—23. then passing over the river Arnon, they are bid to fight with Sihon king of the Amorites, and possess his land, ver. 24, 25. to whom they sent messengers, desiring leave to pass through his land, and to furnish them with provisions for their money, as the Edomites and Moabites had done, ver. 26—29. but he refusing, this gave them an opportunity to attack him, in which they succeeded, slew him and his people, and took possession of his country, ver. 30—37.

Ver. 1. *Then we turned*, &c.] From Kadesh, where they had been many days, and so also their backs on the land of Canaan, on the borders of which they had been: *and took our journey into the wilderness, by the way of the Red sea, as the Lord spake unto me*; ch. i. 40. *and we compassed Mount Seir many days*; many think by Mount Seir is meant the whole mountainous country of Edom, about which they travelled to and fro in the wilderness that lay near it for the space of 38 years, which they suppose are meant by many days; but I rather think they came to this mount towards the close of the 38 years, before they came to Kadesh, from whence they sent messengers to Edom, which they went round about for several days.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord spake unto me*, &c.] Whilst about Mount Seir: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 3. *Ye have compassed this mountain long enough*, &c.] It was time to be gone from thence, as from Horeb, ch. i. 6. *turn you northward*; from the southern border of Edom towards the land of Canaan, which lay north. It was from Ezion-geber in the land of Edom, from whence the Israelites came to Kadesh, where they sent messengers to the king of Edom, to

[r] Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 10. col. 507.
[s] ——— Fumosque manu, &c. Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. v. 230.
[t] Quid, cum suppositos, &c. Ovid. de Remed. Amor. l. 1. v. 185
[u] Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 40.
[w] Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 16, 18.
[x] De Animal. l. 17. c. 35.
[y] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 8. p. 24.
[z] Moreh Nevochim. par. 3. c. 50.

desire a passage through his land; see Numb. xxxiii. 36. and xx. 14.

Ver. 4. *And command thou the people,* &c.] Give them a strict charge: *saying, ye are to pass through the coast of your brethren the children of Esau:* not through the midst of their country, for that the king of Edom would not admit of, but by or on the border of it: *and they shall be afraid of you:* lest such a numerous body of people as Israel were should seize upon their country, and dispossess them of it, they having been so long wanderers in a wilderness near them: *take ye good heed unto yourselves therefore:* that they did not take any advantage of their fears, and fall upon them, and do them mischief, or that they did not provoke them to battle and overcome them.

Ver. 5. *Meddle not with them,* &c.] Contend not with them in battle, nor provoke them to it: *for I will not give you of their land, no not so much as a foot-breadth;* or as the sole of a man's foot can tread on, signifying that they should not have the least part of it, not any at all. Jarchi makes mention of an exposition of theirs, that he would give them nothing of it until should come the day of the treading of the sole of the foot in the mount of Olives, Zech. xiv. 4. meaning not till the days of the Messiah, when Edom should be a possession of Israel; see Numb. xxiv. 18. Obad. ver. 19. *because I have given Mount Seir unto Esau for a possession;* and therefore not to be taken away from them; they have a right of inheritance of it; see Gen. xxxvi. 8. Josh. xxiv. 4.

Ver. 6. *Ye shall buy meat of them for money, that ye may eat,* &c.] That is, if they would, as Aben Ezra observes; for though they had manna daily, yet if they would they might buy other food when they had an opportunity, as they would now have of Edom; but then they were not to take it by force or stealth, but pay for it, which they were able to do. The same writer observes, that some read the words with an interrogation, *shall ye buy meat?* no, there is no need of it; for the Lord had blessed them with a sufficiency of it: *and ye shall also buy water of them for money; that ye may drink;* which was usual in those hot countries; see the note on Numb. xx. 19. or *dig water* [y], that is, pay for digging of wells for water, or buy water out of wells dug in the land of Edom. Jarchi says in maritime places they express buying by this word, and so it is used in the Arabic language; see the note on Hos. iii. 2.

Ver. 7. *For the Lord thy God hath blessed thee in all the works of thine hands,* &c.] Had increased their cattle and substance, even though in a wilderness: *he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness;* every step they took, and he owned them and prospered them in all things in which they were concerned: *these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee:* not only to protect and defend them, but to provide all things necessary for them. This number of years was not fully completed, but the round number is given instead of the broken one: *thou hast lacked nothing:* and since they had wherewith to pay for their food and drink, they are directed to do it, and not take any thing from the Edomites in an unjust way; nor make themselves look poor when they were rich, as Jarchi says.

Ver. 8. *And when we passed by from our brethren the children of Esau, which dwelt in Seir,* &c.] Along their coasts, by the borders of their country: *through the way of the plain;* the wilderness of Zin, where Kadesh was: *from Elath and Ezion-geber;* the two ports on the shore of the Red sea in the land of Edom; it was from the latter they came to Kadesh; see Numb. xxxiii. 35, 36. Elath was ten miles from Petra, the metropolis of Edom, to the east of it, as Jerom says [z]; it is by Josephus [a] called Ælana, and by the Septuagint here Ailon; from whence the Elanitic bay has its name; he speaks of it as not far from Ezion-geber, which he says was then called Berenice: *we turned and passed by the way of the wilderness of Moab;* the wilderness which is before Moab, towards the sun-rising or the east, Numb. xxi. 11.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord said unto me,* &c.] When upon the borders of Moab: *distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle;* besiege not any of their cities, nor draw them into a battle, or provoke them to fight: *for I will not give thee of their land for a possession:* at least not as yet, the measure of their sins not being fully up, and the time of their punishment not come; otherwise in David's time they were subdued, and became tributaries to him, and the Edomites also, 2 Sam. viii. 2, 14. *because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession:* so the Moabites were, they sprung from Moab, a son of Lot by his first-born daughter, Gen. xix. 37. Ar was the metropolis of Moab, called Ar of Moab, Isa. xv. 1. and is here put for the whole country of Moab; so Aben Ezra interprets it of Moab. Jarchi says it is the name of the province; in the Septuagint version it is called Aroer.

Ver. 10. *The Emim dwelt there in time past,* &c.] We read of them as early as the times of Chedorlaomer, Gen. xiv. 5. when their dwelling was in Kirjathaim, a city which Sihon king of the Amorites took from the Moabites, and which being taken from him, was with others given to the tribe of Reuben, Numb. xxxii. 37. These are by some thought to be the same with the Yemim which Anah found and met with in the wilderness, and defeated, which we render *mules,* Gen. xxxvi. 24. They had their name from the fear and terror they put men into because of their gigantic stature and great strength, as follows: it is probable they were the descendants of Ham: *a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim;* who were very numerous, of a very bulky size of body, and of high stature, like the giants the spies had seen at Hebron, the sons of Anak, a noted giant there, Numb. xiii. 22, 33.

Ver. 11. *Which also were accounted giants, as the Anakim,* &c.] Because of their bulky size and tall stature; or, "the Rephaim were they accounted, even they "as the Anakim;" they were reckoned Rephaim, a name for giants in early times, even as the Anakim were; see Gen. xiv. 5. *but the Moabites called them Emim;* to distinguish them from the Rephaim; so that it seems this name of Emim was not originally their name, but they are called so by a prolepsis, or

[y] ותכרו fodietis, Munster.
[z] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. E.
[a] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 4.

anticipation, in Gen. xiv. 5. since they had it from the Moabites, a people of a later date.

Ver. 12. *The Horim also dwelt in Seir before-time,* &c.] Which is the name of a mount, and so of the country from it; so called from Seir the Horite, who dwelt in it before it was possessed by Esau and his sons; but who the Horim or Horites were, from whence they had their name, is difficult to say; they were as early as the times of Chedorlaomer, Gen. xiv. 6. They seem to be so called from their dwelling in holes and caves in rocks, which the southern part of Edom or Idumea was full of, and to be the same the Greeks call Troglodytæ: *but the children of Esau succeeded them;* Esau and his sons marrying among them, made way for getting the country into their possession, as appears from Gen. xxxvi. 2, 8, 12, 20, 25. and in which they afterwards settled themselves by the dint of sword, since it follows: *when they had destroyed them from before them, and dwelt in their stead;* even in Seir where they had dwelt, afterwards called Edom, from one of the names of Esau, Gen. xxxvi. 8, 9, 20. *as Israel did in the land of his possession, which the Lord gave unto them;* because this is said before the Canaanites were drove out of their land, and it was possessed by the Israelites, some think this was written by Ezra, or some other hand; but there is no need to suppose that; Moses, by a spirit of prophecy, and in faith of the promises and prophecies of God relating to this affair, which were just now about to be fulfilled, might write this; besides, it may refer to what was already done to the kingdoms of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites; which had been taken from them, and given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; and the above instances as well as this may be observed, to encourage the people of Israel that they should succeed in dispossessing the Canaanites, and settling in their land, in like manner as dispossessions of this kind had already been made.

Ver. 13. *Now rise up,* said I, *and get you over the brook Zered,* &c.] It is called the valley of Zered, Numb. xxi. 12. the word used signifying both a valley and a brook; and it is very probable there were both a valley and a brook of the same name; it must be near Dibon-gad, since in one place it is said the Israelites came from Ijim and pitched in Zered; and in another place that they came from thence, and pitched in Dibon-gad, Numb. xxi. 11, 12. and xxxiii. 45. *and we went over the brook Zered;* which was fordable, or perhaps at this time dried up.

Ver. 14. *And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea,* &c.] The space of time; or, *the days*[b]; the number of them: *until we were come over the brook Zered,* was *thirty and eight years;* that is, from the time that the spies were sent and searched the land, and brought a report of it; for they were sent from Kadesh-barnea, Numb. xxxii. 8. unto the passage of the Israelites over Zered, were 38 years; so long they had been travelling in the wilderness, after they were come to the borders of the land: *until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host;* all that were twenty years old and upwards, and fit to go out to war upon occasion, when the people were first numbered after they came out of Egypt; all that generation was now consumed within the above space of time, excepting two, Caleb and Joshua; *as the Lord sware unto them;* Numb. xiv. 21, 23, 30.

Ver. 15. *For indeed the hand of the Lord was against them,* &c.] His power was exerted in a way of wrath and vengeance on them, for their murmurings at the report of the spies; and therefore it is no wonder they were consumed, for strong is his hand, and high is his right hand; and when lifted up it falls heavy, and there is no standing up under it, or against it: it smote them with one disease or another, or brought one judgment or another upon them: as the sword of Amalek, by which many were cut off, and the plague at Shittim in the plains of Moab, in which died 24,000; besides the destruction of Korah and his company, which was quickly after the affair of the spies, and the plague at that time, of which died 14,700; and thus, by one stroke after another, he went on to *destroy them from among the host until they were consumed,* even all of them but two, as follows.

Ver. 16. *So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed,* &c.] By wasting diseases and judgments of one kind or another: *and dead from among the people;* the rising and surviving generation.

Ver. 17. *That the Lord spake unto me,* &c.] At the brook Zered, having passed that, or at Dibon-gad, which was their next station: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 18. *Thou art to pass over through Ar,* &c.] That is, over the river Arnon, by the city Ar of Moab, which was situated by it; see ver. 9. and so Moses and the people of Israel were to pass along by that, and by *the coast of Moab;* for they were not admitted to enter the land and pass through it; only to travel on the borders of it, and that they were to begin to do *this day;* the day the Lord spake to Moses.

Ver. 19. *And when thou comest nigh over-against the children of Ammon,* &c.] Who dwelt near the Moabites, and were brethren, both descending from Lot, Gen. xix. 37, 38. *distress them not, nor meddle with them;* lay no siege to any of their cities, nor provoke them to war, nor engage in battle with them: *for I will not give thee of the land of the children of Ammon any possession;* that is, any part of it which was now in their hands; otherwise half their land was given to the tribe of Gad: but then that was what Sihon king of the Amorites had taken from them, and which Israel retook from him, and so possessed it not as the land of the Ammonites, but of the Amorites, one of the seven nations, whose land they were to inherit; see Josh. xiii. 25. Judg. xi. 13—23. *because I have given it unto the children of Lot for a possession;* the Ammonites were the children of Lot by his second daughter, Gen. xix. 38.

Ver. 20. *That also was accounted a land of giants,* &c.] Ammon was so reckoned as well as Moab, ver. 10, 11. *giants dwelt therein in old time;* the Rephaim dwelt there, as they did also in Ashteroth Karnaim, Gen. xiv. 5. *and the Ammonites call them Zamzummim;* they are thought to be the same with the Zuzim in Gen. xiv. 5. who had their name, as Hillerus[c] thinks,

[b] הימים et dies, Montanus; dies autem, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[c] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 156, 288, 289.

from Mezuzah, a door-post, from their tall stature, being as high as one; and for a like reason Saph the giant might have his name, 2 Sam. xxi. 18. The word Zamzummim, according to him [d], signifies contrivers of evil and terrible things; they were inventors of wickedness, crafty and subtle in forming wicked and mischievous designs, which struck terror into people, and made them formidable to them.

Ver. 21. *A people great and many, and tall as the Anakim, &c.*] As the Emim were, ver. 10. *but the Lord destroyed them before them;* destroyed the Zamzummim before the children of Ammon; or otherwise they would have been an overmatch for them, being so numerous, and of such a gigantic stature: *and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead:* and in this way, and by these means, he gave them their land for a possession, ver. 19.

Ver. 22. *As he did to the children of Esau which dwelt in Seir, &c.*] He did the like things for them as he did for the Ammonites: *when he destroyed the Horim from before them;* which is repeated from ver. 12. other instances of the like kind being here recited: *and they succeeded them, and dwelt in their stead, even unto this day;* see the note on ver. 12.

Ver. 23. *And the Avim, which dwelt in Hazerim, even unto Azzah, &c.*] The same with the Avites, who appear to have inhabited some part of the land of the Philistines, in which Azzah or Gaza was, which was one of the five lordships of the Philistines, Josh. xiii. 3. The word Hazerim signifies courts, and a learned man [e] interprets it of tents or huts placed in a square or circular form, so as to have an area in the middle; and in such the Avim may be supposed to dwell, while in Palestine, as far as Gaza: *the Caphtorim, which came forth out of Caphtor, destroyed them:* according to the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, these were Cappadocians, that came out of Cappadocia; but it seems manifest that they were originally of Egypt, see Gen. x. 14. and Bochart [f] thinks they went from thence into that part of Cappadocia that was near Colchis; but things not answering their expectations, they returned, and drove out the Avim from their country: *and dwelt in their stead;* see the notes on Jer. xlvii. 4. and on Amos ix. 7. Though it seems as if they were not utterly destroyed, but some escaped into Assyria, and settled there, where was a place called Ava from them; and from whence they were sent by the king of Assyria to repeople the cities of Samaria, after the captivity of the ten tribes; see 2 Kings xvii. 24. Now these several instances are observed to encourage the children of Israel to hope and believe that they should be able to dispossess the Canaanites, and inherit their land; such dispossessions having been very frequent, when it was the will of God they should take place.

Ver. 24. *Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon, &c.*] Which was on the border of Moab, and divided between Moab and the Amorites, Numb. xxi. 13. *behold, I have given into thy hand Sihon, the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land;* that is, he had determined to give it to the Israelites, for as yet it was not actually given; of this king, and the place he was king of, see the notes on Numb. xxi. 21, 26. *begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle;* provoke him to war, fight with him, take his land from him, and enter upon the possession of it, hereby assuring of victory.

Ver. 25. *This day will I begin to put the dread of thee, &c.*] And so fulfil the prophecies delivered by Moses in Exod. xv. 14, 15, 16. *and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven;* not only the neighbouring nations, the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, Philistines, and Canaanites, but nations more remote even throughout the whole world; *who shall report of thee;* of what was done for Israel in Egypt, and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; and particularly of the delivery of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and of their kingdoms into their hands: *and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee;* lest they should proceed on, and make conquests of their lands also; see Josh. ii. 9, 10, 11.

Ver. 26. *And I sent messengers out of the wilderness of Kedemoth, &c.*] A city in the tribe of Reuben, and given by them to the Levites in after-times, having been taken from the Amorites with others; near this lay a wilderness, which took its name from it, and seems to be the same with Jeshimon, Numb. xxi. 20, 21. see Josh. xiii. 18. and xxi. 37. Aben Ezra takes it to be the wilderness of Matthanah, which according to Jerom [g] was situated on Arnon, 12 miles to the east of Medaba; see Numb. xxi. 18, 30. from hence messengers were sent by Moses, *unto Sihon king of Heshbon, with words of peace;* in a peaceable and respectful manner, desiring to be at peace and in friendship with him, and a continuance of it, which was done to leave him inexcusable; as afterwards a like method was ordered to be taken, when they came to any city, to proclaim peace, and if an answer of peace was given, no hostilities were to be committed, ch. xx. 10. *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 27. *Let me pass through thy land, &c.*] See the note on Numb. xxi. 22. *I will go along by the highway;* the king's highway, as in the place referred to, the public road: *I will neither turn to the right hand nor to the left;* to go into his fields and vineyards, and gather the fruit, or tread down the corn and vines, or do any manner of mischief to them; see the above place.

Ver. 28. *Thou shalt sell me meat for money, that I may eat, &c.*] If they thought fit to have provision of them, they desired no other but to pay for it: *and give me water for money, that I may drink;* see ver. 6. *only I will pass through on my feet;* for they were all footmen, Numb. xi. 21. of the phrase, see the note on Numb. xx. 19.

Ver. 29. *As the children of Esau which dwell in Seir, and the Moabites which dwell in Ar, did unto me, &c.*] Which respects, as Jarchi observes, not the affair of passing through their land requested, for neither of them granted that, but buying food and drink; for though the Edomites at first seem not to have granted that, yet afterwards they did. The mountain of Seir,

[d] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 161, 310, 428.
[e] Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 66.
[f] Phaleg. l. 4, c. 32. col. 291, 292.
[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. C.

and the city Ar, are put for the whole countries of Edom and Moab: *until I shall pass over Jordan into the land which the Lord our God giveth us;* this is observed to remove any suspicion or jealousy of their seizing his country, and taking possession of it, and dwelling in it; since they only proposed to pass through it on their journey to the land of Canaan, which lay on the other side Jordan, over which they must pass in order to possess it, which they had a right unto by the gift of God.

Ver. 30. *But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let us pass by him,* &c.] Or through his country, as was desired: *for the Lord had hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate;* as he did Pharaoh's, for whom he will he hardens; so that he would not listen to the proposals made to him, nor grant the requests asked of him, but with pride and haughtiness of spirit despised and disdained Israel: *that he might deliver him into thine hand;* that so an opportunity might offer of fighting with him, and taking his country from him; whereas, had he been peaceable and flexible, he had continued in the enjoyment of his land, and Israel would not have had that advantage against him; but God, who has the hearts of kings and of all men in his hands, so wrought upon him that he should take the steps he did, which made way for the delivery of him and his country into the hands of the Israelites: *as appeareth this day:* for when Moses made this speech, the kingdom of Sihon was possessed by the Israelites, Numb. xxi. 24, 25.

Ver. 31. *And the Lord said unto me,* &c.] After or about the time when the messengers were sent to Sihon, perhaps when they had returned and had brought his answer: *behold, I have begun to give Sihon and his land before thee;* by hardening his heart, which was a sure token of his ruin, and a leading step to the delivery of him into the hands of Israel: *begin to possess, that thou mayest inherit his land;* move towards it and enter into it, not fearing any opposition made by him.

Ver. 32. *Then Sihon came out against us,* &c.] Perceiving they were upon their march towards his land or into it, he gathered all his people and went out of Heshbon their capital city, where he resided: *he and all his people, to fight at Jahaz;* a city which he had taken from the king of Moab, and which in after-times after the captivity of the ten tribes, came into their hands again, Isa. xv. 4. Jer. xlviii. 21. See the note on Numb. xxi. 23.

Ver. 33. *And the Lord our God delivered him before us,* &c.] With their lands: *and we smote him and his sons, and all his people;* with the edge of the sword; slew them all: the Cetib or textual reading is *his son,* though the Keri or margin is *his sons,* which we follow. So Jarchi observes, it is written *his son,* because he had a son mighty as himself, he says.

Ver. 34. *And we took all his cities at that time,* &c.] As Heshbon, and others mentioned in Numb. xxi. 25, 30, 32. and in xxxii. 3, 34—38. *and utterly destroyed the men, and the women, and the little ones of every city, we left none to remain;* for the Amorites were one of the seven nations who were devoted to destruction, the measure of whose iniquity was now full, and therefore vengeance was taken.

Ver. 35. *Only the cattle we took for a prey unto ourselves,* &c.] These they did not destroy, but preserved alive for their own use and profit, and took them as their own property: *and the spoil of the cities which we took;* as household goods, gold, silver, and whatever valuable was found by them; this they took as plunder, and shared it among themselves.

Ver. 36. *From Aroer, which is by the brink of the river Arnon,* &c.] Upon the border of Moab, and the principal city of it; see Jer. xlviii. 19: *and from the city that is by the river;* or even the city that is in the midst of the river, the city Aroer, which seems to be meant; see Josh. xii. 2. and xiii. 9. This river is afterwards called the river of Gad, 2 Sam. xxiv. 5. in the midst of it Aroer was, perhaps because it was possessed by the tribe of Gad: *even unto Gilead;* Mount Gilead and the country adjacent to it, which belonged to Og king of Bashan: *there was not one city too strong for us;* that could hold out against them, when attacked and besieged by them, but presently surrendered: *the Lord our God delivered all unto us;* Moses ascribes all the victories and success they had unto the Lord, not to their own might and power, but to the power of God with them, and his blessing on them.

Ver. 37. *Only unto the land of the children of Ammon thou camest not,* &c.] Which was then in their possession; otherwise what Sihon had took away from them, that the children of Israel came into and enjoyed, as before observed, ver. 19. *nor unto any place of the river Jabbok;* any town or city situated on this river, which was the border of the children of Ammon, ch. iii. 16. see the note on Gen. xxxii. 22. *nor unto the cities in the mountains;* much less did they penetrate into the innermost parts of their country, the mountainous part thereof, and the cities there: *nor unto whatsoever the Lord our God forbad us:* whether in Edom, Moab, or Ammon, particularly the latter, of which he is more especially and peculiarly speaking.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter the account is carried on of the conquest of the Amorites by Israel, of Og king of Bashan, and his kingdom, ver. 1—11. and of the distribution of their country to the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, ver. 12—17. and then the command to the said tribes is observed, to go out armed before their brethren, and assist them in the conquest of the land of Canaan, and then return to their possessions, ver. 18, 19, 20. and also that to Joshua not to fear, but to do to the Canaanitish kings and kingdoms what he had seen done to the two kings of the Amorites, ver. 21, 22. After which Moses relates the request he made, to go over Jordan and see the good land, which was denied him, only he is bidden to look

from the top of an hill to see it, ver. 23—27. And the chapter is closed with the charge he was to give Joshua, ver. 28. which was received in the valley where they abode, ver. 29.

Ver. 1. *Then we turned and went up the way to Bashan*, &c.] Which seems to have been higher than the kingdom of Sihon: this was a fine country for pasturage, for the breeding of cattle, larger and lesser, and was famous for its oaks: it is the same country which in Josephus and others goes by the name of Batanea: *and Og the king of Bashan came out against us;* got his forces together, and came out from Ashteroth, the royal city where he dwelt: *he and all his people, to battle at Edrei;* another city in his kingdom, about six miles from the former; see ch. i. 4. and Numb. xxi. 33.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said unto me*, &c.] When Og was marching with all his forces against Israel: *fear him not*, &c.; see the note on Numb. xxi. 34.

Ver. 3. *So the Lord our God delivered into our hands Og also the king of Bashan, and all his people*, &c.] As well as Sihon king of Heshbon: *and we smote him, till none was left to him remaining;* or left alive, all were slain with the sword; see the note on Numb. xxi. 35.

Ver. 4. *And we took all his cities at that time*, &c.] Not only Edrei where the battle was fought, and Ashteroth his capital city, but all the rest in his kingdom: *there was not a city which we took not from them:* not one stood out, but all surrendered on summons; the number of which follows: *three score cities;* which was a large number for so small a country, and shews it to be well inhabited: *all the region of Argob;* which was a small province of *the kingdom of Og in Bashan:* Aben Ezra and Jarchi observe, that it was called after a man, *i. e.* whose name was Argob; the Targum of Onkelos names it Tracona, and the Targum of Jonathan Targona, the same with Trachonitis in Josephus and other authors; see Luke iii. 1. Jerom relates [h] that in his time, about Gerasa, a city of Arabia, 15 miles from it to the west, there was a village which was called Arga, which seems to carry in it some remains of the ancient name of this country; and the Samaritan version, in all places where Argob is, calls it Rigobaah; and in the Misnah [i] mention is made of a place called Ragab, beyond Jordan, famous for its being the second place for the best oil.

Ver. 5. *All these cities were fenced with high walls, gates, and bars*, &c.] That is, all the cities in the kingdom of Bashan; and though they were, it hindered not their falling into the hands of the Israelites; and this might serve to encourage them against those fears they were possessed of by the spies, with respect to the cities in the land of Canaan; see Numb. xiii. 28. Deut. i. 28. *besides unwalled towns a great many;* small towns and villages adjacent to the several cities, as is common.

Ver. 6. *And we utterly destroyed them*, &c.] Not the cities, but the inhabitants of them: *as we did to Sihon king of Heshbon:* they did not destroy his cities, for they took them and dwelt in them; but the people that lived there, as follows here: *utterly destroying the men, women, and children, of every city;* see ch. ii. 34.

Ver. 7. *But all the cattle, and the spoil of the cities*, &c.] The oxen and sheep, camels and asses; their gold and silver, and the furniture of their houses; their stores of corn, and of other fruits of the earth, even all their substance of whatsoever kind: *we took for a prey to ourselves;* made them their own property, and used them for their own profit and service, whereby they became greatly enriched.

Ver. 8. *And we took at that time out of the hands of the two kings of the Amorites*, &c.] Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan; *the land that was on this side Jordan:* where Moses then was, being in the plains of Moab, and was the country beyond Jordan, with respect to the land of Canaan, and when in that: *from the river of Arnon unto Mount Hermon;* Arnon was a river which divided Moab and the Amorites, Numb. xxii. 13. and Hermon was a mountain of Gilead, which ended where Lebanon began, and was the northerly border of this country. It was remarkable for the dew that fell on it; see Psal. cxxxiii. 3. and the note there.

Ver. 9. Which *Hermon the Sidonians call Sirion*, &c.] Which name it has in Psal. xxix. 6. a name the inhabitants of Sidon gave it, but for what reason it is not easy to say; however, that it was well known to Tyre and Sidon, appears from snow in summer-time being brought to the former, as will be hereafter observed: *and the Amorites call it Shenir;* in whose possession it was last. Bochart [k] thinks it had its name from the multitude of wild cats in it, Shunar in the Chaldee tongue being the name of that creature; but Jarchi says Shenir in the Canaanitish language signifies *snow;* so, in the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, it is called the mountain of snow; and the Hebrew who read to Jerom, and taught him, affirmed to him that this mountain hung over Paneas, from whence snow in summer-time was brought to Tyre for pleasure [l], and the same is confirmed by Abulfeda [m]. There is said to be upon the top of it a famous temple, which is used for worship by the Heathens, over-against Paneas and Lebanon [n]; and it is highly probable there was one even at this time, when it was possessed by the Amorites, since it is called Mount Baal Hermon, Judg. iii. 3. from the worship of Baal, or some other idol upon it, as it should seem. Besides these, it had another name, Mount Sion, Deut. iv. 48. but to be distinguished from Mount Zion near Jerusalem. The names of it in this place are very differently interpreted by Hillerus [o]; though he thinks it had them all on account of the snow on it, which was as a net all over it; for Hermon, he observes, signifies a net, a drag-net, and Shenir an apron, and Sirion a coat of mail, all from the covering of this mount with snow.

Ver. 10. *All the cities of the plain*, &c.] There was a plain by Medaba, and Heshbon and her cities were in a plain, with some others given to the tribe of Reuben, Josh. xiii. 16, 17. *and all Gilead;* Mount

[h] De loc. Heb. fol. 87. M.
[i] Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 3.
[k] Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 14. col. 865.
[l] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. B, C.
[m] Apud Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. par. 2. p. 920.
[n] Jerom ut supra.
[o] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 261, 568, 786, 929.

Gilead, and the cities belonging to it, a very fruitful country, half of which fell to the share of the Reubenites, and the rest to the half-tribe of Manasseh: *and all Bashan*; of which Og was king, called Batanea, a very fertile country, as before observed: *unto Salcah and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan*; which seem to be frontier cities of the latter: see ch. i. 4. and iii. 1. The former, Adrichomius[p] says, was situated by the city Geshur and Mount Hermon, and was the boundary of the country of Bashan to the north; and according to Benjamin of Tudela[q], it was half a day's journey from Gilead; as Edrei seems to be its boundary to the south.

Ver. 11. *For only Og king of Bashan remained of the remnant of giants*, &c.] The meaning seems to be, either that he was the only one that was left of the race of the giants the Ammonites found when they took possession of this country, ch. ii. 20. or that was left when the Amorites took it from the Ammonites; and who having by some means or other ingratiated himself into their affections, because of his stature, strength, and courage, and other qualifications they might discern in him, made him their king: *behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron*: his body being so large and bulky, he might think it most proper and safest for him to have a bedstead made of iron to lie upon, or to prevent noxious insects harbouring in it; nor was it unusual to have bedsteads made of other materials than wood, as of gold, silver, and ivory; see the note on Amos vi. 4. Some learned men[r] have been of opinion, that the beds of Typho in Syria, made mention of by Homer[s], refer to this bedstead of Og: *is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon?* which was the royal city of the Ammonites, in the times of David, 2 Sam. xii. 26. now called Philadelphia, as Jerom says[t]. This bedstead might be either sent thither by Og, before the battle at Edrei, for safety, or rather might be sold by the Israelites to the inhabitants of Rabbath, who kept it as a great curiosity: *nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man*; a common cubit, so that it was four yards and a half long, and two yards broad. Onkelos renders it, after the king's cubit; and the king's cubit at Babylon, according to Herodotus[u], was larger by three fingers than the common one; such as the cubit in Ezekiel xl. 5. which was a cubit and an hand's breadth; and this makes the dimensions of the bedstead yet larger. And by this judgment may be made of the tallness of Og's stature, though this is not always a sure rule to go by; for Alexander, when in India, ordered his soldiers to make beds of five cubits long, to be left behind them, that they might be thought to be larger men than they were, as Diodorus Siculus[w] and Curtius[x] relate; but there is little reason to believe that Og's bedstead was made with such a view. Maimonides observes[y], that a bed in common is a third part larger than a man; so that Og, according to this way of reckoning, was six cubits high, and his stature doubly larger than a common man's; but less than a third part may well be allowed to a bed, which will make him taller still: the height of Og is reckoned by Wolfius[z] to be $13\frac{1128}{1144}$ feet of Paris measure.

Ver. 12. *And this land, which we possessed at that time*, &c.] Or took possession of, having conquered it; for it still remained in their possession: *from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon*; on the borders of Moab; from thence as far as Gilead was the land which was taken from Sihon king of Heshbon, ch. ii. 36. *and half Mount Gilead, and the cities thereof*; which were taken from Og king of Bashan, ver. 10. *gave I unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites*; at their request, on certain conditions to be performed by them, afterwards repeated.

Ver. 13. *And the rest of Gilead*, &c.] The other half of the mount, with the cities belonging to it: *and all Bashan, being the kingdom of Og, gave I unto the half-tribe of Manasseh*; see Numb. xxxii. 33. *all the region of Argob, with all Bashan*; the region of Trachonitis, in Bashan; see ver. 4. *which was called the land of giants*; or of Rephaim; this Jarchi says is the country of the Rephaim given to Abraham, Gen. xv. 20.

Ver. 14. *Jair the son of Manasseh took all the country of Argob*, &c.] Or Trachonitis; the small towns belonging to Gilead, as in Numb. xxxii. 41. *unto the coasts of Geshuri and Maachathi*; these were little kingdoms in Syria, on which the country of Argob bordered, and had kings over them in the time of David, and came not into the possession of the Israelites; see Josh. xiii. 13. 2 Sam. iii. 3. and x. 6, 8. and xv. 8. *and called them after his own name, Bashan-havoth-jair, unto this day*: see Numb. xxxii. 41.

Ver. 15. *And I gave Gilead unto Machir.*] The son of Manasseh; not to him personally, who cannot be thought to have been living at this time, but to his posterity, to the Machirites; see Numb. xxxii. 40.

Ver. 16. *And unto the Reubenites, and unto the Gadites*, &c.] The tribes of Reuben and Gad: *I gave from Gilead even unto the river Arnon*; see ver. 12. *half the valley and the border*; or rather half the river, the river Arnon; and so it is rendered *the middle of the river*, in Josh. xii. 2. and so here the middle of the torrent by the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions, and by Onkelos: *even unto the river Jabbok*, which is *the border of the children of Ammon*; beyond which the land given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad reached not; see ch. ii. 37.

Ver. 17. *The plain also, and Jordan*, &c.] The plain by Jordan, the plains of Moab on the side of it, together with the river: *and the coast thereof*; the country adjoining to it: *from Chinnereth even unto the sea of the plain*, even *the salt sea*; that is, from Genesaret, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, called the land of Gennesaret, Matt. xiv. 34. from thence to the sea of Sodom, the sea of the plain, where the cities of the plain stood, Sodom, Gomorrah, &c. and the salt sea, so called from the salt and nitrous waters of it, the

[p] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 94.
[q] Itinerar. p. 27.
[r] Vid. Dickinson. Delph. Phœniciz. c. 2. p. 12.
[s] Iliad. 2.
[t] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. C.
[u] Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 178.
[w] Bibliothec. l. 17. p. 563.
[x] Hist. l. 9. c. 3.
[y] Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 47. p. 325.
[z] Apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 401.

lake Asphaltites: *under Ashdoth-pisgah eastward;* mentioned among the cities given to the tribe of Reuben, Josh. xiii. 20. rendered *the springs of Pisgah*, ch. iv. 49. the word having the signification of effusions, pourings out; so the Targums.

Ver. 18. *And I commanded you at that time*, &c.] Not all Israel, but the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh; for what follows only concerns them: *saying, the Lord your God hath given you this land to possess it;* the land before described, lately in the hands of Sihon and Og; this at their request Moses gave them, by the direction of the Lord, on the following condition: *you shall pass over armed before your brethren the children of Israel, all* that are *meet for the war;* that is, they should pass over Jordan with the rest of the tribes, being armed to assist them in the conquest of Canaan: for this phrase, which we render *before your brethren*, does not signify that they went in the fore-front of them, only that they were present with them, and joined them in their war against their enemies; see Numb. xxxii. 29, 30. and therefore should be rendered *with your brethren**; even as many of them as were able to bear arms, at least as many as Joshua would choose to take of them; for he did not take them all by a great many; see Josh. iv. 13.

Ver. 19. *But your wives, and your little ones, and your cattle*, &c.] These were to be left behind: for *I know that ye have much cattle;* which made the countries of Gilead and Bashan, so famous for pasturage, agreeable to them; see Numb. xxxii. 1. these, under the care of servants, and also their wives and children, *shall abide in your cities which I have given you;* and which they rebuilt and repaired, Numb. xxxii. 34—42.

Ver. 20. *Until the Lord have given rest unto your brethren, as well as unto you*, &c.] Rest from their enemies, and habitations to dwell quietly in; so the land of Canaan is called a rest, ch. xii. 9. typical of the rest which remains for the people of God: *and until they also possess the land which the Lord your God hath given them beyond Jordan;* for so Canaan was with respect to Moses and the people with him, who were then in the plains of Moab; otherwise the country in which he was with respect to Canaan is usually called beyond Jordan; this the Lord had given in promise to Israel, and they were just now ready to enter into and possess it, by virtue of his gift, and which made it sure unto them: *and then shall ye return every man unto his possession, which I have given you;* as accordingly they did, Josh. xxii.

Ver. 21. *And I commanded Joshua at that time*, &c.] After the conquest of the two kings, and the assignment of their countries to the above tribes; and after Moses had it made known to him that he should quickly die, and Joshua should be his successor; then, by the direction of God, he gave him the following charge: *saying, thine eyes have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto these two kings;* Sihon and Og; how their kingdoms were taken from them, and given to Israel, and they slain with the sword; this Joshua was an eye-witness of, and was, no doubt, greatly concerned in the battles with them, being the general in the Israelitish armies; at least this was sometimes his post, and he can't be thought to have been unemployed in these wars: *so shall the Lord do unto all the kingdoms whither thou passest;* all the kingdoms in the land of Canaan, where there were many, thirty-one at least; these would be all conquered and put into the hands of the Israelites, and their kings slain.

Ver. 22. *Ye shall not fear them*, &c.] On account of the numbers, strength, courage, and gigantic stature of the inhabitants, at least some of them; nor on account of their walled towns, and fortified cities: *for the Lord your God he shall fight for you;* as he did, particularly at Jericho, the walls of which city fell at the sound of rams' horns; and at Gibeon, when he cast down hailstones on their enemies, and more were slain by them than with the sword; and in all their battles it was he that gave them success and victory.

Ver. 23. *And I besought the Lord at that time*, &c.] When he was told he should die, and Joshua should succeed him; or when the two kings were slain, and their kingdoms conquered; this being the beginning, pledge, and earnest of what God had promised to do for the people of Israel; Moses was very desirous of living to see the work completed, and therefore sought the Lord by prayer and supplication: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 24. *O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand*, &c.] To give a specimen of the greatness of his power in subduing the two kings and their kingdoms, and delivering them up into the hands of the Israelites. Moses had seen instances of the mighty power of God in Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; but this was the beginning of his power, in vanquishing the Canaanites, and putting their land into the possession of the Israelites, as he had promised; of which the Amorites were a part, and a principal nation of them: and thus God, when he begins a work of grace upon the soul of man, begins to shew the exceeding greatness of his power, and which is further exerted in carrying it on, and bringing it to perfection: *for what God* is there *in heaven or in earth that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?* here Moses speaks according to the notion of Heathens, who supposed there were other gods in heaven and in earth besides the true God; and upon this supposition observes, let there be as many as they will, or can be imagined, there is none of them like the Lord God of Israel for power and might; or are able to do such works as he has done, in nature, in the creation of all things out of nothing, in providence, in supporting what he has made, and in governing the world; and in those amazing instances of his power, in bringing down judgments upon wicked men, kings, and kingdoms; and in the deliverance of his own people from them, and putting them and their kingdoms into the possession of them; which were the wondrous works of might Moses had in view, and a sense of which was impressed on his mind at this time.

Ver. 25. *I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan*, &c.] The land of Canaan,

* לפני אחיכם cum fratribus vestris, Noldius, p. 531, No. 1402.

the land flowing with milk and honey; a land which he describes as a most excellent one, ch. viii. 7, 8. To see this land, he was very desirous of going over the river Jordan, beyond which it lay with respect to the place where he now was: *that goodly mountain, and Lebanon*: or, *that goodly mountain, even Lebanon*: which lay to the north of the land of Canaan, and was famous for cedar and odoriferous trees. But if two distinct mountains are meant, the goodly mountain may design Mount Moriah, on which the temple was afterwards built, and of which Moses might have a foresight; and some by Lebanon think that is meant, which was built of the cedars of Lebanon, and therefore goes by that name, Zech. xi. 1. and a fore-view of this made the mountain so precious to Moses, and desirable to be seen by him. So the Targum of Jonathan; "that goodly mountain in which is built the "city of Jerusalem, and Mount Lebanon, in which "the Shechinah shall dwell;" to which agrees the note of Aben Ezra, who interprets the goodly mountain of Jerusalem, and Lebanon of the house of the sanctuary. In the Septuagint it is called Antilibanus. Mount Libanus had its name not from frankincense growing upon it, as some have thought; for it does not appear that any did grow upon it, for that came from Seba in Arabia Felix; but from the whiteness of it, through the continual snows that were on it, just as the Alps have their name for the same reason; and so Jerom says[b] of Lebanon, that the snow never fails from the tops of it, or is ever so overcome by the heat of the sun as wholly to melt; to the same purpose also Tacitus[c] says, and Mr. Maundrell[d], who was there in May, speaks of deep snow on it, and represents the cedars as standing in snow.

Ver. 26. *But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes*, &c.] Not at this time, and for this prayer of his, but on account of he and Aaron not sanctifying him at the waters of Meribah; or of some expressions of unbelief, and unadvised words, which dropped from his lips through their provocation of him; see Numb. xx. 12. Psal. cvi. 32, 33. *and would not hear me*: now, and grant the above request, having before declared that he and Aaron should not bring the people of Israel into the land he had given them; and Moses with all his entreaties could not prevail upon him to repeal the sentence: *and the Lord said unto me, let it suffice*: that he had seen the conquest of the two kings, and the delivery of their kingdoms into the hands of Israel; and that he had brought the people through the wilderness to the borders of the land of Canaan, and that he should have a distant sight of the land, as after directed: *speak no more unto me of this matter*; intimating it would be in vain, and to no purpose, to solicit such a favour, since it would never be granted; it was a determined point, and he would never recede from it.

Ver. 27. *Get thee up into the top of Pisgah*, &c.] Which was the highest eminence of Mount Nebo, and so a very proper place to take a prospect from; see Deut. xxxii. 49. and xxxiv. 1. *and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward*; to all the four points of the heaven, and to all the four quarters and borders of the land of Canaan: *and behold it with thine eyes*; even the land of Canaan, and particularly Lebanon, though it lay to the north of it, that mountain he had such a desire to see. Moses, though old, his natural sight was very strong, and not in the least dim; and it is not improbable that it might be more than ordinarily increased and assisted at this time: *for thou shalt not go over this Jordan*; into the land of Canaan: this affair, of not being suffered to enter there, Moses frequently takes notice of, no less than four or five times, it being what lay near his heart.

Ver. 28. *But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him*, &c.] Charge him to take the care of the children of Israel, to introduce them into the good land, and put them into the possession of it; encourage him against all fear of his and their enemies, and strengthen him with promises of the presence of God, and of his gracious help and assistance: *for he shall go over before this people*; over the river Jordan, at the head of them, as their leader and commander; a type of Christ, the leader and commander of his people, who as their King goes forth at the head of them, and will introduce them all into his father's kingdom and glory: *and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see*: and no more; not enter into, but Joshua should; and having conquered it, should divide it by lot for an inheritance to them, and their children after them; a type of Christ, in whom and by whom the saints obtain an inheritance by lot, Eph. i. 11.

Ver. 29. *So we abode in the valley over-against Beth-peor*.] In the plains of Moab, over-against a temple built for Baal Peor upon a mountain, so called from that idol, or that idol from the mountain; this is the valley where Moses was buried, ch. xxxiv. 6.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter contains an exhortation to Israel to keep the commands, statutes, and judgments of God, urged from the superior excellency of them to those of all other nations, ver. 1—8. from the manner in which they were delivered, out of the midst of fire, by a voice of words, but no similitude seen, ver. 9—15. and particularly the Israelites are cautioned against idolatry, from the consideration of the goodness of God to them, in bringing them out of Egypt, ver. 16—20. and the rather Moses is urgent upon them to be diligent in their obedience to the laws of God, because he should quickly be removed from them, ver. 21—24. and should they be disobedient to them, it would provoke the Lord to destroy them, or to carry

[b] In Hieremiam, c. 18. 14.
[c] Hist. l. 5. c. 6.
[d] Journey from Aleppo, p. 139, 140.

them captive into other lands, ver. 25—28. though even then, if they repented and sought the Lord, and became obedient, he would be merciful to them, and not forsake them, ver. 29, 30, 31. and they are put in mind again of the amazing things God had done for them, in speaking to them out of fire, and they alive; in bringing them out of another nation, and driving out other nations to make room for them; all which he improves, as so many arguments to move them to obedience to the divine commands, ver. 32—40. and then notice is taken of the three cities of refuge, separated on this side Jordan, ver. 41, 42, 43. and the chapter is concluded with observing, that this is the law, and these the testimonies, Moses declared and repeated to the children of Israel in the country of Sihon and Og, who were delivered into their hands, and their lands possessed by them, which laid them under fresh obligations to yield obedience to God, ver. 44—49.

Ver. 1. *Now therefore hearken, O Israel,* **unto** *the statutes and unto the judgments,* &c.] The laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which they are exhorted to attend to and obey, in consideration of the great and good things the Lord had done for them, ever since they came from Horeb, where they were given them; such as providing for them, and feeding them in the wilderness, preserving them from every hurtful thing, and delivering their enemies into their hands, the two kings of the Amorites, which they are put in mind of in the preceding chapters; hence this begins with *therefore hearken:* for nothing is a greater incentive to obedience than the kindness and goodness of God: *which I teach you for to do that ye may live;* the law was taught by Moses, but the Gospel of grace and truth by Jesus Christ; and it was taught by him, as well as it was to be hearkened to by them, in order to yield obedience to it; for not bare hearing, but doing the law, is the principal thing of any avail; and which was to be done, that they might live; not a spiritual and eternal life, which are not by the works of the law, but are had only from Christ, through his grace and righteousness; but a corporeal life, and a comfortable enjoyment of the blessings of it, and particularly that that might be continued to them: *and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers giveth you:* the land of Canaan, which the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had promised to give to their posterity, and which they were to hold by their obedience to his laws.

Ver. 2. *Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish* ought *from it,* &c.] Neither make new laws of their own, and join them to the law of God, and set them upon a level with it, or prefer them before it; as the Scribes and Pharisees did in Christ's time, who by their traditions made the word of God of none effect, as do the Papists also by their unwritten traditions; nor abrogate nor detract from the law of God, nor make void any part of it: or else the sense is, neither do that which is forbidden, nor neglect that which is commanded; neither be guilty of sins of omission nor commission, nor in any way break the law of God, and teach men so to do by word or by example; not a jot or tittle is either to be put to it, or taken from it, Prov. xxx. 5, 6. Matt. v. 18, 19. Rev. xxii. 18, 19. *that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God, which I command you;* in his name; or which he delivered unto them as his commandments, and which were to be kept just as they were delivered, without adding to them, or taking from them.

Ver. 3. *Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-peor,* &c.] Because of the idolatry the people of Israel fell into by worshipping that idol, being drawn into it by the daughters of Moab and Midian, through the counsel of Balaam, with whom they committed fornication; which led them to the other sin, and both highly provoking to God. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are, "what the Word of the Lord has "done to the worshippers of the idol Peor;" *for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you;* 24,000 persons died on that account; which being a recent thing, fresh in memory, and what they were eye-witnesses of, was a caution to them to avoid the same sins, as it is to us on whom the ends of the world are come, Numb. xxiii. 9. 1 Cor. x. 6, 7, 8, 11.

Ver. 4. *But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God,* &c.] To the worship of the Lord your God, as the Targum of Jonathan; attended the service of the sanctuary, were observant of the laws of God, and walked in his statutes and judgments; did not apostatize from him by idolatry or otherwise, but kept close unto him, and followed him fully: are *alive every one of you this day;* which is very remarkable, that in such a vast number of people not one should die in such a space of time, it being several months since that affair happened; and besides, in that time there was a war with the Midianites, and yet not one person died in that war, nor as it seems by this account by any disease or disaster whatever; see Numb. xxxi. 49.

Ver. 5. *Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the Lord my God commanded me,* &c.] He had faithfully delivered them, without adding to them, or diminishing from them, and had diligently instructed the Israelites in them, had taken pains to lead them into a thorough knowledge and understanding of them: *that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it;* do in like manner as the commandments of the Lord direct to; or that which is *right**; proper and fitting to be done, by doing which they should continue in the land they were about to possess, and therefore when in it were to be careful to perform them; some of them could not be done till they came into it, and all were to be done in it.

Ver. 6. *Keep therefore and do* them, &c.] Observe them, take notice of what is expressed by them, and perform them, both as to matter and manner, as they require: *for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations;* that is, their wisdom and understanding would appear to other nations by their observance of the commands of God: *which shall hear all these statutes;* which they had a report, and got knowledge of by some of the philosophers who travelled into those parts, and by the translation of the

* כן rectum.

Bible into the Greek language: *and say, surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people;* that had such a body of laws, in which they were instructed, and according to which they were governed, and in which they walked; that were so agreeable to reason, truth, justice, and equity; insomuch that so far as they became known they were admired and copied after, both by Greeks and Romans; and hence it was that the oracle[f] declared, that only the Chaldeans and Hebrews were a wise people: the Hebrews came from Chaldea, as Abraham the father of them.

Ver. 7. *For what nation* is there so *great*, &c.] Not so much for their number, for they were the fewest of all people; nor for the largeness of their territories, for the land they were going to possess was but a small country; nor for their wealth and riches, and warlike exploits, though they were not contemptible in either; but for their happy constitution in church and state, being directed and governed in both by laws which came immediately from God himself; for their knowledge of divine things, and for spiritual blessings and privileges they were favoured with, of which a special instance is given: *who hath God so nigh unto them as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon him for?* God was nigh unto them in respect of relation, being their covenant God and Father, and they his sons and daughters, to whom the adoption belonged; and with respect to place and presence, his tabernacle being in the midst of them, the seat of his Shechinah, or divine Majesty, being in the most holy place, between the cherubim over the mercy-seat; and he going before them in the pillar of cloud by day, and in the pillar of fire by night, and who might be applied unto at all times for whatsoever they stood in need of; and who was always near unto them, to give them advice and counsel, help and assistance; to hear their prayers, and communicate unto them things temporal and spiritual they stood in need of: and so the Lord is nigh to all that call upon him in faith, with fervency, and in sincerity and truth; and herein the glory and greatness of a people, as of Israel, lies, in being nearly related to God, a people near unto him, both as to union and communion; and in having a communication of good things from him. God is both a God at hand and afar off, Jer. xxiii. 23; see Psal. cxlv. 18.

Ver. 8. *And what nation* is there so *great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous*, &c.] Founded in justice and equity, and so agreeable to right reason, and so well calculated and adapted to lead persons in the ways of righteousness and truth, and keep them from doing any injury to each other's persons and properties, and to maintain good order, peace, and concord among them: *as all this law which I set before you this day?* which he then repeated, afresh declared, explained and instructed them in; for otherwise it had been delivered to them near 40 years ago. Now there was not any nation then in being, nor any since, to be compared with the nation of the Jews, for the wise and wholesome laws given unto them; no, not the more cultivated and civilized nations, as the Grecians and Romans, who had the advantage of such wise lawgivers as they were accounted, as Solon, Lycurgus, Numa, and others; and indeed the best laws that they had seem to be borrowed from the Jews.

Ver. 9. *Only take heed to thyself*, &c.] To walk according to this law, and not swerve from it: *and keep thy soul diligently*; from the transgressions and breaches of it: *lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen;* either the statutes and judgments set before them, and the circumstances of the delivery of them; or the punishment inflicted on the breakers of them; or the favours bestowed on those that observed them: *and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life;* out of thy mind and memory, and have no place in thy affections, through a neglect and disuse of them: *but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons;* their children and grandchildren, that they may be trained up in them in their youth, and so not depart from them when grown up, and in years; see ch. vi. 7.

Ver. 10. Specially *the day that thou stoodest before the Lord in Horeb*, &c.] Above all things Moses would have them take care not to forget the day the law was given from Mount Sinai, which was so awful and solemn, when they saw the fire, the smoke, the lightning, and heard the thunder and the sound of the trumpet; all which were very shocking and terrifying: and though the men of this generation were but young then, being under twenty years of age, yet many of them were old enough to observe these things, and which one would think should never wear out of their minds: *when the Lord said unto me, gather me the people together;* not the elders of the people only, but the whole body of the people, as he did, and brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai, Exod. xix. 17. *and I will make them hear my words;* the ten commands which were spoken by the Lord himself aloud, with an articulate voice, in the hearing of all the people; and was such a terrible voice of words, that they that heard it entreated it might be spoken to them no more, Heb. xii. 19. *that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth;* to reverence him the lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; to fear to offend him by breaking his laws, so holy, just, and good, and delivered in such an awful and solemn manner: *and that they may teach their children;* the words they had heard; teach them obedience to them, and to be careful not to act contrary to them; since that would bring down judgments upon them, and deprive them of the favour they enjoyed, of which they had seen instances.

Ver. 11. *And ye came near and stood under the mountain*, &c.] At the foot of it, in the lower part of the mountain, as the Targum of Jonathan, and agrees with Exod xix. 17. *and the mountain burnt with fire unto the midst of heaven;* the flame and smoke went up into the middle of the air: *with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness;* which thick darkness was occasioned partly by the smoke, which went up like the smoke of a furnace, and partly by the thick clouds, which were on the mount, and covered the face of the heavens, which were black and tempestuous with them; the Septuagint renders it a *tempest*, Exod. xix. 18. Heb. xii. 18. which denotes the obscurity of the law, and the terrors it works in the minds of men.

[f] Apud Porphyr. in Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 9. c. 10. p. 413.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire,* &c.] For the Lord descended on Mount Sinai in a cloud, in fire, and was in the thick darkness, from whence he delivered out the ten commands: *ye heard the voice of the words;* distinctly and plainly, not only the sound of them, but the words themselves, and so as to understand what was meant by them; *but saw no similitude;* not any likeness of the person speaking, by which they could form any idea of him in their minds, which was purposely done to prevent idolatry: *only* ye heard *a voice;* that was all.

Ver. 13. *And he declared unto you his covenant,* &c.] So the law was called, because it contained, on the part of God, things which he would have done or avoided, to which were annexed promises of long life and happiness in the land he gave them; and they, on their part, agreed to hearken to it, and obey it, Exod. xxiv. 3. 7. *which he commanded you to perform,* even *ten commandments;* which see at large in Exod. xx. 1—17. and in this book afterwards repeated, ch. v. 6—21. *and he wrote them upon two tables of stone;* to denote the durableness of them; the Targum of Jonathan says on tables of sapphire; but it is most likely that they were written on tables of marble, since there were great quantities of it in Mount Sinai; see the note on Exod. xxxi. 18.

Ver. 14. *And the Lord commanded me at that time,* &c.] When the ten commandments were delivered on Mount Sinai, and Moses was ordered to come up to God in the mount: *to teach you statutes and judgments;* laws ceremonial and judicial, besides the ten commands given them: *that ye may do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it;* the land of Canaan, which was on the other side of Jordan, and over which they must go in order to possess it; and when they came there, they were to hold the possession of it by attending to those laws which forbad the sins for which the old inhabitants of it were expelled out of it; and besides these, there were also several laws, both ceremonial and judicial, which were to be peculiarly observed in the land; as well as others they were obliged to do whilst without it.

Ver. 15. *Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves,* &c.] As to keep all the laws given them, so particularly to avoid idolatry: *for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire;* and therefore, as they had nothing that directed and led them, so they had nothing that could be a temptation to them, to make any form or likeness, and worship it.

Ver. 16. *Lest ye corrupt* yourselves, &c.] And not themselves only, but the word and worship of God, by idolatry, than which nothing is more corrupting and defiling, nor more abominable to God: *and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure;* a graven image, in the likeness of any figure, an idea of which they had formed in their minds: *the likeness of male or female;* of a man or a woman; so some of the Heathen deities were in the likeness of men, as Jupiter, Mars, Hercules, Apollo, *&c.* and others in the likeness of women, as Juno, Diana, Venus, *&c.* Some think Osiris and Isis, Egyptian deities, the one male, the other female, are respected; but it is not certain that these were worshipped by them so early.

Ver. 17. *The likeness of any beast that is on the earth,* &c.] As there are scarce any but the likeness of them has been made and worshipped, or the creatures themselves, as the ox by the Egyptians, the sheep by the Thebans, the goat by the Mendesians, and others by different people: *the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air;* as the hawk, and the bird called Ibis, and another by the name of Cneph by the Egyptians, and the eagle by others.

Ver. 18. *The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground,* &c.] As serpents by many; and indeed that creature is introduced into almost all the idolatries of the Heathens, which seems to take its rise from the serpent Satan made use of to deceive our first parents: *the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth;* as the crocodile and hippopotamus, or river-horse, by the Egyptians; and Dagon and Derceto, supposed to be figures in the form of a fish, among the Phœnicians.

Ver. 19. *And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven,* &c.] The starry heaven, which to do in itself is not sinful; and may be lawfully and commendably done, to raise admiration at the wonderful works of God in them, and lead to adore the author of them: but if not guarded against may be ensnaring: *and when thou seest the sun and the moon, and the stars,* even *all the host of heaven;* those bright luminaries, so glorious to behold, and so useful and beneficial to the earth, and the inhabitants of it: *shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them;* should have an impulse on their minds and their hearts, be inclined and drawn to the worship of them, partly by considering their splendour, glory, and usefulness, and partly by the example of others; for the worshipping of these seems to be and is the first kind of idolatry men gave into, at least it was very ancient; see Job xxxi. 26, 27. *which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven;* the sun and the moon by their constant revolutions visit all the parts of the world, and stars are fixed in both hemispheres, so that all nations of the earth receive the benefit and advantage of all these heavenly bodies; but were never designed to be the objects of their worship, as might be learnt from their being divided to them, sometimes one part of the earth enjoying them, and then another, and not present with them all at one and the same time, which, if deities, would have been necessary; see Psal. xix. 6. Matt. v. 45.

Ver. 20. *But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace,* &c.] The allusion is to the trying and melting of metals, and freeing them from dross, by putting them into furnaces strongly heated, some of which are of earth, others of iron; the word, as the Jewish writers [t] observe, signifies such an one in which gold and silver and other things are melted; see Psal. xii. 6. Prov. xvii. 3. even *out of Egypt;* which is here compared to an iron furnace, because of the cruelty with which the Israelites were used in it, the hardships they were put under, and the misery and bondage they were kept in; but out

[t] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Celim. c. 8. sect. 9. & Jarchi in loc.

of all the Lord brought them, as he does all his people sooner or later out of their afflictions, sometimes called the furnace of affliction, Isa. xlviii. 10. where their graces are tried, and they are purged, purified, and refined from their dross and tin. This the Lord did to Israel, he brought them out of their distressed state and condition: *to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day;* to be the Lord's inheritance, as they now were, ch. xxxii. 9. as well as they were quickly to inherit the land of Canaan, for which they were brought out of the land of Egypt; and indeed they were already, even that day, entered on their inheritance, the kingdom of the Amorites being delivered into their hands.

Ver. 21. *Furthermore the Lord was angry with me for your sakes,* &c.] See ch. iii. 26: *and sware that I should not go over Jordan;* this circumstance of swearing is nowhere else expressed: *and that I should not go in unto that good land;* the land of Canaan; he might see it, as he did from Pisgah, but not enter into it: *which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance;* to them and to their children after them.

Ver. 22. *But I must die in this land,* &c.] The land of Moab, in a mountain in it he died, and in a valley there he was buried, ch. xxxii. 50. and xxxiv. 5, 6. *I must not go over Jordan;* this he repeats, as lying near his heart; he had earnestly solicited to go over, but was denied it: *but ye shall go over, and possess that good land;* this he firmly believed and assures them of, relying on the promise and faithfulness of God.

Ver. 23. *Take heed unto yourselves,* &c.] Since he should not be long with them, to advise, instruct, and caution them: *lest ye forget the covenant of the Lord your God, which he made with you;* what that required of them, and what was promised unto them on the performance of it, and what they must expect should they break it, and particularly be so forgetful of it, and the first articles in it, as follows: *and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing which the Lord thy God hath forbidden thee;* a graven image in the likeness of men or women, of any beast on the earth, or fowl in heaven, or fish in the sea.

Ver. 24. *For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire,* &c.] To his enemies; his wrath is like fire to burn up and destroy all that oppose him and break his commands, and especially idolaters; whose sin of all others is the most provoking to him, since it strikes at his being, his honour and glory; wherefore it follows, *even a jealous God;* who is jealous of his honour in matters of worship, and will not suffer his glory to be given to another, nor his praise to graven images, without resenting it or punishing for it.

Ver. 25. *When thou shalt beget children, and children's children,* &c.] Children and grandchildren, and several ages and generations have passed: *and shalt have remained long in the land;* many years and even ages, or have grown old [k] in it: now they were in their infancy, and as such they were about to enter into it; during the times of the judges, they were in their childhood, or youth; in the times of David and Solomon, they were in their manhood; after that, in their decline; and in the times of Jeconiah and his brethren, in their old age, when for their sins they were carried captive: *and shall corrupt* yourselves, *and make a graven image, or the likeness of any thing;* see the note on ver. 16. *and shall do evil in the sight of the Lord thy God, to provoke him to anger;* that sin of idolatry, that God-provoking sin, is chiefly intended.

Ver. 26. *I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day,* &c.] Should they be guilty of such a sin, since they were so strongly and publicly cautioned against it; and even the heaven and the earth were called upon as witnesses of the law being set before them, which so expressly forbids it, ch. xxx. 19. *that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto you go over Jordan to possess it;* though they were now about to go over Jordan and inherit the land of Canaan, yet they would not enjoy it long, but be taken and carried captive out of it; as the ten tribes were by Salmaneser king of Assyria, and the two tribes by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and both for their idolatry and other crimes.

Ver. 27. *And the Lord shall scatter you among the nations,* &c.] As they were by both captivities; the ten tribes were dispersed among the cities of the Medes, and the two tribes throughout the empire of Babylon: *and ye shall be left few in number among the Heathen, whither the Lord shall lead you;* or be *men of number* [l], so few that they might be easily numbered; which intimates that it should be otherwise with them than when in Egypt; there they were multiplied and increased the more they were afflicted, but in these captivities they should be greatly diminished.

Ver. 28. *And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone,* &c.] Idols made by men, cut out of wood and stone; these they should be enticed into the service of, or compelled to serve; which was still more brutish and stupid than to worship the sun, moon, and stars, which were not the works of men's hand, but the glorious works of the eternal God. But since in their captivities they were not subject to idolatry, but were cured of it thereby, another sense of the words is given by some, as by Onkelos and Jonathan, who paraphrase the words of serving the people, that serve idols; but what follows confirms the first sense: *which neither see, nor hear, nor taste, nor smell;* senseless things, which have none of the senses of seeing, hearing, and smelling, nor the faculty of eating, which they need not to support life, of which they are destitute; and therefore it must be monstrous stupidity to worship such lifeless, senseless, objects; see Psal. cxv. 4, 5, 6, 7.

Ver. 29. *But if from thence thou shalt seek the Lord thy God,* &c.] By prayer and supplication, acknowledging and confessing sin, and desiring that God would be gracious and forgive it, and bring them out of their miserable condition; even if out of those depths of affliction and distress, and though scattered about in the world, and in the uttermost parts of it: *thou shalt find him;* to be a God hearing and answering prayer, gracious and merciful, ready to help and deliver: *if*

[k] נושנתם inveteraveritis, Montanus: veteres facti fueritis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; senueritis, Vatablus.

[l] מתי מספר viri numeri, Montanus, Drusius.

they seek him with all their heart and with all their soul; sincerely and affectionately.

Ver. 30. *When thou art in tribulation,* &c.] In a strange land, in the power of a foreign enemy, and used ill: *and all these things are come upon thee;* captivity, thraldom, hard labour, and want of the necessaries of life: even *in the latter days:* in their present captivity for the rejection of the Messiah: *if thou turn to the Lord thy God:* as the Jews will when they are converted and brought to a sense of their sin, and of their need of Christ, and seek to him as their Saviour, as they will do in the latter day, Hos. iii. 5. and 2 Cor. iii. 16. *and shall be obedient unto his voice;* not of the law only, but of the Gospel also, proclaiming peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by him whom they have pierced.

Ver. 31. *For the Lord thy God is a merciful God,* &c.] In Christ, in whom he has proclaimed his name as such, of which Moses had a comfortable view, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7, 8. and therefore could attest it from his own knowledge and experience: *he will not forsake thee;* though in a strange country, but bring them from thence into their own land again, and favour them with his gracious presence in his house and ordinances: *neither destroy thee:* from being a people; and in a very wonderful manner are they preserved among the nations of the earth to this day: *nor forget the covenant of thy fathers, which he sware unto them;* that a Saviour should come and turn away ungodliness from them, and take away their sins; see Rom. xi. 26, 27.

Ver. 32. *For ask now of the days that are past, which were before thee,* &c.] Inquire into and consult the annals of former times, of ages past: *since the day that God created man upon the earth;* trace them quite up to the creation of the world, and men in it: *and ask from the one side of heaven to the other;* traverse the whole globe, and examine the records of every nation in it in both hemispheres: *whether there hath been* any such thing *as this great thing* is, *or hath been heard like it?* whether they can give any account of any thing seen, heard, or done like what follows; suggesting that they cannot furnish out an instance to be mentioned with it.

Ver. 33. *Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of fire,* &c.] None ever heard the voice of God as they did, much less speaking such words as they heard, and still less out of the midst of fire, which was their case, ver. 12, 15. *as thou hast heard, and live?* which was stranger still, when they might have expected they should, and doubtless feared they would be, as it was wonderful they were not, consumed by it.

Ver. 34. *Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of* another *nation,* &c.] As he now had done, namely, the nation of Israel out of the nation of the Egyptians; this he not only had assayed to do, but had actually done it; whereas no such instance like it could be produced, and especially as done in the manner this was: *by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war;* the word *temptations* may be considered as a general word, as Aben Ezra thinks, and may signify the temptations by signs, &c. or the various essays and trials, ways, means, and methods, taken by the Lord to bring about the event; by *signs* may be meant those which were required of Moses, and done by him before the people of Israel, and before Pharaoh, as proofs of his mission from the Lord, Exod. iv. 1—9, 30. and vii. 9; and by *wonders,* the ten plagues of Egypt, which were done by a supernatural and miraculous operation, and were amazing things; see Psal. lxxviii. 11, 12, 13; and by *war,* either the slaying of the first-born, with the destruction of the judges and gods of Egypt, as Aben Ezra; or the Lord's fighting for Israel at the Red sea, as Jarchi; he saved them and destroyed the Egyptians, and shewed himself to be a man of war, Exod. xiv. 14, 25. and xv. 3. *and by a mighty hand and stretched-out arm;* phrases frequently used when this affair is spoken of, and are expressive of the mighty power of God in the above instances, and in the issue of them, bringing Israel out of Egypt; though Aben Ezra interprets it of the pillar of fire and cloud in which the Lord went before them: *and by great terrors;* which the same writer interprets of the drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the sea, and dividing it for Israel; but may be understood not only of the terrors which possessed him and his people then, but at other times, especially at the time of the thunder and lightning, and when they sat in thick darkness, and particularly when all their first-born were slain; see ch. xxvi. 8. *according to all that the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes;* among the men of Egypt, as the above writer, Pharaoh and his courtiers: the above things were done as before them for their terror, so before Israel for their encouragement.

Ver. 35. *Unto thee it was shewed,* &c.] What the Lord did in Egypt: *that thou mightest know that the Lord he* is *God,* there is *none else besides him;* that he is the one only living and true God, and there is no other: this phrase is often used by the Prophet Isaiah, to express the same great article of faith.

Ver. 36. *Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee,* &c.] Thunder is the voice of God, and by which he instructs men in the greatness of his power, Job xxvi. 14. and xl. 9. and Psal. xxix. 3, &c. unless his voice in giving the law, which was for the instruction of Israel, is meant; for that was heard on earth, on Mount Sinai, to which the following refers: *and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire;* on Mount Sinai, which burned with it: *and thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire;* the ten commands, and therefore may well be called a fiery law; see ver. 12, 15, 33.

Ver. 37. *And because he loved thy fathers,* &c.] Not their immediate fathers, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, and entered not into the good land because of their unbelief, but their more remote fathers or ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who had some singular testimonies of the love of God to them. Abraham is called thef riend of God, and Isaac was the son of promise in whom the seed was called; and Jacob is particularly said to be loved by God, when Esau was hated: *therefore he chose their seed after them;* not to eternal life and salvation, but to the enjoyment of external blessings and privileges, to be called by his name, and to set up his name and worship among them, and to be a special people to him above all people on the earth, as to outward favours,

both civil and ecclesiastical: *and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt;* which was done not only in the sight of the Egyptians openly, they not daring to hinder them, as the wonders wrought to oblige them to let them go out, done in the sight of the Israelites as before observed, but in the sight of God, he going before them in the pillar of cloud and fire, smiling upon them the Israelites, and looking with a frown upon the host of the Egyptians, and conducting the people by the angel of his presence.

Ver. 38. *To drive out nations from before thee, greater and mightier than thou* art, &c.] The seven nations of the land of Canaan, which were more in number and mightier in power and strength than they, and particularly the Amorites, who were already driven out and dispossessed of their country, even the kingdoms and nations of Sihon and Og: *to bring thee in to give thee their land* for *an inheritance, as* it is *this day;* referring, as Aben Ezra observes, to the inheritance of the land of the two kings of the Amorites, which the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, were put into the possession of already.

Ver. 39. *Know therefore this day, and consider* it *in thine heart,* &c.] Own and acknowledge it now with thy mouth, and lay it up and consider it in thine heart hereafter, as a truth of the greatest importance to be professed and held fast, and to be thought of and meditated upon continually, and never to be forgotten: *that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath;* that he has made both, and is the possessor and Lord of them, and does what he pleases with them; that the one is his throne, his dwelling-place, and the other his footstool; and that the inhabitants of both are his creatures, and under his authority and command, and he can dispose of them as he pleases: there is *none else;* no God in heaven or in earth beside him.

Ver. 40. *Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments,* &c.] All his laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, partly being under obligation to him for all the great and good things done by him for them before enumerated, and partly and chiefly because he is the Lord God in heaven and in earth, and has a right to command and ought to be obeyed: *which I command thee this day;* in the name of the Lord, and which he repeated, opened, and explained, and charged them afresh to observe; otherwise they were such that had been given long ago: *that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee;* that they and theirs might enjoy temporal mercies, and continue in the land of Canaan, and partake of all the blessings in it, as follows, and of the sanctuary of the Lord, and the privileges of it: *and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for ever;* that is, that they and theirs might live long in the land of Canaan, which the Lord gave for an inheritance for ever, provided they kept his law, and were obedient to his commands; see Deut. vi. 25. Isa. i. 19. and though they have had several interruptions by their captivities, and especially by their present very long one, yet when they shall return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, they shall have their land restored to them again, and shall never more be dispossessed of it.

Ver. 41. *Then Moses severed three cities,* &c.] To be cities of refuge, according to the command of God, Numb. xxxv. 14. this he did when he had conquered the two kingdoms of the Amorites, that God had given them for an inheritance to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, ver. 38. though Jarchi says, and so other Jewish writers, that persons were not received into them until the three cities appointed in the land of Canaan were separated for the like use; see the note on Numb. xxxv. 14. and these were, *on this side Jordan, toward the rising sun;* on that side of the river on which the plains of Moab lay, and the kingdoms of the Amorites, and to the east of Jordan: so Jarchi remarks, "on that side which is on the east of Jordan;" see Josh. xx. 8.

Ver. 42. *That the slayer might flee thither,* &c.] For refuge; the slayer of a man, but not any slayer, but *which should kill his neighbour unawares;* by accident to him, without any design and intention to kill him; ignorantly, as the Septuagint version; and so Onkelos: *and hated him not in times past;* it having never appeared that there had been a quarrel between them, and that the slayer had shewn any enmity to the man slain any time before the fact, or bore a grudge against him, or spite unto him: *and that, fleeing unto one of these cities, he might live;* in peace and safety unto his own death, or unto the death of the high-priest, when he was released from his confinement to the city of his refuge, and might return to his tribe, house, family, and possessions.

Ver. 43. Namely, *Bezer in the wilderness,* &c.] In Josh. xx. 8. it is added *upon the plain;* this perhaps was the wilderness of Moab, in the plains of it, the same with Bozrah, Jer. xlviii. 24. see ch. ii. 8. and 1 Maccab. v. 28. it was in the *plain country of the Reubenites,* or lay in that part of the country which was allotted to them, and which they gave to the Levites, 1 Chron. vi. 78. *and Ramoth in Gilead of the Gadites;* it lay in that part of Mount Gilead, and among the cities of it, which fell to the share of the tribe of Gad, and was by them given to the Levites, 1 Chron. vi. 80. this city is frequently in Scripture called Ramoth-gilead; see 1 Kings iv. 13. and xxii. 20. *and Golan in Bashan, of the Manassites,* or *Gaulon,* as the Septuagint, and from hence the country round about was called Gaulanitis; all Bashan, the kingdom of Og, was given to the half-tribe of Manasseh, and out of it this city was given by them to the Levites, 1 Chron. vi. 71. and appointed a city of refuge: now as these cities were typical of Christ, there may be something observed in the names of them as agreeing with him. *Bezer* signifies a *fortified place;* Christ is the fortress, mountain, and place of defence for his people, and strong hold to which the prisoners of hope turn, the strong tower whither the righteous run and are safe. *Ramoth* signifies *exaltations;* which may point both at the exaltation of Christ in human nature at the right hand of God, and the exaltation of his people by him, who are raised by him from a low estate to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and by whom he is exalted in his person, office, and grace. *Golan* signifies *revealed* or manifested: so Christ has been manifest in the flesh, and is revealed to sinners, when they are called by his grace; to whom they flee

for refuge, and lay hold on him, the hope set before them.

Ver. 44. *And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel.*] Not the law concerning the cities of refuge, but the law of the ten commands repeated in the following chapter; so Jarchi remarks, "this which he should set in order after this section;" as he does in the next chapter, where he repeats in order the ten precepts, and makes observations on the manner of the delivery of them, and urges obedience to them.

Ver. 45. *These are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments,* &c.] The laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, delivered in the following chapters; which are renewed, repeated, and explained: *which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, after they came forth out of Egypt;* in the third month after they came from thence these laws were delivered to him at Mount Sinai, and he declared them to them: and now afresh, near 40 years after, repeated them to them in the plains of Moab.

Ver. 46. *On this side Jordan, in the valley, over-against Beth-peor,* &c.] Where the Israelites abode some time; see ch. iii. 29. *in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon:* which was now conquered, and in the hands of the Israelites: *whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, after they came out of Egypt;* not as soon as, or quickly after they came from thence; for it was but a few months ago since this conquest was made, whereas it was near forty years since they came out of Egypt.

Ver. 47. *And they possessed his land, and the land of Og king of Bashan,* &c.] Seized upon them, and took them as their own, and divided them for an inheritance among two of their tribes and half another: *two kings of the Amorites;* which is more than once observed, that it might be taken notice of that these were of the nations of the Canaanites Israel were to root out, and possess their land: *which were on this side Jordan, toward the sun-rising;* which lands and kingdoms lay to the east of Jordan, on that side of it on which were the plains of Moab, where Moses and Israel now were.

Ver. 48. *From Aroer, which is by the bank of the river Arnon,* &c.] A city of Moab, which was situated on the bank of the river Arnon, that was on the border of Moab, ch. ii. 36. and iii. 12. *even unto Mount Sion, which is Hermon;* the meaning is, that the lands of these two kings conquered by Israel reached from the city Aroer on the river Arnon to Mount Hermon, the one being the southern, the other the northern boundary of them. Here Hermon has another name Sion, and is to be carefully distinguished from Mount Zion near Jerusalem; it lying in a different country, and being written with a different letter in the Hebrew language. In the Septuagint version it is called Seon, and by the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem the mount of snow; see the note on ch. iii. 9.

Ver. 49. *And all the plain on this side Jordan eastward,* &c.] The plains of Moab, on that side of Jordon to the east: *even unto the sea of the plain;* the sea of Sodom, the salt sea: *under the springs of Pisgah;* that rose from Mount Pisgah, the same with Ashdoth-pisgah, ch. iii. 17.

CHAP. V.

IN this chapter Moses, after a short preface, ver. 1—5. repeats the law of the decalogue, or ten commands, with some little variation, ver. 6—21. and then reminds the Israelites of the terrible manner in which it was delivered to them, ver. 22, 23. which put them upon making a request that Moses might be a mediator between God and them, and hear what the Lord had to say, and report it to them; to which they promised obedience, ver. 24—27. and which being agreeable to the Lord was granted, ver. 28—31. and this laid them under a greater obligation to observe the commands of God, and keep them, ver. 32, 33.

Ver. 1. *And Moses called all Israel,* &c.] The heads of the several tribes, and elders of the people, as he had on occasion been used to do; unless it can be thought that at different times he repeated the following laws to separate parties and bodies of them, until they had all heard them: *and said unto them, hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day:* the laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which he was about to repeat, and afresh declare unto them, being what they had all a concern in, and under obligation to regard.

Ver. 2. *The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.*] Which is Sinai, as Aben Ezra observes; it being the same mountain, only it had two tops, which bore these different names; for certain it is that the decalogue after repeated was given at Sinai, and had the nature and form of a covenant; see Exod. xxiv. 7, 8.

Ver. 3. *The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers,* &c.] That is, not with them only, as Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Abendana remark; for certain it is that this covenant was made, or law was given, to the immediate fathers of this present generation of Israelites, whose carcasses had fallen in the wilderness; unless this is to be understood of their more remote ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with whom the covenant of grace was made, or afresh made manifest, especially with the former; when the law, the covenant here spoken of, was not delivered until 430 years after, Gal. iii. 16, 17. *but with us,* even *us, who are all of us here alive this day;* many of them were then present at the giving of the law, and though under twenty years of age, could remember it, and the circumstances of it; and besides, they were the same people to whom it was given, though not consisting wholly of the same individuals.

Ver. 4. *The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount,* &c.] Meaning, not in that free, friendly, and familiar manner, in which he sometimes talked with Moses, of whom this phrase is used, Exod. xxxiii. 11. but publicly, audibly, clearly, and distinctly, or

without the interposition of another; he did not speak to them by Moses, but to them themselves; he talked to them without a middle person between them, as Aben Ezra expresses it: without making use of one to relate to them what he said; but he talked to them directly, personally: *out of the midst of the fire:* in which he descended, and with which the mountain was burning all the time he was speaking; which made it very awful and terrible, and pointed at the terrors of the legal dispensation.

Ver. 5. *I stood between the Lord and you at that time,* &c.] Between the Word of the Lord and you, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; that is, about that time, not at the exact precise time the ten commandments were delivered, for these were spoken immediately to the people; but when the ceremonial law was given, which was ordained by angels, in the hand of a mediator, Gal. iii. 19. and which was at the request of the people as follows, terrified by the appearance of the fire out of which the moral law was delivered: *to shew you the word of the Lord:* not the decalogue, that they heard with their own ears, but the other laws which were afterwards given, that were of the ceremonial and judicial kind: *for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount:* lest they should be consumed by it: and indeed bounds were set about the mount, and they were charged not to break through: *saying:* this word is in connexion with the preceding verse, the Lord's talking out of the midst of the fire, when he said what follows.

Ver. 6. *I am the Lord thy God,* &c.] This is the preface to the ten commandments, and is the same with that in Exod. xx. 2. see the note there; and those commands are here delivered in the same order, and pretty near in the same words, with a little variation, and a few additions; which I shall only observe, and refer to Exod. xx. for the sense of the several laws.

Ver. 12. *Keep the sabbath-day to sanctify it,* &c.] Or observe it, by setting it apart as a time of natural rest, and for the performance of holy and religious exercises; see Exod. xx. 8. where the phrase is a little varied, *remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy:* it having been instituted before: *as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee:* not at Sinai only, for the same might then have been observed of all the rest of the commands, but before the giving of the law, at the first of the manna; see Exod. xvi. 23.

Ver. 14. *Nor thine ox, nor thine ass,* &c.] In Exod. xx. 10. it is only in general said, *nor thy cattle:* here by way of illustration and explanation the ox and the ass are particularly mentioned; the one being used in ploughing ground, and treading out the corn, and the other in carrying burdens; and it is added, *nor any of thy cattle;* as their camels, or whatever else they were wont to use in any kind of service; they were none of them to do any kind of work on the sabbath-day. The following clause also is not used before, which expresses the end of this institution: *that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may have rest as well as thee:* which if the cattle had not rest, they could not have, being obliged to attend them at the plough or elsewhere; and this respects not only hired, but bond servants and maidens.

Ver. 15. *And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt,* &c.] Even a bond-servant; for Egypt was an house of bondage, and there the Israelites were made to serve in hard bondage; of which they are reminded, that their hearts might be touched with it, and inclined to shew pity to persons in somewhat similar circumstances; calling to mind how sweet a little rest would have been unto them when in Egypt: *and that the Lord thy God brought thee out thence, through a mighty hand and by a stretched-out arm;* signifying that their deliverance from their state of bondage was not owing to themselves, nor to any creature, but to the mercy and kindness of God, and to his almighty power; and therefore they were under the greatest obligations to observe any command and institution of his he should think fit to make; and particularly this of the sabbath, which was made on that account, as follows: *wherefore the Lord thy God commandeth thee to keep the sabbath-day;* in commemoration of their rest from Egyptian bondage.

Ver. 16. *Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee,* &c.] And is the first commandment with promise, as the apostle observes, Eph. vi. 2, 3. with a promise of long life and happiness in the land of Canaan, as follows: *that thy days may be prolonged;* see Exod. xx. 12. here it is added, *and that it may go well with thee;* and which the apostle also has in the place referred to: *in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;* the land of Canaan; which the same apostle explains to a greater latitude, *that thou mayest live long on the earth;* applying it to Christians under the Gospel dispensation, whether Jews or Gentiles.

Ver. 17, 18, 19, 20. *Thou shalt not kill,* &c.] The following commands begin with the copulative *and,* different from the manner in which they are expressed, Exod. xx. which joins these together, and them with the preceding ones; hence the law is by some said to be one copulative, and may serve to illustrate a passage in Jam. ii. 10.

Ver. 21. *Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife,* &c.] Here a neighbour's wife is put before his house, different from Exod. xx. 17. and *his field* is added, which with what follows take in every thing that is a man's property; and which is not to be desired or coveted in an unlawful manner by another, and much less should any means be made use of to deprive him of it; but *lust* is the thing intended and prohibited, be it after what it may, which is another man's: see Matt. v. 28. Rom. vii. 7. of a man's field, see Isa. v. 8. Mic. ii. 2.

Ver. 22. *These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount,* &c.] The above ten words or commands, which were spoken so audibly and loudly by the Lord himself on Mount Sinai, that the whole congregation of the people of Israel heard them: *out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness;* in which the Lord was; see ch. iv. 11. with *a great voice, and he added no more:* ceased speaking; after he had delivered the ten commands, he said no more at that time. The Targum of Jonathan is, "with "a great voice which ceased not." It ceased not until all were delivered, and then it did; it was a continued voice, yet clear and distinct: *and he wrote them in*

two tables of stone: marble stone, as the Targum of Jonathan; which is much more likely than what the paraphrase has on ch. iv. 13. this is an emblem of the duration of the law: *and delivered them unto me:* to Moses, and by him to be delivered to the people, who though they had heard them would be apt to forget them; and therefore they were written, that they might read them, and meditate on them, and be careful to keep them.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness,* &c.] The thick darkness, where God was, and with which the mountain was covered, Exod. xx. 21. *for the mountain did burn with fire:* which is a reason both why the Lord spoke out of the midst of the fire, the mountain on which he descended burning with it; and also for his speaking out of the midst of darkness, because not only a thick cloud covered the mountain, but it was altogether on a smoke, which ascended as the smoke of a furnace, Exod. xix. 16, 18. *that ye come near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes and your elders:* or wise men, as the Targum of Jonathan; by which it appears, that not only the common people were affrighted at what they heard and saw on Mount Sinai, but those of the first rank and eminence among them, who were the most famous for their authority and wisdom.

Ver. 24. *And ye said, behold, the Lord our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness,* &c.] In descending on Mount Sinai in the manner he did, and giving the law from thence with such solemnity; for there was a glory in the ministration of it, as the apostle argues 2 Cor. iii. 7—11. it being delivered with so much majesty, and such a glorious apparatus attending it; see Deut. xxxiii. 2. Aben Ezra interprets this of the appearance of fire in which the Lord was, *and his greatness,* of the thunders and lightnings, and the voice of the trumpet: *and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire;* the ten words, as the same interpreter rightly notes, which were vocally and audibly expressed out of the fire: *we have seen this day, that God doth talk with man, and he liveth:* they had proof of it in themselves; God had been talking with them out of the fire, and yet it did not reach and consume them, but they were still alive.

Ver. 25. *Now therefore why should we die?* &c.] Since we are now alive, and have so wonderfully escaped the danger we were exposed unto, let us be careful that we are not liable to it again: *for this great fire will consume us;* if it continues, and we are exposed to it: perhaps some of them might remember the fire that burnt in the uttermost parts of the camp at Taberah, and the destruction of Korah and the 250 men with him by fire, Numb. xi. 1. and xvi. 35. *if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die;* for it was such a voice of words they could not endure as to the matter of them, and therefore entreated the word might not be spoken to them any more; it being the killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death; and the manner in which it was delivered was so terrible, that they concluded they could not live, but must die if they heard it again; and imagined that if the fire continued, the flames of it would spread and reach them, and they would not be able to escape them.

Ver. 26. *For who* is there *of all flesh,* &c.] What man was there in any age, that was ever heard of or can be named: *that hath heard the voice of the living God;* who lives in and of himself, and is the author and giver of life to all his creatures, whereby he is distinguished from and is opposed unto the lifeless deities of the Gentiles; and which makes him and his voice heard the more awful and tremendous, and especially as *speaking out of the midst of the fire:* which was the present case: *as we have, and lived?* of this there never was the like instance; for though some had seen God and lived, as Jacob did, and therefore called the name of the place where he saw him Penuel, Gen. xxxii. 30. and Moses had heard the voice of the angel of the Lord out of a bush, which seemed to be burning, and was not consumed, Exod. iii. 2, 4. yet none ever heard the voice of the Lord out of real fire, and particularly expressing such words as he did, but the Israelites. Zoroastres, the founder of the Magi among the Persians, and of their religion, seems to have had respect to this, and to have applied falsely this to himself, which belonged to Moses and the people of Israel; for it is said[a], "one reason the Persians have fire in so much "veneration is, because they say that Zoroastres, "being caught up to heaven, did not see God, but "heard him speaking with him out of the midst of "fire."

Ver. 27. *Go thou near,* &c.] To the mount, and to God on it: *and hear all that the Lord our God shall say:* for they supposed, by the continuance of the Lord on the mount, and the fire burning on it, that he had more to say, which they were not averse to hear; but desired it might be not immediately delivered to them, but by the means of Moses; the sound of the words, and the sight of the fire, being so terrible to them: *and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee;* they did not doubt, knowing the faithfulness of Moses, his declaring all unto them that should be told him by the Lord; and they were desirous that he should, they did not want to have any thing withheld from them, only they could not bear to see and hear things immediately from the Lord: *and we will hear it and do it;* hearken to it, and receive it, as the word of God, and not man, and yield a ready and cheerful obedience, even to every thing that should be required; see Exod. xx. 19. and xxiv. 3—7.

Ver. 28. *And the Lord heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me,* &c.] Not only in a general way, as he hears and knows all that is spoken by men; for there is not a word on the tongue, formed upon it, and uttered by it, but what is altogether known to him; but in a special and particular manner observed, took notice of, approved, and was well-pleased with what these people said: *and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken unto thee;* not only heard the sound of them, but took notice of the sense and meaning of them, and listened to them with pleasure and delight: *they have well said all that they have spoken;* express-

[a] Hyde Hist. Relig. Vet. Pers. c. 8. p. 160.

ing such an awe and reverence of the divine Majesty, desiring to have a mediator between God and them, and purposing and promising to hearken to and obey whatsoever he should command by him.

Ver. 29. *O that there were such an heart in them,* &c.] Not that there is properly speaking such volitions and wishes in God; but, as Aben Ezra observes, the Scripture speaks after the language of the children of men; and may be considered as upbraiding them with want of such an heart, and with weakness to do what they had promised; and, at most, as approving of those things they spoke of as grateful to him, and profitable to them: the words may be rendered, *who will give*[t] *that they had such an heart:* not to me, but to them, as Aben Ezra notes; they can't give it to themselves, nor can any creature give it to them; none but God can, and therefore they ought to have prayed to him to give them an heart to hearken and do; agreeably to which is the Arabic version, "it is to be wished "by them, that such an heart would continue with "them;" which they by their language signified was in them: *that they would fear me;* which is not naturally in the heart of man, is a gift of God, a part of the covenant of grace, is implanted in regeneration, and is no inconsiderable branch of it; it is opposed to pride, and is consistent with faith and joy, and is increased by views of the grace and goodness of God, and is a distinguishing character of a good man: *and keep all my commandments always:* not only one, but all, and not only at some certain times, but continually; and which are to be kept in faith from a principle of love, with a view to the glory of God, and in the strength of Christ; and to this the fear of God is necessary, for where there is no fear of God, there is no regard to his commandments; but where there is a reverential fear of God, there are faith, hope, love, and every other grace; yea, the spirit, the author of all, who is in the saints, to enable them to walk in the statutes of the Lord, and to keep his judgments and do them; and such keep the commandments of God, not from a slavish fear, but from a sense of divine goodness: *that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever;* for the fear of God, and the keeping of his commandments, issue in the good of men, in their own good, their inward peace, and spiritual welfare; in the good of others, their neighbours, servants, and children, by way of example and instruction; and even in the public peace and prosperity of a nation in which they dwell: not that these things are meritorious of eternal life, but are what are approved of by the Lord, and are grateful to him; which is the chief view in the expression of the text.

Ver. 30. *Go say to them, get you into your tents again.*] Which they had left, being brought by Moses, at the direction of God, to the foot of Mount Sinai, to receive the law from his mouth; this being done, they are ordered to return to their tents again, to their families, wives, and children.

Ver. 31. *But as for thee, stand thou here by me,* &c.] On the mount by him, whither he was called up; Moses was not pemitted to go to his tent when the children of Israel were, but was ordered to wait upon the Lord to receive instructions from him, which he was to communicate to the people, being a kind of a mediator between God and them, as they requested, and which was granted them: *and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments;* all laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which belong to them as men, as in a church-state, and members of a body-politic: *which thou shalt teach them, that they may do* them; for all doctrine is in order to practice, without which all instructions, and theoretical notions, signify little: and these they were more especially to do, and some of them peculiarly, *in the land which I give them to possess it;* the land of Canaan, and which laid on them no small obligation to do the commandments of God; since of his free favour and good will, and as a pure gift of his, he had bestowed upon them a land flowing with milk and honey, into which he was just now about to bring them; as nothing can more strongly engage souls to a cheerful obedience to the service of God, whether in private or in public, than the consideration of the great and good things which God of his rich grace bestows upon them, and has promised to them, and prepared for them, and will quickly put them into the possession of; and upon such an account Moses presses the observance of the commands of God in the following verses.

Ver. 32. *Ye shall observe to do therefore as the Lord your God doth command you,* &c.] Observe every precept, as to matter and manner, which the Lord has commanded, and that under a sense of the great obligations laid on them by him, in giving them freely so good a land to possess: *you shall not turn to the right hand or to the left;* but walk in the way of the commandments of God, and not depart from them at all, but follow the Lord in his own ways fully. The phrase is expressive of a strict and close attention to the word of God, without deviating from it in the least; for every sin, which is a transgression of some command of God or another, is a going out of the way that directs unto; see Isa. xxx. 21.

Ver. 33. *Ye shall walk in all the ways which the Lord your God hath commanded you,* &c.] None are to be avoided or departed from on any consideration whatever; see Psal. cxix. 6. an instance of this we have in Zacharias and Elizabeth, Luke i. 6. *that ye may live;* corporeally, comfortably, in all the outward enjoyments of life needful for them, particularly in the possession of the land of Canaan, and the benefits of it; for these promises of life upon obedience seem to reach no further, unless as types and emblems of what is enjoyed through the obedience and righteousness of Christ, as the following phrases shew: *and* that it may *be well with you, and* that *ye may prolong* your *days in the land which ye shall possess;* the land of Canaan; though the Jewish writers[u] carry it further, even to heaven and eternal happiness; and so may we in the sense before given.

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[t] מי יתן quis det, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus. Vatablus, Drusius; quis dabit, Piscator.

[u] Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 27. p. 418.

CHAP. VI.

IN this chapter Moses proceeds on in his exhortation* to the people of Israel, to attend to the commandments of God, that it might be well with them, ver. 1, 2, 3. and begins with a principal and fundamental article of religion, which deserved their first and chief regard, the unity of God, and the love of him, ver. 4, 5. which they were carefully to instruct their children in, and ever to be mindful of themselves, ver. 6—9. and when they were come into the land of Canaan, and into a plentiful enjoyment of all good things in it, they are exhorted to be careful not to forget the Lord, their kind benefactor; but to fear him, serve him, and not go after other gods, since he is jealous of his honour and worship, ver. 10—15. and not to tempt him, as they had done, but diligently keep his commandments, that it might be well with them in that land, ver. 16—19. and when their children inquired the reason and meaning of such testimonies, statutes, and judgments, that were enjoined them, they were to give them the history of their case in Egypt, their deliverance from thence, the wonders that were wrought for them, and the introduction of them into the good land of Canaan; and to let them know that these commands were some of them in commemoration of these blessings; and by these they were laid under obligation to regard them all, and the rather, since they were not only for the glory of God, but for their own good, ver. 20—25.

Ver. 1. *Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, &c.*] Not the ten commandments repeated in the preceding chapter, but all others, whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial, afterwards declared; for what Moses now did was only to give a repetition and fresh declaration of such laws as he had before received, and delivered to the people; and so the Targum of Jonathan thus paraphrases this clause, "this is a declaration of the commandments, statutes, "and judgments:" *which the Lord your God commanded to teach you*; that is, which he commanded him, Moses, to teach them, though not fully expressed, as may be learned from ch. iv. 1, 5. and v. 31. *that ye might do them in the land whither ye go to possess it*: this is often observed, to imprint upon their minds a sense of their duty, even of obedience to the laws of God, which they were carefully and diligently to perform in the land of Canaan they were going into, and by which they were to hold their possession of it.

Ver. 2. *That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, &c.*] Being taught to know the greatness of his being, and the nature of his mind and will, and the manner of his worship; and not with a slavish fear, but with a filial one, a reverential affection for God; being instructed in their duty, as of children, to their God and father; see ch. v. 29. *to keep all his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee*: not in his own name, but in the name, and by the authority of God, whose minister and messenger he was; and all, having the stamp of divine authority on them, were to be observed and kept, and not one to be neglected or departed from: *thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life*: a man and his children, and grandchildren; he was to take care that they kept all the commandments of the Lord as long as he lived, and had any concern with them: *and that thy days may be prolonged*; long life being reckoned a very great outward mercy; a long enjoyment of, and continuance in the land of Canaan, is chiefly designed, which is usually expressed when this is observed; see ch. iv. 26, 40. and v. 16, 33.

Ver. 3. *Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it, &c.*] Or them, the commandments given them: *that it may be well with thee*: in body and estate: *and that ye may increase mightily*: not only in wealth and riches, but chiefly in numbers: *as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee*; a promise of increase of numbers was frequently made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; as that their seed should be as the stars of heaven, and as the dust of the earth, and the sand on the sea-shore, innumerable; see Gen. xv. 5. and xxii. 17. and xxvi. 4. and xxviii. 14. and this especially *in the land that floweth with milk and honey*; a very common periphrasis of the land of Canaan, because of the plenty of good things in it; see Exod. iii. 8.

Ver. 4. *Hear, O Israel, &c.*] These are the words of Moses, stirring up the people to an attention to what he was about to say of this great and momentous article, the unity of God, to prevent their going into polytheism and idolatry. From one of the words here used, the Jews call this section Kiriath-shema, which they oblige themselves to read twice a day, morning and evening*; the last letter of the first word in this verse, *Shema*, hear, and the last letter of the last word in it, *Echad*, one, are greater than ordinary; which seems designed to excite the attention to what is contained in this passage: *the Lord our God is one Lord*: the doctrine of which is, that the Lord, who was the covenant God and Father of his people Israel, is but one Jehovah; he is Jehovah, the Being of beings, a self-existent Being, eternal and immutable; and he is but one in nature and essence; this appears from the perfection of his nature, his eternity, omnipotence, omnipresence, infinity, goodness, self-sufficiency, and perfection; for there can be but one eternal, one omnipotent, one omnipresent, one infinite, one that is originally and of himself good; one self, and all sufficient, and perfect Being; and which also may be concluded from his being the first cause of all things, which can be but one; and from his relations to his creatures, as their King, ruler, governor, and lawgiver. And for this purpose these words are cited in Mark xii. 29, 30. but then they no ways contradict the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the

* Misn. Beracot, c. 1. sect. 1, 2.

unity of the divine essence, the Father, Word, and Holy Spirit, which three are one; the one God, the one Jehovah, as here expressed; see 1 John v. 7. and so the ancient Jews understood this passage. In an ancient book of theirs it is said [w] Jehovah, Elohenu, Jehovah (*i. e.* Jehovah, our God, Jehovah); these are the three degrees with respect to this sublime mystery; *in the beginning God* (Elohim) *created the heavens and the earth*; and again [x], Jehovah, Elohenu, Jehovah, they are one; the three forms (modes or things) which are one; and elsewhere [y] it is observed, there are two, and one is joined to them, and they are three; and when the three are one, he says to (or of) them, these are the two names which Israel heard, Jehovah, Jehovah, and Elohenu (our God) is joined unto them; and it is the seal of the ring of truth, and when they are joined they are one in one unity; which is illustrated by the three names the soul of man is called by, the soul, spirit, and breath; and elsewhere they say [z] the holy blessed God, and his Shechinah, are called one; see John x. 30.

Ver. 5. *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, &c.] Which is the first and chief commandment in the law, the sum and substance of the first table of it; and includes in it, or at least has connected with it, knowledge of God, esteem of him, delight in him, faith and trust in him, fear and worship of him, and obedience to him, which when right springs from it. God is to be loved because of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hand, of nature, providence, and grace; and because of the relations he stands in to men, and especially to his own people; and because of his peculiar love to them; and, indeed, he is to be loved by all men for his care of them, and blessings of goodness bestowed on them; the manner in which this is to be done follows: *with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might*; with a superlative love, above all creatures whatever; with the whole of the affections of the heart, with great fervency and ardour of spirit, in the sincerity of the soul, and with all the strength of grace a man has, with such love that is as strong as death. Jarchi interprets loving God with all the heart, that is, with thy heart not divided about God, a heart not divided between God and the creature; *all thy might* he interprets of mammon or substance; and, indeed, that is one way in which men may shew their love to God, by laying out their substance in his service, and for the support of his cause and interest in the world. Aben Ezra by the *heart* understands knowledge, and by the *soul* the spirit of man that is in his body, and by *might* perfect love in the heart.

Ver. 6. *And these words, which I command thee this day*, &c.] To hearken to, observe, and take notice of, that God is one, and is to be loved in the strongest manner that possibly can be: *shall be in thine heart*; on the table of the heart, as the Targum of Jonathan; see 2 Cor. iii. 3. be cordially received, have a place in the affections of the heart, and be retained in mind and memory.

Ver. 7. *And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children*, &c.] Care and diligence are to be used, and pains taken, to instruct children, as soon as they are capable, in the knowledge of God, and of his commandments; that they are to love him, fear him, serve, and worship him; this is to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, Eph. vi. 4. it may be rendered *thou shalt whet* or *sharpen them* [a], the words or commandments; it is expressive of diligence and industry in teaching, by frequent repetition of things, by inculcating them continually into their minds, endeavouring to imprint them there, that they may be sharp, ready, and expert in them: *and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house*; at the time of meals, or at leisure hours, or even when employed in any business in the house which will admit of it; every opportunity should be taken to instil the knowledge of divine things into their tender minds: *and when thou walkest by the way*: in a journey, and any of his children with him; or for diversion, in the garden, field, or vineyard; occasion may be taken on sight of any of the works of creation to lead into a discourse concerning God, his nature, perfections, and works, and the obligations his creatures lie under to love, fear, and serve him: *and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up*; at the time of going to bed, and rising from it; which, as they are seasons of prayer to God, may be improved in instruction of children.

Ver. 8. *And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand*, &c.] As a man ties any thing to his hand for a token, that he may remember somewhat he is desirous of; though the Jews understand this literally, of binding a scroll of parchment, with this section and others written in it, upon their left hand, as the Targum of Jonathan here interprets the hand: *and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes*; and which the same Targum interprets of the Tephilim, or phylacteries, which the Jews wear upon their foreheads, and on their arms, and so Jarchi; of which see the note on Matt. xxiii. 5.

Ver. 9. *And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thine house, and on thy gates*.] To put them in mind of them when they went out and came in, that they might be careful to observe them; this the Jews take literally also, and write in a scroll of parchment this section with some passages; and, as the Targum of Jonathan here, fix them in three places, over-against the bed-chamber, upon the posts of the house, and on the gate at the right hand of it; and this is what they call the Mezuzah; and the account given of it is this. In a parchment prepared for the purpose, they write the words in Deut. vi. 4. to the 9th, and ch. xi. 13. to the 20th, and then roll up the parchment, and write on it *Shaddai*; and put it either into a cane (or reed), or else into a like hollow piece of wood, and so fasten it to the wall on the posts of the door at the right hand of entrance; and thus, as often as they go in and out, they make it a part of their devotion to touch this parchment, and kiss it [b].

Ver. 10. *And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall*

[w] Zohar in Gen. fol. 1, 3.
[x] Ib. in Exod. fol. 18. 3, 4.
[y] Ib. in Numb. fol. 67. 3.
[z] Tikkune Zohar, Correct. 47. fol. 86. 2.

[a] ושננתם & acues ea, Vatablus, Piscator.
[b] Buxtorf. Synag. Jud. c. 31. p. 582, &c. Leo Modena's History of the Rites and Customs of the Jews, par. 1. c. 2. p. 5, 6.

have brought thee into the land, &c.] The land of Canaan, on the borders of which they now were, and were just going into: *which he sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee:* of his own free favour and good will, without any merit and desert of theirs, and in which would be found *great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not;* large and capacious, delightfully situated, well built, and strongly fortified, without any pains or expense of theirs; all ready for them to take possession of, and dwell in; and so should no longer reside in tents or booths, as they had for forty years past, but in spacious and noble cities.

Ver. 11. *And houses full of all good things which thou filledst not,* &c.] Not only full of good, convenient, and rich household furniture, but of the fruits of the earth, of corn, and wine, and oil, and also, perhaps, of gold and silver: *and wells digged which thou diggedst not;* which in those hot and dry countries were in much esteem, and of great worth; see Gen. xxvi. 18—22. *vineyards and olive-trees which thou plantedst not;* which Canaan abounded with much more than Egypt, where there were but few vines and olive-trees, though of both these there were more where the Israelites lived than elsewhere; see the note on Gen. xlvii. 11. and these therefore might be such as they had seen in Egypt, in that part of it in which they dwelt, Goshen, which was in the Heracleotic nome, and that Strabo [u] says only produced perfect olives, and fruit-bearing trees, but the rest of Egypt wanted oil; and this nome is the same which the Arabs now call the province of Fium, of which Leo Africanus [w] says, it produces a large quantity of olives; so that this might be observed for the encouragement of the Israelites: *when thou shalt have eaten and be full;* having such plenty of good things the land would furnish them with.

Ver. 12. Then *beware lest thou forget the Lord,* &c.] To love, fear, and worship him, and keep his commands; creature-enjoyments being apt to get possession of the heart, and the affections of it; see Prov. xxx. 9. *which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;* into a land abounding with all the above good things, and therefore under the highest obligations to remember the Lord and his kindnesses, and to serve and glorify him: see Exod. xx. 2.

Ver. 13. *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him,* &c.] Serve him through fear; not through slavish fear, a fear of hell and damnation; but through filial fear, a reverential affection for that God that had brought them out of a state of bondage into great and glorious liberty, out of Egypt into Canaan's land, out of a place of misery into a land of plenty; and therefore should fear the Lord and his goodness, and from such a fear of him serve him, in every part of worship, public and private, enjoined; this passage Christ refers to in Matt. iv. 10. *and shalt swear by his name;* when they made a covenant with any, or were called to bear a testimony for the decision of any controversy which could not be otherwise finished; or whenever they took an oath on any account, which should never be taken rashly or on any trivial account, and much less falsely; it should be taken not in the name of any idol, or of any other but the true and living God; the Targum of Jonathan is, "in the name of the Word of "the Lord, in truth ye shall swear."

Ver. 14. *Ye shall not go after other gods,* &c.] To serve and worship them, and swear by them; and which indeed are no gods, only nominal and fictitious ones; idols which are nothing in the world, and ought to have no veneration and adoration given them; to go after them is to worship them, and this is to depart from the true God, and go a whoring after false deities: *of the gods of the people which are round about you;* the gods of the Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, Philistines, and Egyptians; all of which had their peculiar deities.

Ver. 15. *For the Lord thy God is a jealous God among you,* &c.] He was near to them, in the midst of them, his tabernacle being placed between their camps; and was a God jealous of his honour and glory in matters of worship, and would resent any affront given him in that way: *lest the anger of the Lord thy God be kindled against thee;* there being nothing more apt to stir up his wrath than idolatry: *and destroy thee from off the face of the earth;* suffer them to be carried captive out of their own land, and to be scattered among the nations of the world, and be utterly destroyed.

Ver. 16. *Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God,* &c.] By striving with him or against him, by murmuring at or complaining of his providential dealings with them, or by requiring a sign of him, or miracles to be done by him; this is another passage used by Christ to repel the temptations of Satan, Matt. iv. 7. *as ye tempted him in Massah;* a place so called from the Israelites tempting the Lord there, Exod. xvii. 7. the Targum of Jonathan adds, with ten temptations; see Numb. xiv. 21.

Ver. 17. *You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God,* &c.] Not only the ten commands, but all others: *and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee;* those of a judicial and ceremonial kind.

Ver. 18. *And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] And what is such appears from the declaration of his mind and will in the commandments he has given, and obeying which is therefore doing what is right and good; for his commandment is holy, just, and good, being agreeable both to his nature and will, Rom. vii. 12. *that it may be well with thee;* as it is with those that fear God, and keep his commandments: *and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers;* to give to them and to their posterity, even the land of Canaan; but if they did not what was right and good in the sight of God, they might expect to be kept out of it, as their immediate parents were, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness.

Ver. 19. *To cast out all thine enemies from before thee,* &c.] This the Lord promised, and as it seems with an oath, that he would do for them; drive out their enemies, and make way for the settlement of

[u] Geograph. l. 17. p. 556.

[w] Descriptio Africæ, l. 8. p. 722.

them in their country: *as the Lord hath spoken*: see Gen. xv. 18, 19, 20. and xxii. 17. Exod. xxiii. 28.

Ver. 20. *And when thy son asketh thee in time to come*, &c.] Or *to-morrow*[x]; that is, in after-times, as Jarchi interprets it; any time after this, and particularly after they were come into the land of Canaan, when the several laws, statutes, and ordinances appointed, would take place and be obeyed: *what mean the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the Lord our God hath commanded you?* what is the reason of the various rites, customs, and usages, the observance of which is directed to, such as the feasts of passover, pentecost, tabernacles, sacrifices, and other duties of religion?

Ver. 21. *Then shalt thou say unto thy son*, &c.] In order to lead him into the spring and original of them, and to acquaint him with the goodness of God, which laid them under obligation to observe them: *we were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt*; were brought into bondage and slavery to Pharaoh king of Egypt, into whose country their ancestors came, and where they resided many years, and at length were reduced to the utmost servitude and misery: *and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand*; by the exertion of his mighty power, which the Egyptians and their king could not withstand, as a token of his care and kindness to us; by the ties of which we are bound in gratitude to observe his commands. The Targum of Jonathan is, "the Word of "the Lord brought us, *&c.*" and it was Christ the Son of God that was from first to last concerned in that affair, even from the appearance to Moses in the bush to Israel's coming out of Egypt.

Ver. 22. *And the Lord shewed signs and wonders, great and sore*, &c.] Meaning the ten plagues, which were signs of the power of God, marvellous works, great, above the power of nature, and very sore or *evil*[y]; very distressing to the Egyptians; for they came and lay heavy *upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes*: upon the king, his courtiers, and the whole land, and which were done publicly in the sight of the people of Israel, as well as the Egyptians; and there were some then living, though at that time when wrought under twenty years, who saw with their own eyes what were done to them, and could never forget them. Here also the Targum of Jonathan has it, "and the Word of the Lord sent "signs, *&c.*"

Ver. 23. *And he brought us out from thence*, &c.] By means of those miraculous plagues, even out of a state of bondage and misery: and in order *that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers*; to bring them into the land of Canaan, give it to them, and put them in the possession of it; and so fulfil his promise and his oath made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Ver. 24. *And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes*, &c.] Some of which were designed on purpose to commemorate the wonderful deliverance out of Egypt, as particularly the passover; and all of them they were obliged in gratitude to obey, in consideration of such great favours bestowed upon them: *to fear the Lord our God, for our good always*; as it is always for the good of men, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, to fear the Lord; for there is no want to them that fear him, nor will the Lord withhold good things from them; see Psal. xxxiv. 9, 10. *that he might preserve us alive, as it is at this day*; in bodily health and strength, and in the enjoyment of the good land, and all the blessings and benefits of it.

Ver. 25. *And it shall be our righteousness*, &c.] Or a mercy, benefit, and blessing to us; or this shall be reckoned our righteousness, and that by which we shall be justified: *if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us*; in order to have such a justifying righteousness, a man must keep all the commandments of God, not one excepted; and that perfectly, without the least breach of them in thought, word, or deed; and that before the Lord, in his sight, not as it may appear to a man himself, or to others, but as it appears to God, who sees the heart, and weighs all actions; and a man must keep them in the manner the Lord has commanded, even with all his heart, soul, and strength, as in ver. 5. and this is not possible for a sinful man to do; and therefore righteousness cannot be by the law. Only Christ could thus keep all the commandments of God, and his obedience is our righteousness; and he only is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes, and to him we must seek for it.

C H A P. VII.

IN this chapter the Israelites are exhorted to destroy the seven nations of the land of Canaan, when they entered into it, and to make no alliances with them of any kind, nor suffer any remains of idolatry to continue, ver. 1—5. to observe which, and other commands of God, they are urged from the consideration of their being freely chosen of God above all other people, and of their being redeemed out of the house of bondage, and of the Lord's being a covenant-keeping God to them, ver. 6—11. and it is promised them, for their further encouragement to keep the commands of God, that they should have an increase of all temporal good things, and no evils and calamities should come upon them, ver. 12—16. and, lest they should be disheartened at the numbers and might of their enemies, they are put in mind of what God had done for them in Egypt, and of what he had promised to do for them now, ver. 17—20. and they are assured that the nations should be cast out before them by little and little, until they were utterly destroyed, ver. 21—24. and the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to destroy their images, and not

[x] מחר cras, V. L. Paguinus, Montanus.

[y] רעים & pessima, V. L. Junius & Tremellius; & noxia, Tigurine version; & mala, Paguinus, Montanus, Piscator.

admit any thing of that sort to be brought into their houses, ver. 25, 26.

Ver. 1. *When the Lord thy God shall bring thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it,* &c.] The land of Canaan they were just now going into to take possession of; their introduction into which is here, as in many other places, ascribed not to themselves, or their leaders, but to the Lord as their covenant-God: *and hath cast out many nations before thee;* even all that were in it, the seven following: *the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites;* the Canaanites were a particular nation in the land of Canaan, which had their name from Canaan himself; the rest were called from several sons of his; see Gen. x. 15, 16, 17. the country of the Gergasenes, the same with the Girgashites, continued its name unto the times of Christ, Matt. viii. 28. *seven nations greater and mightier than thou:* more in number, and more robust in body, some being of a gigantic stature; there were ten of these nations in Abraham's time, three of them were since sunk or swallowed up among the rest, the Kenites, and Kenizites, and the Rephaim; for instead of the Kadmonites the Hivites are here put, which seem to be the same.

Ver. 2. *And when the Lord thy God shall deliver them before thee,* &c.] Into their hands: *thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy them;* men, women, and children; which was ordered not merely to make way and room for the people of Israel to inherit their land, but as a punishment for capital crimes they had been guilty of, such as idolatry, incest, murder, *&c.* wherefore though they were reprieved for a while for Israel's sake, till their time was come to possess the land, they were at length righteously punished; which observed, abates the seeming severity exercised upon them: *thou shalt make no covenant with them:* to dwell in their cities and houses, and enjoy their lands and estates, on any condition whatever; and though they did make a league with the Gibeonites, that was obtained by fraud, they pretending not to be of the land of Canaan, but to come from a very distant country: *nor shew mercy unto them;* by sparing their lives, bestowing any favours upon them, or giving them any help and assistance when in distress: the Jews extend this to all other Heathen nations besides these seven; wherefore, if an Israelite, as Maimonides[z] says, should see a Gentile perishing, or plunged into a river, he may not take him out, nor administer medicine to a sick person. Hence Juvenal[a] the poet upbraids them with their unkindness and incivility, and says that Moses delivered it as a Jewish law, in a secret volume of his, perhaps referring to this book of Deuteronomy, that the Jews might not direct a poor traveller in his way unless he was one of their religion, nor one athirst to a fountain of water; and which led Tacitus[b], the Heathen historian, to make this remark upon them, that they entertained an hostile hatred against all other people.

Ver. 3. *Neither shalt thou make marriages with them,* &c.] Unless they became proselytes, as Rahab, who was married by Salmon, and so those of other nations, as Ruth the Moabitess, and so any captive taken in war; otherwise it was not lawful, bad consequences have followed upon it, which it is the design of this law to prevent; that is, being ensnared and drawn aside into idolatry, which was the case of Solomon: *thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son;* for, according to the Targum of Jonathan, whosoever marries with them, it is as if he married with their idols: and this law, according to the Jewish writers[c], is binding with respect to other nations besides the seven; and whosoever marries any Heathen, of whatsoever nation, is to be beaten.

Ver. 4. *For they will turn away thy son from following me,* &c.] From the pure worship of God, his word, statutes, and ordinances: *that they may serve other gods;* worship their idols; that is, the daughters of Heathens, married to the sons of Israelites, would entice them from the worship of the true God to idolatry; so the Targum of Jonathan; as Solomon's wives drew him aside: or *he will turn away thy son*[d]; meaning, as Jarchi observes, that the son of an Heathen, that marries the daughter of an Israelite, will turn away the son born of her to idolatry, called here the grandfather's son; though Aben Ezra says this respects the son mentioned in the preceding verse, that is, the son married to an Heathen woman, and not to a son born in such marriage: *so will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly;* by some immediate judgment striking dead at once; there being nothing more provoking to God than idolatry, that being directly contrary to his being, nature, perfections, honour, and glory, of which he is jealous.

Ver. 5. *But thus shall ye deal with them,* &c.] The inhabitants of the land of Canaan: *ye shall destroy their altars;* on which they sacrificed to their idols: *and break down their images;* of their gods, and the statues and pillars erected to the honour of them: *and cut down their groves;* sacred to idols, which were usually planted on hills, and about Heathen temples, and under which idols were placed to be worshipped. The Targum of Jonathan calls them trees of their adoration, under which they worshipped; though there was a worship paid to them, not indeed directly to them, or for their sakes, but for the sake of the idols they were sacred to, or were placed under them; so Maimonides[e] says, a tree which at first was planted to be worshipped is forbidden of any use (or profit); and this is the אשרה, or grove, spoken of in the law, a tree planted and lopped, of which a graven image is made for an idol; and so the tree that has been worshipped, though the body of it is not forbidden, all the shoots and leaves, and the branches, and the fruits it produces all the time it is worshipped, are forbidden to be used: though the word here used sometimes seems to signify,

[z] Hilchot Abodath Cochabim, c. 10. sect. 1, 2.
[a] Non monstrare vias, &c. Satyr 14.
[b] Hist. l. 5. c. 5.
[c] Maimon. Hilchot Issure Biah, c. 12. sect. 1.
[d] יסיר faciet recedere, Pagninus, Montanus; so Junius and Tremellius, Piscator, Tigurine version, Vatablus, V. L. all in the singular number.
[e] Hilchot Obede Cochabim, c. 8. sect. 3, 4. Vid. Misn. Avodah Zarah, c. 3. sect. 7.

not a grove of trees, but some image itself, since we read of it in the temple, 2 Kings xxi. 7. and xxiii. 6. *and burn their graven images with fire;* distinguished from their molten images, which may be meant in a preceding clause, and which are particularly mentioned as to be destroyed as well as these, Numb. xxxiii. 52.

Ver. 6. *For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, &c.*] Not sanctified in a spiritual sense, or having principles of grace and holiness in them, from whence holy actions sprang, at least not all of them; but they were separated from all other people in the world to the pure worship and service of God in an external manner, and therefore were to avoid all idolatry, and every appearance of it: *the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself above all people that are upon the face of the earth;* for special service and worship, and to enjoy special privileges and benefits, civil and religious; though they were not chosen to special grace here, and eternal glory hereafter; at least not all of them, only a remnant, according to the election of grace; yet they were typical of the chosen people of God in a special sense; who are chosen out of the world to be a peculiar people, to be holy here and happy hereafter; to enjoy communion with God in this life and that to come, as well as to serve and glorify him now and for evermore.

Ver. 7. *The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, &c.*] He had done both, and the one as the effect and evidence of the other; he loved them, and therefore he chose them; but neither of them, *because ye were more in number than any people;* not for the quantity of them, nor even for the quality of them: *for ye were the fewest of all people;* fewer than the Egyptians, from whence they came, and than the Canaanites they were going to drive out and inherit their land, ver. 1. Those whom God has loved with an everlasting love, and as a fruit of it has chosen them in Christ before the world began to grace and glory, holiness and happiness, are but a small number, a little flock; though many are called, few are chosen; nor are they better than others, being by nature children of wrath even as others, and as to their outward circumstances the poor of this world.

Ver. 8. *But because the Lord loved you, &c.*] With an unmerited love; he loved them, because he loved them; that is, because he would love them; his love was not owing to any goodness in them, or done by them, or any love in them to him, but to his own good will and pleasure: *and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers;* the promise he had made, confirmed by an oath: *hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand;* out of the land of Egypt: *and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen;* where they were bondmen to the Egyptians: *from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt;* who detained them, and refused to let them go.

Ver. 9. *Know therefore that the Lord thy God he is God, &c.*] The only true and living God, and not the idols of the Gentiles, who are false and lifeless ones, and therefore not the proper objects of adoration: *the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy;* as appeared by fulfilling the promise made to their fathers, in bringing them out of Egypt, and now them to the borders of the land of Canaan given them for an inheritance: *with them that love him, and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations;* see Exod. xx. 6. which are not the causes or conditions of his covenant and mercy, nor of his keeping them, but descriptive of the persons that enjoy the benefit thereof.

Ver. 10. *And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them, &c.*] Openly, publicly, and at once, they not being able to make any resistance. Onkelos interprets it in their life-time, and so Jarchi; which agrees with the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: *or to his face*[r]; the face of God; that is, he will punish them that hate him to his face, who are audacious, bold, impudent sinners; sinners before the Lord, as the men of Sodom were, Gen. xiii. 13. *he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face;* not defer the execution of his judgment and vengeance, which may seem to slumber and linger, but will quickly and openly bring it upon the sinner; this also the Chaldee paraphrases explain as before.

Ver. 11. *Thou shalt therefore keep the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, &c.*] The laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, urged thereunto both by promises and threatenings, in hopes of reward, and through fear of punishment: *which I command thee this day, to do them;* in the name of the Lord, and by his authority; by virtue of which he made a new declaration of them, to put them in mind of them in order to observe them.

Ver. 12. *Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them, &c.*] Attentively listen to the declaration made of them, and be careful to observe them: *that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy fathers;* to bring them into the land of Canaan, and continue them in it; yea, to send the Messiah to them, and bring him the salvation of Israel out of Zion; see Luke i. 68—73.

Ver. 13. *And he will love thee, &c.*] As he has done, and rest in his love, and give further instances and proofs of it: *and bless thee, and multiply thee;* that is, bless thee with a multiplication of offspring, which was what was often promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that their seed should be as the stars of heaven, the dust of the earth, and the sand of the sea: *he will also bless the fruit of thy womb;* not only give strength to conceive, but carry on the pregnancy, preserve the fœtus, and prevent miscarrying: *and the fruit of thy land, thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil;* which were the principal produce of it: *the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep;* their larger and lesser cattle, oxen and sheep: *in the land which he sware unto thy fathers to give thee:* the land of Canaan, given in promise, and that established by an oath.

Ver. 14. *Thou shalt be blessed above all people, &c.*] Even with temporal blessings, besides those of a religious kind; they having the oracles of God, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises, Rom. iii. 1, 2. and ix. 4. *there shall not be male or female barren among you;* which to be was

[r] אל פניו in faciem ejus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Vatablus, Fagius; so Ainsworth.

reckoned a reproach, and the contrary a blessing, Luke i. 25. Psal. cxxvii. 5. and cxxviii. 3, 4. *or among your cattle*: the Targum of Jonathan is, nor thy beasts barren of wool, and milk, and lambs.

Ver. 15. *And will take away from thee all sickness*, &c.] Bodily sickness and diseases, prevent the coming of them, or remove them when come: *and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt (which thou knowest) upon thee*; meaning either the plagues that were inflicted upon them to oblige them to let the Israelites go, of which they had perfect knowledge; or else some noxious and nauseous diseases, which were common among, and peculiar to, the Egyptians, particularly what is called the botch of Egypt; see Exod. xv. 26. likewise the leprosy; see the note on Lev. xiii. 2. Deut. xxviii. 27. *but will lay them upon all them that hate thee*; with which God sometimes punishes his and his people's enemies; see Judg. v. 9. Rev. xv. 10, 11.

Ver. 16. *And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee*, &c.] All the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, which the Lord should deliver into their hands; them they were not to spare, but utterly destroy men, women, and children: *thine eye shall have no pity upon them*; see ver. 2. and the note there: *neither shalt thou serve their gods, for that will be a snare unto thee*; which will bring into utter ruin and destruction; see Exod. xxiii. 33.

Ver. 17. *If thou shalt say in thine heart*, &c.] Should have secret thoughts arise in the heart, misgivings of heart, fears and doubts there, which, though not outwardly expressed, might be inwardly retained: *these nations are more than I*; seven to one, and perhaps any one of them as powerful as Israel: *how can I dispossess them?* of the land they inherit, and take possession of it.

Ver. 18. *Thou shalt not be afraid of them*, &c.] Neither on account of their number, nor their strength: but *shalt well remember what the Lord thy God did unto Pharaoh, and unto all Egypt*; a people more numerous and potent than the Canaanites, among whom the Lord wrought such wonderful things by his power, which obliged them to let Israel go; and his power was now the same, he could do as great things to the Canaanites as he had to the Egyptians; and as he had delivered them out of the hands of the Egyptians, he could as easily deliver the Canaanites into their hands, and put them into the possession of their country.

Ver. 19. *The great temptations which thine eyes saw, and the signs, and the wonders*, &c.] The miracles wrought in Egypt; see ch. iv. 34. *and the mighty hand, and stretched-out arm, whereby the Lord thy God brought thee out*; that is, out of Egypt, which was an instance and proof of his almighty power: *so shall the Lord thy God do unto all the people of whom thou art afraid*; not perform the same miraculous operations among them, but exert the same power in the destruction of them, and in dispossessing them of their land, as in destroying the Egyptians, and delivering Israel from among them.

Ver. 20. *Moreover, the Lord thy God will send the hornet among them*, &c.] Not a single one, but several of them, and which may be understood of creatures so called, which resemble wasps, only twice as large, an insect very bold and venomous; see Exod. xxiii. 28. Aben Ezra interprets it of the leprosy: *until they that are left, and hide themselves from thee, be destroyed*; such of the Canaanites who escaped the sword of the Israelites, and hid themselves in holes and caverns of the earth; these the hornets would find out and sting them to death, until they were all destroyed. Thus God can make use of small creatures, even insects, to destroy nations the most populous and mighty.

Ver. 21. *Thou shalt not be affrighted at them*, &c.] At their numbers, nor at their gigantic stature: *for the Lord thy God is among you*; in the tabernacle, in the holy of holies, which was in the midst of them, and besides would give proof of his powerful presence among them, in protecting them, and destroying their enemies; *a mighty God and terrible*; mighty to save his people, and terrible to others.

Ver. 22. *And the Lord thy God will put out those nations before thee by little and little*, &c.] Which is observed for their encouragement, who seeing that all were not destroyed at once, might fear the work would never be thoroughly accomplished; see Exod. xxiii. 30. *thou mayest not consume them at once*: though it was in the power of their hands to do it, there being some wise reasons for sparing them awhile, at least for not cutting them off all at once, and one follows: *lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee*; through so many places being waste without inhabitants, and there being none to destroy these creatures; and who therefore in course would become more numerous, and so more troublesome and distressing to the Israelites. The Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of explanation, "when they shall come to devour their carcasses," the carcasses of the slain Canaanites; who, if destroyed at once, would be so many, that they would lie unburied, which would invite the beasts of the field to come out of their lurking places to feed upon them, and which might lead them on to mischief among the Israelites.

Ver. 23. *But the Lord thy God shall deliver them unto thee*, &c.] Gradually, by little and little, until at length they should all come into their hands: *and shall destroy them with a mighty destruction until they be destroyed*; even all of them.

Ver. 24. *And he shall deliver their kings into thine hand*, &c.] Who were very numerous, for though there were but seven nations, there were more kings, even one-and-thirty, Josh. xii. 9—24. *thou shalt destroy their name from under heaven*; not only destroy the name of the reigning kings, so as that they should not be remembered and made mention of any more, but put an end to the name and race of kings among them, so that they should never have any more, as they never had: *there shall no man be able to stand before thee, until thou have destroyed them*; the nations and their kings.

Ver. 25. *The graven images of their gods shall ye burn with fire*, &c.] Which is repeated from ver. 5. that it might be the more observed and strictly performed, and which unless done, they could not expect the utter destruction of their enemies, who were left in the land to try and prove them with respect to this very thing: *thou shalt not desire the silver or gold* that is *on them*; the raiment of gold or silver with which they were bedecked, or the plates of gold and silver

with which they were covered, or any ornament about them, as chains and the like, that were of either of these metals; see Ezek. xvi. 16, 17, 18. Jer. x. 9. *nor take it unto thee, lest thou be snared therein:* nor take it into their possession, or bring it into their houses, as in the next verse, lest they should be under a temptation to worship it, or keep it as a superstitious relic: *for it is an abomination to the Lord thy God:* not only the idol itself, being put in the place of God, and so derogatory to his honour and glory, but the gold and silver on it, being devoted to a superstitious and idolatrous use; and even the taking of it, and appropriating it to a man's own use, was an abomination, and resented by the Lord as such.

Ver. 26. *Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thy house,* &c.] An idol, so the Targum of Jonathan, the abominations of idols and their utensils, or what is ministered to them, with any thing that appertains to them, or is used in the service of them, as well as the gold and silver upon them: this care was taken as much as possible to prevent idolatry, and all appearance of it, and to shew what might lead on and be a temptation to it: *lest thou be a cursed thing like it:* as an idol is, and so is every one that worships it; for what more exposes to the curse of God than idolatry, a breach of the first table of the law? and therefore subjects a man to the curse of it; nay, the bringing of an idol into a man's house brings a curse into it, and makes him liable thereunto; for if the curse enters into the house of the thief or perjurer, much more into the house of a man guilty of idolatry in any degree of it; see Zech. v. 3, 4. *but thou shalt utterly detest it;* the Targum of Jonathan adds, as the pollution of an abominable thing: *and thou shalt utterly abhor it, for it is a cursed thing;* devoted to destruction; and to have any thing to do with it is the way to entail a curse, and bring to everlasting ruin and destruction; see Rev. xxi. 8.

C H A P. VIII.

IN this chapter Moses repeats the exhortation to observe the commands of God, and urges the Israelites to it, from the consideration of the great and good things God had done for them in the wilderness, and even in those instances which were chastisements, and were of an humbling nature, ver. 1—6. and on the consideration of the blessings of the good land they were going to possess, ver. 7, 8, 9. for which blessings they are exhorted to be thankful, and are cautioned against pride of heart through them, and forgetfulness of God, and of his goodness to them whilst in the wilderness, and when brought into the land of Canaan, which they were to ascribe to his power and goodness, and not their own, ver. 10—18. and the chapter is concluded with a warning against idolatry, lest they perish through it as the nations before them, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do,* &c.] It is repeated over and over again, to impress it on their minds, and to shew the importance and necessity of it, how greatly it was expected from them, and how much it was incumbent on them: *that ye may live and multiply, and go in, and possess the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers;* for their temporal life, and the mercies and comforts of it, the multiplication of their offspring, and of their substance, their entrance into the land of Canaan, possession of it, and continuance in it, all depended on their obedience to the commands of God; see ch. xix. 30.

Ver. 2. *And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness,* &c.] For this was now the fortieth year of their coming out of Egypt into the wilderness, into which they quickly came after their departure from thence, and had been in one wilderness or another ever since, in which God went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire, and directed their way; and now they are called upon to remember all the occurrences in the way, what favours and mercies had been bestowed upon them, what provisions had been made for them, what enemies they had been delivered from or overcome, as well as what afflictions and chastisements had attended them: and so the people of God should call to mind how they were brought to see their wilderness-state and condition by nature; how they were brought out of it, and stopped in their career of sin, and turned from their evil ways, and led to Christ; what gracious promises have been made to them; what light has been afforded them; what communion they have had with God; what pleasure in his ordinances; what food they have been fed with; what temptations have befallen them, and how delivered out of them; and what afflictions have been laid upon them, and how supported under them, and freed from them: *to humble thee;* under the mighty hand of God, to bring down the pride of their hearts and hide it from them; to lay them low in their own eyes, and clothe them with humility, that the Lord alone might be exalted: and *to prove thee;* whether they would be obedient to his laws, or how they would behave towards him both in prosperity and adversity, and to try their graces, their faith and patience, fear and love: *to know what was in thine heart;* that is, to make it known to themselves and others; for God knew all that was in it, the wickedness of it, the unbelief, rebellion, and frowardness of it, and needed not any ways and means to get into the knowledge of it; see 2 Chron. xxxii. 31. *whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no;* which they had in such a solemn manner promised to do; ch. v. 27, 28, 29.

Ver. 3. *And he humbled thee,* &c.] Or afflicted thee with want of bread: *and suffered thee to hunger;* that there might be an opportunity of shewing his mercy, and exerting his power: and *fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know;* a sort of food they had never seen before, and when they saw it, knew not what it was, but asked, what is it? Exod.

xvi. 15. Thus the Lord humbles his people by his spirit and grace, and brings them to see themselves to be in want, and creates in them desires after spiritual food, and feeds them with Christ the hidden manna, whose person, office, and grace, they were before ignorant of: *that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only:* which is the stay and staff of life, and which strengthens man's heart, and is the main support of it, being the ordinary and usual food man lives upon, and is put for all the rest: *but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live:* not so much by the food he eats as by the blessing of God upon it, and who can make one sort of food as effectual for such a purpose as another; for every creature of God is good being received with thankfulness, and sanctified by the word and prayer; and particularly he could and did make such light food as manna was to answer all the purposes of solid bread for the space of forty years in the wilderness; the Targum of Jonathan is, "but by all which is created by "the Word of the Lord is the life of man;" which seems to agree with 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4. for the meaning is not that the Israelites in the wilderness, and when come into the land of Canaan, should not live by corporeal food only, but by obedience to the commands of God, by means of which they should continue under his protection, which was indeed their case; nor that man does not live in his body only by bread, but in his soul also by the word of God, and the doctrines of it, which is certainly true; spiritual men live a spiritual life on Christ, the Word of God, and bread of life, and on the Gospel and the truths of it, the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus, and are nourished up with the words of faith and sound doctrine, by means of which their spiritual life is supported and maintained; but this is not what is here intended.

Ver. 4. *Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee,* &c.] They wanted not clothes all the forty years they were in the wilderness; which some account for by the rising generation being supplied with the clothes of those that died in the wilderness, and with the spoils they took from Amalek, Exod. xvii. 1. and others, as Aben Ezra observes, remark that they brought much clothes with them out of Egypt, which no doubt they did; see Exod. xii. 35. and he adds, as worthy of notice, that the manna they lived upon did not produce sweat, which is prejudicial to clothes; but be it so, that they were sufficiently provided with clothes, it must be miraculous that these clothes they wore should not wax old. This, in a spiritual sense, may denote the righteousness of Christ, which is often compared to raiment, the property of which is, that it never waxes old, wears out, or decays; it is an everlasting righteousness, and will never be abolished, but will answer for the saints in a time to come: see Isa. li. 6, 8. Dan. ix. 24. *neither did thy foot swell these forty years:* or puff up like paste, as Jarchi explains it, which is often the case in long journeys; the Septuagint version is, *did not become callous;* a callousness or hardness is frequently produced by travelling: in ch. xxix. 5. it is explained of the shoes on their feet not waxing old; so Ben Melech, and the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and the Syriac and Arabic versions here, "thy feet were not naked," were not without shoes; these were no more wore out by travel than their clothes upon their backs, and this was equally as miraculous: the Gibeonites, pretending to come from a far country, and to have travelled much and long, put on old garments and old shoes, to make it probable and plausible, Josh. ix. 5, 13. This may be an emblem of the perseverance of the saints in faith and holiness: shoes upon the feet denote a Gospel conversation, which is very beautiful, Cant. vii. 1. the feet of saints being shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; which, as shoes to the feet, guides and directs the Christian walk, strengthens and makes fit for walking, keeps tight and preserves from slipping and falling, and protects from what is hurtful, accompanied by the power and grace of God.

Ver. 5. *Thou shalt also consider in thine heart,* &c.] Frequently think of, and meditate upon, revolve in their thoughts, well weigh in their minds, and take into thorough and deliberate consideration in their hearts; it being a matter of great moment and importance to them for their peace and comfort and the glory of God, namely, what follows: *that as a man chasteneth his son,* so *the Lord thy God chasteneth thee;* that they stood in the same relation to God as a son to a father, and therefore happy and honourable; that all their afflictions came from God, were appointed, sent, directed, and overruled by him for his own glory and their good; that these were the chastenings and corrections of a father, and were not done in wrath, but in love, and therefore should be patiently endured; and it became them to consider well from what hand they came, and in what manner, and for what ends and purposes, how they ought to behave under them, and what they should do, as follows.

Ver. 6. *Therefore thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God,* &c.] Not only because they are the commands of God, and of a covenant God and father, which are reasons sufficient for the observance of them; but because the Lord had dealt so bountifully with them, in providing food and raiment for them in the wilderness, which always continued with them; and because, when he afflicted them, it was a fatherly chastisement, with great tenderness and compassion, and for their good; all which laid them under obligations to keep the commands of God, whatsoever he had enjoined them, whether of the moral, ceremonial, or judicial kind: *to walk in his ways, and to fear him;* to walk in the ways he directed, to be under an awe of his majesty, a fear of offending him, and a reverential affection for him, such as children have to a father.

Ver. 7. *For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land,* &c.] The land of Canaan, abounding with good things after enumerated, a land flowing with milk and honey, having in it plenty of every thing both for convenience and delight; which is another reason why they were under obligations to serve the Lord, to walk in his ways and keep his commandments: *a land of brooks of water;* rivers and torrents, such as Jordan, Jabbok, Kishon, Kedron, Cherith, and others: *of fountains;* as Siloam, Gihon, Etam, the baths of Tiberias, and others: *and depths that spring out of valleys and hills;* deep waters, caverns, wells, and lakes, which had their rise from such places, of which there were many. With this agrees the account of it by our coun-

tryman, Mr. Sandys[g], as it was in the beginning of the last century; that it was adorned with beautiful mountains and luxurious valleys, the rocks producing excellent waters, and no part empty of delight or profit.

Ver. 8. *A land of wheat and barley*, &c.] There were two harvests in it, one a barley-harvest, which began at the passover, and the other a wheat-harvest, which began at Pentecost: instances of the great plenty of these might be observed in the vast quantities consumed in the times of Solomon, in his household, and in the yearly distribution he made to Hiram, 1 Kings iv. 22, 28. and v. 11. 2 Chron. ii. 10. yea, there was such plenty of wheat in this land, that it not only supplied the inhabitants of it, but even furnished other countries with it; with this the merchants of Israel and Judah traded at the market of Tyre, Ezek. xxvii. 17. see Acts xii. 20. According to the Jewish writers, the best fine wheat-flour was at Mechumas and Mezonichah, and the next to them was Chephraim, or Ephraim, in the valley[h]: *and vines;* with which this land abounded everywhere; the places most noted were Lebanon, Eshcol, Engedi, Ascalon, Gaza, and Sarepta; according to the above writers[i], Cerotim and Hatolim were the first for wine, and the second to them were Beth Rimah and Beth Laban in the mountain, and Caphar Sigmah in the valley; the wine of Sharon is also highly commended by them[k]: *and fig-trees and pomegranates;* according to Josephus[l], the country of Genesaret furnished with the best grapes and figs for ten months without intermission, and the rest of fruits throughout the whole year. Figs and pomegranates, the spies brought with them when they returned from searching the land, as well as grapes, are a specimen of the fruits of it, Numb. xiii. 23. *a land of oil-olive;* the mount of Olives was famous for olive-trees, and had its name from thence; the whole land abounded with them, and though oil was so much in common use with the Jews, they supplied their neighbours with it: see 1 Kings v. 11. 2 Chron. v. 10. Ezek. xxvii. 17. It was usual also, as we are told, for the ten tribes to send oil into Egypt[m]; according to the Jewish doctors, Tekoah was the first place for oil, and the second, Ragab, beyond Jordan[n]; very probably the same with Argob, ch. iii. 4. *and honey;* besides the great quantities of honey produced by bees in this country, there was much of another sort that dropped from trees, called wild honey, the food of John the Baptist in the wilderness, Matt. iii. 4. Pliny[o] speaks of a sort of honey which he calls *elæomeli*, or oil-honey, which is said to flow from the olive-trees in Syria; but this honey here is generally thought by the Jewish writers to be an honey which was made of the fruit of palm-trees, frequent in this country, and especially about Jericho; of which Josephus[p] says, that the palm-trees about Jericho, the fatter of them (*i. e.* of the fruit of them) being pressed, emit a large quantity of honey, scarce exceeded by any; and Maimonides[q] says, that the honey spoken of in the law, particularly in this place, is honey of palm-trees, so Ben Melech; and it was not unusual for people of other nations to make honey of the fruit of them. Herodotus[r] reports, that the Babylonians made honey out of palm-trees; so the Arabs call honey of palm-trees *dibs, dibis, dipso*[s], the same with the word here used; agreeably to which both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the words, "out of whose palm-"trees honey is made."

Ver. 9. *A land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness*, &c.] That is, should have plenty of all sorts of provisions, which *bread* is often put for: *thou shalt not lack any thing in it;* for necessity and convenience, and for delight and pleasure: *a land whose stones are iron;* in which were iron mines: *and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass;* both which are taken out of the earth and the stones of it, Job xxviii. 2. and were to be found in the land of Canaan, and particularly in the tribe of Asher, as seems from ch. xxxiii. 25. and more particularly at Sidon and Sarepta, which were in that tribe; the latter of which seems to have its name from the melting of metals there, and the former is said in Homer[t] to abound with brass.

Ver. 10. *When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God*, &c.] For as the Lord would furnish them with plenty of food, they might eat of it liberally, provided they did not indulge to intemperance, as every one may whom God has blessed with a fulness of good things; and this shews that we are to return thanks to God for a plentiful meal, as well as to ask a blessing on it: *for the good land which he hath given thee;* which supplied them with such plenty, that they enjoyed full meals every day.

Ver. 11. *Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God*, &c.] The father of mercies and fountain of goodness, the author and donor of every good and perfect gift. Plenty is apt to induce a forgetfulness of God, when on the contrary one would think it should keep him in continual remembrance, and engage to daily thankfulness to him: *in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day;* gave a repetition of, and in the name of God afresh enjoined them, even laws moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which, when not observed, God is forgotten.

Ver. 12. *Lest* when *thou hast eaten and art full*, &c.] Not only once and again, but continually, day after day, being indulged with great plenty: *and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt* therein; who for 40 years had only dwelt in tents, moving from place to place in the wilderness.

Ver. 13. *And* when *thy herds and thy flocks multiply*, &c.] Having good pasture for them in so fruitful a land: *and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied;* by trading with other nations: *and all that thou hast is multipled;* children, servants, and substance.

Ver. 14. *Then thine heart be lifted up*, &c.] As the

[g] Travels, l. 3. p. 110.
[h] Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1.
[i] Ibid. sect. 6.
[k] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 77. 1.
[l] De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 9. sect. 8.
[m] Echa Rabbati, fol. 59. 3.
[n] Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 3.
[o] Nat. Hist. l. 23. c. 4. Tikkune Zohar, correct. 16. fol. 27. 1.
[p] De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 3.
[q] In Misn. Menachot, c. 5. sect. 1. so Bartenora in Misn. Biccurim, c. 1. sect. 3.
[r] Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 193.
[s] See Shaw's Travels, p. 143.
[t] Ἐκ μὲν Σιδῶνος πολυχάλκου. Homer. Odyss. 15. l. 424.

heart is apt to be when riches increase; hence the advice in 1 Tim. vi. 17. *and thou forget the Lord thy God;* from whom all good things come, and who can take them away when he pleases, and therefore should be ever kept in mind, for ever looked to and trusted in for the continuance of them; yet such is the evil heart of man, and such the stupifying nature of riches, that they bring on forgetfulness of the author of them, lead off from dependence on him and obedience to him; in order to prevent which, an enumeration is given of wonderful instances of divine goodness to Israel, as follows: *which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage;* into a land abounding with all the above good things, and therefore it must be the highest ingratitude to forget such a God, and disobey his commands.

Ver. 15. *Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness,* &c.] The wilderness of Paran, which was great and large, reaching from Sinai to Kadesh, eleven days' journey, and terrible to the sight, nothing being to be seen but dry rocks and barren mountains; see ch. i. 19. and especially for what follows: wherein were *fiery serpents and scorpions;* fiery serpents, such as bit the Israelites, of which see Numb. xxi. 6. and scorpions, a kind of serpents, venomous and mischievous, which have stings in their tails they are continually thrusting out and striking with, as Pliny says[u]; and have their name from their great sting; for Aristotle[w] says, this alone of insects has a large sting: *and drought where there was no water;* a dry and barren place where no water was to be had; see Psal. lxiii. 1. or it may be rather another kind of serpents may be meant, which is called *dipsas;* and so the Vulgate Latin, Septuagint, and Samaritan versions render it; the biting of which produces such a thirst as proves mortal, and which must be intolerable in a wilderness where no water is; and from whence it has its name, which signifies thirsty, as does the Hebrew word here used: *who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint;* which was done both at Horeb and Kadesh, Exod. xvii. 6. Numb. xx. 11. and was very extraordinary; by striking flint, fire is ordinarily produced, and not water. Dr. Shaw observes[x], that it may be more properly named, with other sorts of granite marble here to be met with, *the rock of amethyst,* from their reddish or purple colour and complexion.

Ver. 16. *Who fed thee in the wilderness with manna,* &c.] Even all the forty years they were in it, Exod. xvi. 35. *which thy fathers knew not;* when they first saw it, Exod. xvi. 15. *that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee;* they were kept humble, being dependent on God for their daily bread, having nothing in the wilderness to support themselves with; and this tried them, whether they would trust in God for their daily supply, and be thankful for it, or no: *to do thee good at thy latter end;* that by living on such light bread, and this only and continually, his goodness might appear the greater, and be the sweeter to them, when they came into a land abounding with all good things; which is not to be understood of the latter end and last days of their commonwealth, as our version, with the Septuagint, Samaritan, Arabic versions, and others, and the Targum of Onkelos; but of time following nearer, and the phrase should be rendered *hereafter*[y]; which better agrees with the promise of a divine blessing; though, come when it would, it was the more acceptable for the trial; as heaven will be the sweeter to the saints, through the afflictions, hardships, straits, and difficulties, which attend them here.

Ver. 17. *And thou say in thine heart,* &c.] These words are in connexion with the former part of the 14th verse; *and thou forget the Lord thy God;* the author and giver of all the good things enjoyed, and think within themselves, though they might not express it in words at length: *my power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth;* so ascribing that to themselves, their labour, and diligence, which ought to be ascribed to the bounty and blessing of God; see Hos. xii. 8.

Ver. 18. *But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God,* &c.] That he was the author of their beings, the God of their lives and mercies; what great and good things he had done for them in Egypt, and in the wilderness; and particularly in putting them into the possession of such a fruitful country, abounding with all that heart could wish for: *for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth;* for though men may have seeming opportunities for getting wealth, may have capacities for the management of business for the acquisition of it, and may not be wanting in diligence and industry, yet may not attain it; it is the blessing of God that makes rich, and to that it should be imputed whenever it is enjoyed; see Psal. cxxvii. 2. Prov. x. 22. Eccl. ix. 11. 1 Chron. xxix. 12. *that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day;* that he would give the land of Canaan to their seed, and make them a rich and flourishing people, as they would be and were when possessed of the land, which is supposed throughout this discourse.

Ver. 19. *And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God,* &c.] Either the mercies they received from him, not acknowledging they came from him, but ascribing them to themselves; or their duty to him, to whom they were so greatly obliged: *and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them;* which would be to forget him indeed, forsaking his worship, and giving homage and adoration to idols, which is what is intended by these expressions: *I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish;* by one judgment and calamity or another, as the sword, famine, pestilence, and captivity; there being nothing more provoking to God than idolatry, which so much detracts from his honour and glory: and which besides, in such a people, so highly favoured of God, it argued the basest ingratitude.

Ver. 20. *As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish,* &c.] Be cut off by the sword, or cast out as they were, the same sins, particularly idolatry, being committed by them. This is to be understood of the seven nations of the land of Canaan, which the Lord would be gradually destroying when Israel came into the possession of their land; and they might righteously expect the same treatment,

[u] Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 25.
[w] Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 7.
[x] Travels, p. 317, 442.

[y] באחריתך tandem, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Piscator; posthac, Noldius, p. 180. No. 807.

should they be guilty of the same sins: *because ye would not be obedient to the voice of the Lord your God;* expressed in his law, especially in the two first precepts of it, which require the worship of one God, and forbid the worshipping of idols; or to the Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan, Christ, the essential Word, in whom the name of the Lord was, and whose voice Israel was to obey, Exod. xxiii. 20, 21, 22.

CHAP. IX.

In this chapter the Israelites are assured of the ejection of the Canaanites, though so great and mighty, to make room for them, ver. 1, 2, 3. and they are cautioned not to attribute this to their own righteousness, but to the wickedness of the nations which deserved to be so treated, and to the faithfulness of God in performing his promise made to their fathers, ver. 4, 5, 6. and that it might appear that it could not be owing to their righteousness, it is affirmed and proved that they had been a rebellious and provoking people from their coming out of Egypt to that time, as was evident from their idolatry at Horeb: a particular account of which is given, and of the displeasure of the Lord at it, ver. 7—21. and of their murmurings, with which they provoked the Lord at other places, ver. 22, 23, 24. and the chapter is closed with an account of the prayer of Moses for them at Horeb, to avert the wrath of God from them for their making and worshipping the golden calf, ver. 25—29.

Ver. 1. *Hear, O Israel,* &c.] A pause being made after the delivery of the preceding discourse; or perhaps what follows might be delivered at another time, at some little distance; and which being of moment and importance to the glory of God, and that Israel might have a true notion of their duty, they are called upon to listen with attention to what was now about to be said: *thou art to pass over Jordan this day:* not precisely that very day, but in a short time after this; for it was on the first day of the eleventh month that Moses began the repetition of the laws he was now going on with, ch. i. 3. and it was not until the tenth day of the first month of the next year that the people passed over Jordan, Josh. iv. 19. which was about two months after this: *to go in and possess nations greater and mightier than thyself;* the seven nations named ch. vii. 1. where the same characters are given of them: *cities great and fenced up to heaven;* as they were said to be by the spies, ch. i. 28. and were no doubt both large and strongly fortified, and not to be easily taken by the Israelites, had not the Lord been with them, ver. 3.

Ver. 2. *A people great and tall,* &c.] Of a large bulky size, and of an high stature, so that the spies seemed to be as grashoppers to them, Numb. xiii. 33. *the children of the Anakim, whom thou knowest:* by report, having had an account of them by the spies, who described them as very large-bodied men, and of a gigantic stature, the descendants of one Anak, a giant: and so the Targum of Jonathan, "a people "strong and high like the giants;" from these Bene Anak, children of Anak, or Phene Anak, as the words might be pronounced, the initial letter of the first word being of the same sound, Bochart [a] thinks the country had its name of Phœnicia: *and of whom thou hast heard say, who can stand before the children of Anak?* or the children of the giants, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; which they had heard either from the spies who had suggested the same, Numb. xiii. 31. or as a common proverb in the mouths of most people in those days.

Ver. 3. *Understand therefore this day,* &c.] Or be it known to you for your encouragement, and believe it: *that the Lord thy God is he which goeth over before thee as a consuming fire:* did not only go before them over the river Jordan, in a pillar of cloud and fire, to guide and direct them, and was a wall of fire around them to protect and defend them, but as a consuming fire, before which there is no standing, to destroy their enemies; see ch. iv. 24. Heb. xii. 29. *he shall destroy them, and he shall bring them down before thy face;* be they as great and as mighty, as large and as tall as they may, they'll not be able to stand before the Lord, but will soon be made low, and be easily brought down to the earth by him, and to utter destruction; which would be done in a public and visible manner, so as that the hand of the Lord would be seen in it by the Israelites: *so shalt thou drive them out, and destroy them quickly, as the Lord hath said unto thee;* that is, the far greater part of them, and so many as to make room for the Israelites, and which was quickly done. The Jews commonly say [b], that they were seven years in subduing the land; otherwise they were not to be driven out and destroyed at once, but by little and little: see ch. vii. 22.

Ver. 4. *Speak not thou in thine heart,* &c.] Never once think within thyself, or give way to such a vain imagination, and please thyself with it: *after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee;* to make way for the Israelites, and put them into the possession of their land; which is to be ascribed not to them, but to the Lord: *saying, for my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land;* such a thought as this was not to be secretly cherished in their hearts, and much less expressed with their lips; nothing being more foreign from truth than this, and yet a notion they were prone to entertain. They were always a people, more or less, from first to last, tainted with a conceit of their own righteousness, and goodness, which they laboured to establish, and were ready to attribute all the good things to it they enjoyed, and nothing is more natural to men, than to fancy they shall be brought to the heavenly Canaan by and for their own righteousness; which is contrary to the perfections of God, his purity, holiness, and justice, which can never admit of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one; to justify any one thereby, is contrary to the Gospel-scheme of salvation;

[a] Canaan, l. 1. c. 1. col. 346.

[b] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31, 32.

which is not by works of righteousness men have done, but by the grace and mercy of God through Christ; it would make useless, null, and void, the righteousness of Christ, which only can justify men in the sight of God, give a title to heaven and happiness, and an abundant entrance into it; and would occasion boasting, not only in the present state, but even in heaven itself; whereas the scheme of salvation is so framed and fixed, that there may be no room for boasting, here or hereafter: see Rom. iii. 27, 28. Eph. ii. 8, 9. Tit. iii. 5, 7. *but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee:* namely, their idolatry, incest, and other notorious crimes; see Lev. xviii. 3—28. which sufficiently justifies God in all his dealings with these nations.

Ver. 5. *Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart,* &c.] Neither for their external righteousness before men, or their outward conformity to the law, nor for the inward sincerity of their hearts, and their upright intentions in doing good, in which they were defective: *dost thou go to possess their land:* this is repeated, and enlarged on, and explained, that this notion might be entirely removed from them, and not entertained by them; similar to which is that of men, who fancy that their sincere obedience, though imperfect, will be accepted of God instead of a perfect one, on account of which they shall be justified and saved; but by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified in the sight of God, nor by any works of righteousness done by the best of men, and in the best manner they are capable of, will any be saved: *but for the wickedness of those nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee:* which is repeated, that it might be taken notice of as the true reason of the Lord's dealing with them in such severity; and which because it would be now doing, when the Israelites passed over Jordan, and went in to possess the land, it is expressed in the present tense, *doth drive,* the work being not yet finished; sin was the cause of their ejection out of their land, and another thing was the reason of the Israelites possessing it, and not their righteousness next expressed: *and that he may perform the word which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:* it was to fulfil his covenant, and make good his word of promise to their fathers, and not on account of any righteousness of theirs; and the salvation of the Lord's people in a spiritual sense, and their enjoyment of the heavenly Canaan, are owing to the gracious purposes and promises of God, and to his covenant-engagements, as well as to the undertakings, obedience, and righteousness of his son, and not to any righteousness of theirs.

Ver. 6. *Understand therefore that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness,* &c.] This is again repeated to impress it upon their minds, that it was not for any goodness of theirs, but as a gift of divine goodness to them, that they were put into the possession of the good land, which greatly exceeded any merits of theirs, and was entirely owing to the kindness of God to them, and not to any righteousness of theirs; and this he frequently inculcates, that they might have a thorough understanding of it. And so the doctrines of justification by the righteousness of Christ, and not man's, and of salvation by the grace of God, and not the works of men, are points of knowledge and understanding; and to lead men into an acquaintance with them is the general design of the Gospel; and he can't be reckoned an understanding man, but ignorant of God and his righteousness, of the law and the spirituality of it, of Christ and the way of salvation by him, of the Spirit and of spiritual things, of the Gospel and its doctrines, nor can he be wise unto salvation, who expects to get to heaven by his own works of righteousness; and it might be added, that he is ignorant of himself, of his state and condition, of his sinfulness and vileness, and of the nature of his best works; as the Israelites in a good measure seemed to be, whose conviction is laboured in the following part of this chapter: *for thou art a stiff-necked people;* refractory and unruly, like an heifer unaccustomed to the yoke, that draws back from it, and wriggles its neck out of it; so untoward and perverse were this people, and disobedient to the commands of God; wherefore there was no shew of reason that they were put into the possession of Canaan for their righteousness; and to make it appear that they were such a people as here described, several instances are given.

Ver. 7. *Remember,* and *forget* not *how thou provokedst the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness,* &c.] Aben Ezra remarks that this was after they journeyed from Horeb; but before they came thither, even as soon as they were in the wilderness, they provoked the Lord, as by their murmuring for water at Marah, when they had been but three days in the wilderness; and for bread in the wilderness of Sin, and for water again at Rephidim; all which were before they came to Horeb or Sinai, and which agrees with what follows: *from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt until ye came unto this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord:* though they had such a series of mercies, yet their life was a continued course of rebellion against the Lord: which is a sad character of them indeed, and given by one that thoroughly knew them, was an eye-witness of facts, and had a hearty respect for them too, and cannot be thought to exaggerate things; so that they were far from being righteous persons in themselves, nor was there any reason to conclude it was for their righteousness the land of Canaan was given them.

Ver. 8. *Also in Horeb ye provoked the Lord to wrath,* &c.] The word *also* shews that they had provoked him before, but this instance is given as a very notorious one; here they made the golden calf and worshipped it, whilst Moses was on the mount with God, receiving instructions from him for their good. Near to this place a rock had been smitten for them, from whence flowed water for the refreshment of them and their cattle; here the Lord appeared in the glory of his majesty to them, and from hence, for it is the same mount with Sinai, the law was given to them in such an awful and terrible manner; and yet none of these things were sufficient to restrain them from provoking the Lord to wrath by their sins: *so that the Lord was angry with you, to have destroyed you:* so very angry with them, and so justly, that he proposed to Moses to destroy them, and make of him a great nation in their room, Exod. xxxii. 10.

Ver. 9. *When I was gone up into the mount to receive the tables of stone*, &c.] The tables of the law, the same law which forbid idolatry, and which they had lately heard from the mouth of God himself: even *the tables of the covenant which the Lord made with you*: which they had agreed unto, and solemnly promised they would observe and do, Exod. xxiv. 7. *then I abode in the mount forty days and forty nights*: and this long stay was one reason of their falling into idolatry, not knowing what was become of him, Exod. xxiv. 18. and xxxii. 1. *I neither did eat bread nor drink water*: all those 40 days and nights, Exod. xxxiv. 28.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord delivered unto me two tables of stone, written with the finger of God*, &c.] The letters were of his devising and forming, the writing was his, the engraving them on the stones was his own doing; and which was done to shew its original, to instamp a divine authority on it, and to denote its duration; see Exod. xxxi. 18. and xxxii. 16. *and on them* was written *according to all the words which the Lord spake with you in the mount*; the ten commands, exactly in the same order, and in the same words, without any variation, as they were delivered to them with an articulate voice in their hearing; but now were written in this manner, that they might be read by them, and remain with them, see Exod. xxxiv. 28. *out of the midst of the fire*; in which the Lord was, and from whence he spake: *in the day of the assembly*; when all the people of Israel were gathered together at the foot of the mount; see Exod. xix. 17. Deut. iv. 10, 11, 12.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass at the end of forty days and forty nights*, &c.] The time of Moses's stay in the mount, when it was just up, and not before: that *the Lord gave me the two tables of stone*, even *the tables of the covenant*, as in ver. 9. Aben Ezra observes, that this shews that the day the tables were given to Moses the calf was made.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord said unto me*, &c.] The omniscient God, who knew what was doing in the camp of Israel, though Moses did not, of which he informs him: *arise, get thee down quickly from hence*; from the mount where he was; and the word *arise* does not suppose him to be sitting or lying along, neither of which postures would have been suitable, considering in whose presence he was; but is only expressive of urgency and haste of his departure; it is not used in Exod. xxxii. 7. *for thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt, have corrupted* themselves; their way, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, by idolatry, than which nothing is more corrupting and defiling; the Lord calls them not his people, but the people of Moses, being highly displeased with them; and ascribes their coming out of Egypt to Moses the instrument, and not to himself, as if he repented of bringing them from thence: *they are quickly turned aside out of the way which I commanded them*: it being but about six weeks ago, that the command forbidding idolatry, the sin they had fallen into, had been given them: *and they have made them a molten image*; the image of a calf made of melted gold.

Ver. 13. *Furthermore the Lord spake unto me, saying*, &c.] After he had given him the two tables, and before his departure from the mount: *I have seen this people*; took notice of them, their ways, and their works: *and, behold, it is a stiff-necked people*; unwilling to submit to, and bear the yoke of my commandments; see Exod. xxxii. 9.

Ver. 14. *Let me alone, that I may destroy them*, &c.] Do not say one word to me on their behalf, or entreat me to spare them, and not destroy them: *and blot out their name from under heaven*; that no such nation may be heard of, or known by the name of Israel: *and I will make of thee a nation mightier and greater than they*; of his family, whereby the Lord's promise to Abraham would not have been made void, but equally firm and sure, since this mightier and greater nation would have been of his seed; see the note on Exod. xxxii. 10.

Ver. 15. *So I turned and came down from the mount*, &c.] As the Lord commanded: *and the mount burned with fire*; as it had for six weeks past, ever since the Lord's descent upon it; and so it continued, for the words may be rendered, *and the mount was burning*[b]; and yet this did not deter the Israelites from idolatry: *and the two tables of the covenant were in my two hands*; one table in one hand, and the other in the other hand.

Ver. 16. *And I looked*, &c.] When he was come down from the mount, and was nigh the camp: *and, behold, ye had sinned against the Lord your God*; that plainly appeared by what they had done, and at which he was amazed; and therefore a behold is prefixed to it, it being such a gross sin, having so much impiety and ingratitude, and stupidity in it: and *made you a molten calf*; that he saw with his eyes, and them dancing about it; see Exod. xxxii. 19. *ye had turned aside quickly out of the way which the Lord had commanded you*; see ver. 12.

Ver. 17. *And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands*, &c.] In wrath and indignation at the sin they were guilty of: *and brake them before your eyes*; as an emblem of their breach of them by transgressing them.

Ver. 18. *And I fell down before the Lord*, &c.] In prayer for Israel who had sinned; but this he did not immediately after he had broken the tables, but when he had first ground the calf to powder, strewed it on the water, and made the children of Israel drink it; and when he had chided Aaron, and ordered the sons of Levi to slay every man his brother: *as at the first forty days and forty nights*; which is to be connected, I think, not with what goes before; for we read not that he fell down before the Lord, at the first time he was with him so long in the mount; but with what follows: *I did neither eat bread nor drink water*; as he neither ate nor drank the first forty days, so neither did he these second forty; see ver. 9. *because of all your sins which ye sinned, in doing wickedly in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger*; for they were guilty of more sins than one; besides idolatry, they were guilty of unbelief, ingratitude, &c. which were notorious and flagrant, were done openly and publicly, in sight of his glory and majesty on the mount; all which must be very provoking to him, and on account of these Moses prayed and fasted.

[b] בער de monte ardente, V. L. Heb. burning, Ainsworth.

Ver. 19. *For I was afraid of the anger and hot displeasure wherewith the Lord was wroth against you, &c.*] Which was exceeding vehement, as appeared by his words to Moses, forbidding to intercede for them, that he might consume them, and make of him a greater nation; wherefore he dreaded the issue of it, lest it should be *to destroy you*; that that should be his full resolution and determination; however, he made use of means, and betook himself to fasting and prayer; so heartily affected was he to this people when his temptations lay another way: *but the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also*; as he had at other times, when this people had sinned, and he entreated for them; in which he was a type of Christ, the Mediator and Advocate, whom the Father always hears.

Ver. 20. *And the Lord was very angry with Aaron, to have destroyed him, &c.*] For complying with the request of the people in making a calf for them, and for that miserable shift he made to excuse himself; which so provoked the Lord, that he threatened to destroy him, and he was in danger of being cut off, had it not been for the intercession of Moses: *and I prayed for Aaron also the same time*; who either was included in the general prayer for the people, Exod. xxxii. 31. or a particular prayer was made for him, though not recorded, and which also succeeded.

Ver. 21. *And I took your sin, the calf which ye had made, &c.*] Which was the object of their sin, which lay in making and worshipping it; see Isa. xxxi. 7. *and burnt it with fire, and stamped it*; with his feet after it was burnt, to bring it into small pieces: and *ground it very small*; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, "ground " it in a mortar well;" the burnt and broken pieces: *even until it was as small as dust*; being ground to powder, as in Exod. xxxii. 20. *and I cast the dust thereof into the brook that descended out of the mount*; and made the children of Israel to drink of it, as in the fore-cited place; see the note there; all this was done before the prayer for Aaron and the people.

Ver. 22. *And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-hattaavah, ye provoked the Lord to wrath.*] These places are not mentioned in the strict order in which the provocations were made at them; for they provoked the Lord at Massah by murmuring for water, before they provoked him at Taberah, by complaining as it should seem of their journeying; for Massah was before they came to Sinai, and Taberah after they departed from thence; though some, as Aben Ezra observes, say that Taberah is Massah; but it could not be the Massah in Rephidim, for that was on one side of Mount Sinai, and Taberah on another; though different places might be so called from their tempting the Lord at them; rather Taberah and Kibroth-hattaavah seem to be the same; where the people died with the flesh in their mouths they lusted after, and were buried; since no mention is made of their removal at that time from the one place to the other, nor of Taberah in the account of their journeys, only Kibroth-hattaavah; see Exod. xvii. 7. Numb. xi. 3, 34.

Ver. 23. *Likewise when the Lord sent you from Kadesh-barnea, &c.*] From whence the spies were sent to search the land, though previous to it they had the following order to go up and possess it; see Numb. xxxii. 8. Deut. i. 19, 20, 21. *saying, go up and possess the land which I have given you*; this they were bid to do, before they desired the spies might be sent to search it first; and after they had returned and made their report, they were encouraged to go up and take possession of it: *then ye rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God*; refusing to go up into it: *and ye believed him not*; that he would cast out and destroy the inhabitants of it, and put them into the possession of it; which they distrusted by reason of the gigantic stature of some that dwelt in it, and their fortified cities: *nor hearkened to his voice*; whether commanding or encouraging.

Ver. 24. *You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.*] Either from the time he first had and took knowledge of them and visited them, before his departure from Egypt to the land of Midian; (see Exod. ii. 11—14. compared with Acts vii. 25;) or from the time that he was sent to them to deliver them out of Egypt; see Exod. v. 20, 21. and especially from the time he brought them into the wilderness.

Ver. 25. *Thus I fell down before the Lord forty days and forty nights, as I fell down* at the first, &c.] Which Jarchi says are the self-same said above, ver. 18. but doubled or repeated, because of the order of his prayer. The words *at the first* are not in the text; and, as before observed, we do not read that Moses fell down at the first forty days he was in the mount, unless it can be thought he did, Exod. xxxii. 11. wherefore this falling down seems to be as he fell down at the second forty days; and so this was a third forty days, according to the Jewish writers, and of which opinion were Dr. Lightfoot and others; see the note on Exod. xxxiv. 28. *because the Lord had said he would destroy you*; threatened them with destruction, and seemed as if it was his intention to destroy them; nay, even after Moses's first prayer, though he bid him go and lead the people on, yet he declared that he would visit their sin upon them, Exod. xxxii. 34.

Ver. 26. *And I prayed therefore unto the Lord, &c.*] What follows is a different prayer from that in Exod. xxxii. 31, 32. and agrees better with that in ver. 11, 12, 13. delivered before he came down from the mount, yet could not be the same, because delivered at another forty days and nights: *and said, O Lord God, destroy not thy people, and thine inheritance*; because they were his inheritance, a people whom he had chosen for his peculiar treasure; this is the first argument used, another follows: *which thou hast redeemed through thy greatness*; redeemed out of the house of bondage, the land of Egypt, by his great power, as next explained: *which thou hast brought forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand*: inflicting plagues on the Egyptians, particularly destroying their first-born, which made them the Israelites urge to depart.

Ver. 27. *Remember thy servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, &c.*] The covenant he had made with them, the promises he had made to them of the multiplication of their seed, and of giving the land of Canaan to them; which is a third argument used with the Lord not to destroy them: *look not unto the stubbornness of this people, nor to their wickedness, nor to their sin*; not to the natural temper and disposition of the people, which was to be stubborn, obstinate, stiff-necked, and self-

willed; nor to their wickedness, which appears in various instances; nor to that particular sin of idolatry they had now been guilty of; tacitly owning that if God looked to these things, there was sufficient reason to destroy them.

Ver. 28. *Lest the land whence thou broughtest us out say*, &c.] The land of Egypt, the inhabitants of it; *because the Lord was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them*: the land of Canaan, the inhabitants of it being so mighty, and their cities so strongly fortified. Here Moses expresses his concern for the glory of God, and the honour of his perfections, and makes that a fourth argument why he should not destroy them: *and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness*: out of Egypt, a plentiful country, into a wilderness where nothing was to be had; but his choice of them for his inheritance, his redemption of them out of bondage and misery, the care he took of them, and the provision he had made for them in the wilderness, clearly shewed that they were not the objects of his hatred, but of his love.

Ver. 29. *Yet they are thy people*, &c.] Though they had sinned against him: *and thine inheritance*; which he would not forsake and cast off; at least Moses hoped on this account he would not, and makes use thereof as an argument with him why he should not, and which he repeats, adding in effect what he had said before: *which thou broughtest out by thy mighty power and stretched-out arm*; even out of the land of Egypt; the doing of which was plainly the effect of his almighty power, and an evidence of it, considering the weakness of Israel and the strength of Egypt, and the manner in which the Lord brought about this surprising event.

CHAP. X.

In this chapter an account is given of an order to Moses to hew two tables of stone, on which the Lord would write the words that were on the first, and to make an ark and put them into it, all which was accordingly done, ver. 1—5. and of some of the journeys of the children of Israel, ver. 6, 7. and of the separation of the tribe of Levi to the service of the sanctuary, ver. 8, 9. and of Moses's stay in the mount forty days and nights, and his success there, and the direction he had to lead on the people of Israel towards Canaan's land, ver. 10, 11. and who by various arguments are exhorted to fear the Lord, and serve him, and keep his commands, ver. 12—22.

Ver. 1. *At that time the Lord said unto me*, &c.] On the 40th day, mentioned in the preceding chapter, as Aben Ezra, or at the end of forty days, as Jarchi; not of the first forty, for then were given him the first two tables of stone, with the law written on them, which he broke when he came down; but at the end of the second forty days, as some think, when he had fallen before the Lord, and entreated him for the people, and, as a token of his reconciliation to them, gave the following order: *hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first*, &c. Of the same sort of stone, of the same size and form with those God gave him in the mount the first time he was there, and which he broke in his descent from thence: they were the work of God, but these were to be hewed by Moses: the order seems to be given between the request Moses made to see the glory of the Lord, and the proclamation made of it, see Exod. xxxiv. 1. *and come up unto me into the mount*: Mount Sinai; this was certainly the third time of his going up there, and where he continued forty days and nights; but whether he continued there so long the second time may be a matter of question, though he certainly did the third time; see Exod. xxxii. 30, 31. and xxxiv. 1, 4, 28. *and make thee an ark of wood*: Jarchi thinks this was not the ark Bezaleel made, but made after, and is that which went out to battle; and some take it to be a temporary ark, made for the present purpose till that was finished; but Aben Ezra is of opinion it is the same that Bezaleel made: and it may be said to be made by Moses, because he was not only ordered to make it, but it was by his orders and the direction he gave to Bezaleel that it was made; and this seems the more probable, because there the tables remained, ver. 5.

Ver. 2. *And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest*, &c.] Though they were hewn by Moses, the writing on them was the Lord's; and the very same laws, in the same words, without any alteration or variation, were written by him on these as on the former; partly to shew the authenticity of them, that they were of God and not Moses, of a divine original and not human; and partly to shew the invariableness of them, that no change had been made in them, though they had been broken by the people; of which Moses's breaking the tables was a representation; *and thou shalt put them in the ark*; which being a type of Christ may signify the fulfilment of the law by him, who is the end, the fulfilling end of the law for righteousness to every believer; and that as this was in his heart to fulfil it, so it is in his hand as a rule of faith and conversation to his people.*

Ver. 3. *And I made an ark of shittim-wood*, &c.] That is, ordered it to be made, and it was made by Bezaleel, and that of shittim-wood: so the ark that was put into the holy of holies was made of this wood; see Exod. xxv. 10, and the note there, and xxxvii. 1. *and hewed two tables of stone like unto the first*: two marble ones, as the Targum of Jonathan; that is, he ordered them to be hewed, and took care that they should be exactly made as the former were, of which he had perfect knowledge, having received them of the Lord, and brought them with him down the mount: *and went up into the mount, having the two tables in my hand*; in order to have the words of the law, the ten

* See a Sermon of mine on this text, called, "The Law in the Hand of Christ."

commands, written on them, these being only hewn stones, without any thing on them: they were very probably marble, of which great quantities were near at hand.

Ver. 4. *And he wrote on the tables according to the first writing, &c.*] The same laws, in the same letters: *the ten commandments which the Lord spake unto you in the mount;* in Mount Sinai, on which he descended, and from whence he delivered the decalogue by word of mouth in an audible manner, that all the people could hear it: *out of the midst of the fire;* in which he descended, and where he continued, and from whence he spake, so that it was indeed a fiery law: *in the day of the assembly;* when all the people of Israel were assembled together at the bottom of the mount to hear it: *and the Lord gave them unto me;* the two tables, when he had wrote upon them the ten commands.

Ver. 5. *And I turned myself, &c.*] From the Lord, out of whose hands he had received the tables: *and came down from the mount;* with the two tables in his hand as before, one in one hand, and the other in the other hand: *and put the tables in the ark which I had made;* or ordered to be made: *and there they be, as the Lord commanded me;* there they were when Moses rehearsed what is contained in this book, on the plains of Moab, about 38 years after the putting them into it; and there they continued to be when the ark was brought into Solomon's temple, 1 Kings viii. 9. and there they were as long as the ark was in being; which may denote the continuance of the law in the hands of Christ under the Gospel dispensation as a rule of walk and conversation to his people.

Ver. 6. *And the children of Israel took their journey from Beeroth of the children of Jaakan, &c.*] Not when or soon after they removed from Sinai; for if this place is the same with Bene Jaakan, as is generally supposed, they had a great many journeys, mansions, and stations before they came to it; see Numb. xxxiii. 31. and besides, since Aaron, according to this account, died at their next station from hence, that was 38 years after their departure from Mount Sinai; and it is hard to say what should be the reason of making mention of these two or three journeys here; and whereas they are here said to journey from the place here mentioned *to Mosera;* on the contrary in Numb. xxxiii. 31. they are said to depart from Mosera, and pitch in Bene Jaakan; which is accounted for by their going backwards and forwards, and so both may be true. Aben Ezra is of opinion, that Beeroth Bene Jaakan, or the wells of the children of Jaakan, is not the same with Bene Jaakan, nor Mosera the same with Moseroth; but Beeroth is Kadesh, and Mosera is the name of the desert of Mount Hor; and it is certain that Moseroth was the 27th station, and Mosera, or the desert of Mount Hor, where Aaron died, was the 34th, and therefore must be distant; see Numb. xxxiii. 30—37. which seems to agree with what follows: *there Aaron died, and there he was buried;* it is certain that Aaron died on Mount Hor, Numb. xx. 23, 28. and xxxiii. 38, 39. or there died and was buried when in the desert of Mosera: *and Eleazar his son ministered in the priest's office in his stead;* so that though the high-priest died, the office continued, and the law of it remained in force, and the tribe of Levi was separated for the service of the sanctuary, as afterwards expressed.

Ver. 7. *From thence they journeyed unto Gudgodah, &c.*] Which Jarchi takes to be the same with Horhagidgad, and so do most; see Numb. xxxiii. 32, 33. but Aben Ezra says it is not, but is a general name, including Zalmanah, Punoen, and Oboth, places the Israelites came to after they removed from Mount Hor, where Aaron died; see Numb. xxxiii. 41, 42, 43. *and from Gudgodah to Jotbath, a land of rivers of waters;* which the above writer takes to be the same with Beer, the well, Numb. xxi. 16. and by this description of it it was a place where there was much water.

Ver. 8. *At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, &c.*] Not at the time that Moses came down from the mount with the tables of the law, but some considerable time after, even after the tabernacle was erected; nor at the time that Aaron died, and Eleazar succeeded him, but many years before that; unless there was a fresh separation of them, or a renewal of it when Eleazar became high-priest in his father's stead; and so that being mentioned is the reason of its being repeated here; *to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord;* even that into which the law, sometimes called the covenant, was put, and therefore here called the ark of the covenant: when this was carried from place to place, as it was especially in the wilderness, it was the business of the Levites to bear it, particularly the Kohathites; Numb. iii. 31. and x. 21. see 1 Chron. v. 1. *to stand before the Lord to minister unto him;* that is, to his priests, in the tabernacle, and to keep and guard that: *and to bless in his name unto this day;* not to bless the people, which was the work of the priest, but to sing praise in the name of the Lord, to give thanks unto him, and bless and praise him.

Ver. 9. *Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren, &c.*] In the division of the land of Canaan, because being separated to the service of the sanctuary, he had no leisure to plough and sow, as Jarchi observes: *the Lord is his inheritance, as the Lord thy God promised him;* not in a spiritual sense, for so the Lord was an inheritance and portion of other Israelites; though these being taken off of worldly employments, and devoted to sanctuary service, might have more communion with God than others; but in a temporal sense, provision being made particularly by tithes, which were the Lord's, for their maintenance: and so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan paraphrase the words; "gifts which the Lord gave him "are his inheritance;" see Numb. xviii. 20, 21.

Ver. 10. *And I stayed in the mount, according to the first time, forty days and forty nights, &c.*] Which is to be connected with ver. 6. and relates what passed before he came down from the mount with the two tables; as that he stayed there as long as he did when he received the first tables, and fasted also as long as he did then; see Exod. xxxiv. 28. *and the Lord hearkened unto me at that time also;* to his prayer on the behalf of the people: and *the Lord would not destroy thee;* though he had threatened it, and their sin had deserved it.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord said unto me, arise, take thy journey before the people, &c.*] Here Moses goes on

with his relation of things at Mount Sinai, how that upon his supplication for the people, on account of the destruction they were threatened with for their idolatry, the Lord was graciously pleased not only to hear him and forgive the people, but ordered him to go before them, and lead them on towards the land of Canaan he had promised them, Exod. xxxii. 34. and xxxiii. 1. *that they may go in and possess the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give unto them:* and which had it not been for their after-murmurings and rebellions, they had been in the possession of it in a little time, especially after their departure from Sinai.

Ver. 12. *And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee,* &c.] For all these favours bestowed upon them, the forgiveness of their sins, and a fresh intimation of their possession of the land of Canaan, and the renewal of the promise of it made to their fathers: *but to fear the Lord thy God:* to fear him with a filial fear, to fear him and his goodness, and him for his goodness-sake, and particularly for his pardoning grace and mercy vouchsafed to them; see Psal. cxxx. 4. *to walk in all his ways:* prescribed and directed to by him, every path of duty, whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial: *and to love him, and to serve the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul:* for that is the best service which springs from love, and love constrains unto, and which is hearty and sincere, as that is, and is performed in the best manner such are capable of.

Ver. 13. *To keep the commandments of the Lord, and his statutes,* &c.] Both the ten commands and all others: *which I command thee this day for thy good:* promises of temporal good things, introduction into the land of Canaan, possession of it, and continuance in it, being made to obedience to them.

Ver. 14. *Behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, are the Lord's thy God,* &c.] Made and possessed by him; the airy and starry heaven, the third heaven, which is the heaven of heavens, the seat of the divine Majesty, the habitation of angels and glorified saints: *the earth also, with all that therein* is; that is his property, and at his disposal, being made by him, and all that is upon it, or contained in it, even whatsoever is on or in the whole terraqueous globe; see Psal. cxv. 15, 16.

Ver. 15. *Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them,* &c.] Though the heavens and the earth, and all the inhabitants of them are the Lord's by creation, yet he had a special regard unto, and a peculiar complacency in, the fathers of the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; from whence arose some particular expressions of love to them, signified by various acts of kindness done them, and promises made unto them: *and he chose their seed after them, even you above all the people, as* it is *this day;* to be a special people to him, to enjoy civil and religious privileges greater than any other: and particularly to have his law given to them, his tabernacle and worship set up among them, which were at this time, and which gave them the preference to all other nations; see ch. iv. 7, 8. and vii. 6, 7, 8. Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. Rom. iii. 1, 2. and ix. 4, 5.

Ver. 16. *Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart,* &c.] Content not yourselves with, nor put your confidence in outward circumcision of the flesh, but be concerned for the circumcision of the heart; for removing from that whatever is disagreeable to the Lord, even all carnality, sensuality, hypocrisy, and superfluity of naughtiness, and for having that put there which is well-pleasing in his sight; and which though it is the work of God, and he only can do it and has promised it, yet such an exhortation is made to bring men to a sense of their need of it, and of the importance of it, and to shew how agreeable it is to the Lord, and so to stir them up to seek unto him for it; see ch. xxx. 6. *and be no more stiff-necked:* froward, obstinate, and disobedient, as they had been hitherto; ch. ix. 6, 13, 24.

Ver. 17. *For the Lord your God is God of gods,* &c.] Of angels and civil magistrates, who are sometimes so called; these are his creatures, act for him and under him, and are accountable to him: *the Lord of lords;* of the kings and princes of the earth, who have their crowns, sceptres, and kingdoms from him, and hold them of him, by and under whom they reign and decree judgment, and who are subject to his authority and control: *a great God;* as the perfections of his nature, the works of his hands, the blessings of his providence and grace, and the extensiveness of his dominion in heaven, earth, and hell, shew him to be: *a mighty and a terrible;* mighty and powerful to help, protect, and defend his people; terrible to his and their enemies, even to the kings of the earth: *which regardeth not persons;* but bestows his favours, whether in a way of providence or grace, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, without regard to the works and merits of men, their characters or circumstances: *nor taketh reward:* or bribes, to avert threatened and deserved judgments; see Job xxxvi. 18, 19.

Ver. 18. *He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow,* &c.] Who have none to help them, and whose patron and defender he is, and will do them justice himself, and take care that it is done them by others, or avenge their injuries, for he is a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow, in his holy habitation; Psal. lxviii. 5. *and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment:* one that is in a foreign country, at a distance from his native land, and destitute of friends; such God in his providence takes care of, and expresses his love and kindness to, by giving them the necessaries of life, food, and raiment.

Ver. 19. *Love ye therefore the stranger,* &c.] Because the Lord loves him; and another reason follows, particularly binding on the Israelites: *for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt:* and therefore should sympathize with such, and shew them compassion, relieve them in distress, and afford them whatever they want, and is in the power of their hands to communicate to them; remembering their own condition in Egypt, and how welcome such a treatment would have been to them then, as well as the kind and careful providence of God towards them at that time.

Ver. 20. *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God,* &c.] Which includes the whole worship of him, external and internal: *him shalt thou serve;* heartily and sincerely, according to his revealed will, and him only: *and to him shalt thou cleave;* and not turn aside to follow

other gods, and worship them: *and swear by his name*; and his only, whenever it is necessary to take an oath, which should not be done rashly or on trivial accounts; and never by any creature, but by the living God; see ch. vi. 13.

Ver. 21. *He is thy praise*, &c.] The object and matter of it, who deserves the praises of all his creatures, because of his perfections, works, and blessings of goodness; for all mercies temporal and spiritual come from him, and therefore he is greatly to be praised for them: praise is his due, and it is comely in his people to give it to him; see Jer. xvii. 14. *and he is thy God, which hath done for thee these great and terrible things which thine eyes have seen*; which were done upon the Egyptians for their sakes, both in the land of Egypt and at the Red sea; and also what he had done for them in the wilderness, to Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, Psal. cvi. 22. and cxxxvi. 10—21.

Ver. 22. *Thy fathers went down into Egypt with* 70 *persons*, &c.] That is, in all; for there were not 70 besides Jacob and the patriarchs his sons, but with them; see Gen. xlvi. 26, 27. *and now the Lord thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude*; as he promised they should be, Gen. xv. 5.

CHAP. XI.

IN this chapter, the exhortation to love the Lord, and keep his commands, is repeated and urged again and again from various considerations; as not only from the chastisement of Pharaoh and the wicked Egyptians, but of such Israelites who offended the Lord, and transgressed his law, ver. 1—7. from the goodness and excellency of the land they were going to inherit, ver. 8—11. from the blessing of rain that would come upon it, and be productive of all good things for man and beast, in case of obedience, and a restraint of it in case of disobedience, ver. 12—17. from the continuance of them and their offspring in the land, should they be careful to observe the commands themselves, and teach them their children, ver. 18—21. and from the extensiveness of their conquests and dominions, ver. 22—25. and from the different issue and effects of their conduct and behaviour, a blessing upon them if obedient, but a curse if disobedient, ver. 26, 27, 28. and the chapter is concluded with an exhortation to pronounce the blessing on Mount Gerizzim, and the curse on Mount Ebal; the situation of which places is described when they should come into the land of Canaan, of which they are assured, ver. 29—32.

Ver. 1. *Therefore thou shalt love the Lord thy God*, &c.] Because he is so great and glorious in himself, and because he had done such great and good things for them, the Israelites, particularly in the multiplication of them, the last thing mentioned: *and keep his charge*; whatsoever the Lord had charged them to observe, even what follow: *and his statutes and his judgments, and his commandments, alway*; all his laws, ceremonial, judicial, and moral; and that constantly and continually, all the days of their lives.

Ver. 2. *And know you this day*, &c.] Take notice of, and diligently attend unto, what is now about to be delivered: *for I speak not unto your children which have not known, and which have not seen, the chastisement of the Lord your God*; who have no knowledge and experience of the chastisement of the Lord on themselves, or on their foes or friends; and with whom the argument drawn from it could not come with that force, and make that impression, as it might be thought it would, being used with them who had perfect knowledge of it. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it doctrine, which, being children, they were not instructed so perfectly in as they were who were adult persons, to whom Moses directs his discourse: *his greatness, his mighty hand, and stretched-out arm*; the exceeding greatness of his power, displayed in the following instances.

Ver. 3. *And his miracles, and his acts, which he did in the midst of Egypt*, &c.] The miraculous works done there, the ten plagues inflicted on the Egyptians for refusing to let Israel go: *unto Pharaoh king of Egypt, and unto all his land*; for those plagues not only affected him and his court, and his metropolis, but all parts of the land, the inhabitants of it everywhere.

Ver. 4. *And what he did unto the army of Egypt, unto their horses, and to their chariots*, &c.] At the Red sea, when they pursued Israel in order to bring them back or destroy them, after they had let them go, which army was very numerous; see Exod. xiv. 7, 9. *how he made the water of the Red sea to overflow them*; or *to flow over their faces*[b], *as they pursued after you*; so that they could not see their way, nor steer their course after them; and not only so, but were covered with the waters of the sea, drowned in them, and sunk to the bottom of them: *and* how *the Lord hath destroyed them unto this day*; either continued to destroy them yet more and more by one means or another; or else the destruction made by the several plagues upon them, and particularly that of their army at the Red sea, which was the strength and glory of the nation, was so general and extensive, that they never recovered it to that day; and so were in no capacity of coming out against them, and attacking them, and doing them any hurt, all the forty years they had been in the wilderness; of which no doubt they had knowledge, and of their condition and circumstances there.

Ver. 5. *And what he did unto you in the wilderness, until ye came unto this place*.] Meaning not so much the good things he did for them in divers places, as the chastisements and corrections he had exercised them with for their murmurings, rebellions, idolatry, and uncleanness, as at Taberah, Kibroth-hattaavah, on the coast of Edom, and plains of Moab; by fire, by sword,

[b] הציף־על פניהם fecit inundare super facies eorum, Paguinus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

by plagues, and fiery serpents; the instances both before and after being of this sort.

Ver. 6. *And what he did unto Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, the son of Reuben,* &c.] When they with Korah and his company quarrelled with Moses and Aaron about the priesthood, Numb. xvi. 1, &c. *how the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up;* the history of which see in Numb. xvi. 30—33. *and their households and their tents;* not their houses and their tents, as the Septuagint and some other versions; for though the word signifies houses, and is often used for them, yet here it must signify families, their wives, and children; since they had no houses, but dwelt in tents, all which were swallowed up with them: *and all the substance that* was *in their possession;* gold, silver, cattle, household goods, and whatever they were possessed of: *or was at their feet*[c]; or which followed them, their living creatures; or was for them, as Aben Ezra interprets it; for their use, service, and necessity: and this was done *in the midst of all Israel;* openly and publicly, they beholding it, as follows; and therefore should be rendered, *before all Israel*[d]; and, besides, the tents of Dathan and Abiram, Reubenites, were not in the midst of Israel.

Ver. 7. *But your eyes have seen all the great acts of the Lord which he did.*] Even all before related, with many others; and therefore the instruction they should learn from thence should be as follows.

Ver. 8. *Therefore shall you keep all the commandments which I command you this day,* &c.] For the reasons before suggested, as well as for what follow: *that ye may be strong;* healthful in body, and courageous in mind, for sin tends to weaken both; whereas observance of the commands of God contributes to the health and strength of the body, and the vigour of the mind; both which were necessary to the present expedition they were going upon: *and go in and possess the land whither ye go to possess it;* the land of Canaan, they were marching towards in order to possess it; and nothing would more inspire them with courage, and cause them to enter it manfully without fear of their enemies, than obedience to the commands of God; whose presence being promised them on that account, they might expect it, and so had nothing to fear from the inhabitants of the land.

Ver. 9. *And that ye may prolong your days in the land,* &c.] Not only enter it, and take possession of it, but continue in it long, which depended upon their obedience to the laws of God: *which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give unto them and to their seed;* had promised with an oath, so that they might be assured of the enjoyment of it, though they could not be of their continuance in it, unless they obeyed the divine commands: *a land that floweth with milk and honey;* abounds with all good things, whose fruits are fat as milk, and sweet as honey; so the Targum of Jonathan.

Ver. 10. *For the land whither thou goest in to possess it,* &c.] The land of Canaan they were about to take possession of: is *not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out;* either the whole land of Egypt, or that part of it, Rameses, in which Israel dwelt, and which was the best of it, as Jarchi observes, and yet Canaan exceeded that; though the design of this passage is not so much to set forth the superior excellency and fertility of the land of Canaan to that of Egypt, which was certainly a very fruitful country; see Gen. xiii. 10. but to observe some things in which they differed, whereby they both became fruitful, and in which Canaan had the advantage: *where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs;* as a gardener when he has sowed his seed, or planted his plants, waters them that they may grow, by carrying his water-pot from bed to bed, which requires much labour and toil. In Egypt rain seldom fell, especially in some places it was very rare, though that there was none at all is a vulgar mistake; see the note on Zech. xiv. 18[e]. To supply the want of it the river Nile overflowed once a year, which not only moistened the earth, but left mud or slime upon it, which made it fruitful; but this was not sufficient, for what through the river not overflowing enough sometimes, and so as to reach some places, and through the heat of the sun hardening the earth again, it was found necessary to cut canals from it, and by water from thence to water it, as a gardener waters his seed and plants; and it is to this watering that respect is here had, not to the overflowing of the Nile, for that was before the seed was sown; but to the watering of it out of the canals, which was done after it was sown; the former was without any trouble of theirs, the latter with much labour; the manner in which it is done is expressed by the phrase *with thy foot,* which the Targum explains *by thyself,* by their own labour and industry. Jarchi is more particular; "the land of Egypt had need to "have water brought from the Nile with thy foot;" he seems to have understood the phrase to signify carrying water on foot from the Nile to the place where it was wanted; but the custom still in use in Egypt, when they water their fields, plantations, or gardens, will give us a clear understanding of this phrase; as a late traveller informs us[f], the water is drawn out of the river (Nile) by instruments, and lodged in capacious cisterns; when plants require to be refreshed, they strike out the plugs that are fixed in the bottoms of the cisterns, and then the water gushing out, is conducted from one rill to another by the gardener, who is always ready as occasion requires to stop and divert the torrent by turning the earth against it *with his foot,* and opening at the same time with his mattock a new trench to receive it; and to the same purpose another learned person[g] has observed, that at other times (than the flowing of the Nile) they are obliged to have recourse to art, and to raise the water out of the river and some deep pits by the help of machines, which water is afterwards directed in its course by channels cut in the ground, which convey the water to those places where it is wanted; and when one part of the ground is sufficiently watered, they then stop that channel, by thrusting some earth into the en-

[c] אשר ברגליהם quæ erat in pedibus eorum, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

[d] בקרב coram omni Israele, Noldius, p. 212. No. 975.

[e] See also Vansleb's Relation of a Voyage to Egypt, p. 212. who speaks of large rains in Egypt.

[f] Shaw's Travels, p. 409.

[g] Clayton's Chronology of the Hebrew Bible, p. 478.

trance of it *with their foot*, and then also *with their foot* open a passage into the next channel, and so on: and Philo the Jew[h] speaks of a machine with which they used to water fields, and was worked with the feet by going up the several steps within, which gave motion to it.

Ver. 11. *But the land whither ye go to possess it is a land of hills and valleys*, &c.] And so could not be watered by the overflow of a river, and by canals cut out of it, and in the manner Egypt was; which was for the most part a plain and flat country, but not so Canaan, in which were many hills and mountains, as those about Jerusalem, Carmel, Tabor, Lebanon, and others; and plains and valleys, as the valley of Jezreel, *&c.* and which made it more delightful and pleasant for prospects; see ch. viii. 7. *and drinketh water of the rain of heaven*; by which it was watered, refreshed, and made fruitful; not by means of men, but by the Lord himself, and so with much more ease to men, and without the toil and labour they were obliged to in Egypt, as well as it was both more healthful and pleasant; for the damps that arose from the overflow of the Nile were sometimes prejudicial to health; and during the season of its overflow, which was in the summer, they were obliged to keep in their houses, and could not walk abroad for weeks together: to which inconveniences the land of Canaan was not subject; but then, as its fertility depended on rain from heaven, the Israelites would be under the greater obligation to observe the commands of God, who could give and withhold it at his pleasure, and as they conducted themselves; which seems to be the general drift of this passage.

Ver. 12. *A land which the Lord thy God careth for*, &c.] In a very particular and special manner; otherwise he has a general care of the whole world, and all the parts of it; for as the earth is his, and the fulness thereof, his providential care reaches everywhere: but as this spot was what he had chosen for his own residence, and the place of his worship, and for an habitation for his peculiar people: he exercised a more peculiar care over it, to make it fruitful, commodious, and pleasant; or which *he seeketh*[i]; that is, the good of it, and to make it convenient, useful, and delightful to his people; yea, which he sought for and desired for his own habitation, Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14. *the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year*; his eyes of providence, to give the former and the latter rain, and that there be seed-time and harvest in their seasons, and that the fruits of it be produced at their proper time; some at the beginning, others at the end of the year, and others in the intervening months, and all wisely suited to the good of the inhabitants of it.

Ver. 13. *And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day*, &c.] In the name, and by the authority of the Lord, the only lawgiver: *to love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul*; see ch. x. 12. Jarchi interprets this of prayer; but it is not to be restrained to that only, but includes the whole service of God, in all the parts of it, performed from a principle of love to him, and in sincerity and truth.

Ver. 14. *That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season*, &c.] Such a quantity of it as the land required, a sufficiency of it to make it fruitful, and that in proper time: *the first rain and the latter rain*; the former rain in Marchesvan, the latter rain in Nisan, as the Targum of Jonathan; the first fell about our October, which was at or quickly after seed-time, to water the seed that it might take root, and grow and spring up; and the latter fell about March, a little before harvest, to ripen the corn, and swell and plump the ears of it, and make them yield more and better; see the note on Joel ii. 23. *that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil*; which were the principal things the land afforded for the sustenance of men; bread-corn, the stay and staff of human life, and which strengthens man's heart, and makes him fit for labour; wine, which is his drink, and makes the heart of man gladsome and cheerful; and oil, which in these countries was used instead of butter, and was fattening, and made the face to shine, Psal. civ. 15. The in-gathering of these fruits were at different times; the barley-harvest first, the wheat-harvest next, and after that the vintage, and the gathering of the olives; and by means of rain in due season they were favoured with each of these.

Ver. 15. *And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle*, &c.] By giving plentiful showers of rain at proper times, to cause it to spring up and grow, that so there might be food for the cattle of every sort, greater or lesser; see Psal. civ. 13, 14. Zech. x. 1. *that thou mayest eat and be full*; which refers to the preceding verse as well as to this; and the sense is, that the Israelites might eat of and enjoy the fruits of the earth to satiety; namely, their corn, wine, and oil; and that their cattle might have grass enough to supply them with.

Ver. 16. *Take heed to yourselves, that your heart be not deceived*, &c.] By observing the influence of the heavens upon the fruitfulness of the earth, and so be drawn to the worship of the host of them, the sun, moon, and stars; or by the examples of nations round about them; and by the plausible arguments they may make use of, taken from the traditions of ancestors, from antiquity, and the consent of nations, and the great numbers of worshippers, and the like: *and ye turn aside*; from the true God, and the worship of him; or from the law, as Jarchi, which directs to the worship of one God, and forbids idolatry, or the worshipping of images: *and serve other gods, and worship them*; other gods than the one only living and true God; gods that made not the heavens and the earth, and which cannot give rain, nor any blessing and mercy of life, nor help and deliver their worshippers when in distress.

Ver. 17. *And then the Lord's wrath be kindled against you*, &c.] For their idolatry, nothing being more provoking to him than that, it being contrary to his nature and being, as well as to his will, and to his honour and glory: *and he shut up the heaven, that there be no rain*; the treasures and storehouses of it there, or the windows of it, the clouds, which when opened let

h De Confusione Ling. p. 322.

i דרש quærit, Paguinus; quærens, Montanus.

it down, but when shut withhold it; the key of rain is one of the keys which the Jews say[*] the Lord keeps in his own hand, and with it he opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens; see Deut. xxviii. 12. Mal. iii. 10. *and that the land yield not her fruit*; which is unavoidably the case when rain is withheld: *and lest ye perish quickly from off the good land which the Lord giveth you*; for if the land does not yield its fruits sufficient to support the inhabitants of it, they must in course perish.

Ver. 18. *Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul*, &c.] Treasure up the laws of God delivered to them in their minds, retain them in their memories, and cherish a cordial affection for them; which would be an antidote against apostacy, idolatry, and other sins, Psal. cxix. 11. *and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes*; of this and the two following verses, see the notes on ch. vi. 7, 8, 9.

Ver. 21. *That your days may be multiplied*, &c.] Long life being a very desirable blessing, and which is promised to those that obey and keep the law; see ch. xxx. 19, 20. Psal. xci. 16. *and the days of your children*; which are dear to parents, and the continuance of whose lives, next to their own, is most desirable, yea, as desirable as their own; and especially it is desirable that they might have a posterity descending from them, to enjoy for ever their estates and possessions; as it was to the people of Israel, that they might have a seed always to dwell *in the land which the Lord sware unto your fathers to give them*; the land of Canaan, so often spoken of as the promise, oath, and gift of God: *as the days of heaven upon the earth*; that is, as long as the heavens and the earth shall be, and the one shall be over the other, as they will be to the end of time.

Ver. 22. *For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you to do them*, &c.] Observe and take notice of them, even all of them, and so as not merely to have a theory or notional knowledge of them, but to put them in practice: *to love the Lord your God*; and shew it by obeying his commands, and which is the end of the commandment, and the principle from which all obedience should flow: *to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him*; see ch. x. 12, 20.

Ver. 23. *Then will the Lord drive out all those nations from before you*, &c.] By little and little, even all the seven nations which then inhabited the land of Canaan; and this he would do to make room for them, that they might inherit the land; see ch. vii. 1. *and ye shall possess greater nations, and mightier than yourselves*; countries whose inhabitants were more in number, and greater in strength, than they; and therefore the conquest of them was not to be ascribed to themselves, but to the Lord; this is often observed; see ch. vii. 1. and ix. 1.

Ver. 24. *Every place wherein the soles of your feet shall tread*, &c.] Meaning in the land of Canaan: though the Jews vainly apply this to every land, and country, and place therein, where any of them come; pleasing themselves with this foolish fancy, that all shall be theirs that the foot of any of them have trod upon, or they have dwelt in; but that it respects only the land of Canaan appears by the following description of it and its boundaries: *from the wilderness*; the wilderness of Paran, which lay to the south of it, where Kadesh was, from whence the spies were sent, and was the southern border of it: *and Lebanon*; which was a range of mountains to the north of it; and was the northern border of the land: *from the river, the river Euphrates*; which was the eastern border of it, when it was carried to its utmost extent, as in the days of Solomon, 1 Kings iv. 21. *even unto the uttermost sea shall your coast be*; the Mediterranean sea, which was the western border of the land of Canaan, or the *hinder sea*, and so it is called Zech. xiv. 8. it lay at the back of them; for if a man stands with his face to the east, the south will be on his right hand, and the north on his left, and the west will be behind him, or at the back of him.

Ver. 25. *There shall be no man able to stand before you*, &c.] Meaning not a single man, such an one as Og, or any of the sons of Anak, the giants; because it could never be thought, imagined, or feared, that one man only should be able to stand against 600,000 fighting men, but any people or nation, though greater and mightier than they: *for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you, and the dread of you, upon all the land that ye shall tread upon*: that is, upon all the land of Canaan, and the inhabitants of it; who should hear what wonderful things had been done for them in Egypt, and at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; and what they had done to Sihon and Og, and to their countries, and which accordingly was fulfilled, Josh. ii. 9, 10, 11. *as he hath said unto you*; had promised them, Deut. ii. 25. and which was prophesied of in the prophetic song at the Red sea; see Exod. xv. 14, 15, 16.

Ver. 26. *Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse*, &c.] Meaning the law of God, and the statutes, judgments, and commandments of it; which, if obeyed, blessings would be bestowed upon them; but if disobeyed, they would be liable to the curses of it, as the following words explain it; see ch. xxx. 15—19. every one of the Israelites were called upon to see and consider this matter, it being an interesting one to them all.

Ver. 27. *A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God*, &c.] That is, a blessing should come upon them, even all temporal blessings they stood in need of; they should be blessed in body and estate, in their families, and in their flocks, in town and country; see Deut. xxviii. 1—6. *which I command you this day*; afresh repeated to them, and enjoined them the observation of it in the name of the Lord.

Ver. 28. *And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God*, &c.] Accursed in body and estate, in basket and store; in their families, flocks, and herds; within doors and without; in city, and country; going out, or coming in; in this world, and that to come, if divine goodness prevent not; see ch. xxviii. 15—20. and xxix. 20. *but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day*: which the law he gave them, and repeated to them, directed them to walk in: *to go after other gods, which ye have not*

[*] Targum Jon. in Deut. xxviii. 12.

known: to serve and worship the gods of other nations, strange gods, which neither they nor their fathers knew any thing of, or ever received any good thing from; and which indeed are no gods, and nothing in the world, as an idol is.

Ver. 29. *And it shall come to pass, when the Lord thy God hath brought thee into the land whither thou goest to possess it*, &c.] Which is often observed, as being near at hand; and when and where many things were to be done, which could not be done in the place and circumstances they now were, particularly what follows: *that thou shalt put the blessing on Mount Gerizzim, and the curse upon Mount Ebal*: that is, pronounce the one on one mountain, and the other on the other mountain, or at least towards them, or over-against them. The Targum of Jonathan is, "ye shall set six "tribes on Mount Gerizzim, and six tribes on Mount "Ebal; (see ch. xxvii. 12, 13.) blessing they shall "turn their faces against Mount Gerizzim, and cursing "they shall turn their faces against Mount Ebal;" with which agrees the account given in the Misnah; "six "tribes went to the top of Mount Gerizzim, and six to "the top of Mount Ebal; and the priests and the "Levites, and the ark, stood below in the middle; "the priests surrounded the ark, and the Levites the "priests, and all Israel were on this and on that side "of the ark, as in Josh. viii. 33. then they turned their "faces against Gerizzim, they opened with the bless- "ing, blessed is he that maketh not any graven or "molten image, and both answered *Amen*; then they "turned their faces against Mount Ebal, and opened "with the curse, Deut. xxvii. 15. and both answered "*Amen*[s];" see the performance of this command in Josh. viii. 33, 34.

Ver. 30. Are *they not on the other side Jordan*, &c.] Opposite to that where Moses now was in the plains of Moab, even in Samaria; so in the Misnah[t] it is said, "as soon as Israel passed over Jordan, they came to "Mount Gerizzim and Mount Ebal, which are in Sa- "maria;" but those mountains were not near Jordan nor Jericho, to which the people of Israel came first, but 60 miles from thence; though they were, as Moses says, on the other side from the place they now were: *by the way wherewith the sun goeth down*: or, as the Targum of Jonathan, "after the way of the sun-set- "ting;" following that, or taking their direction from thence, signifying that they lay to the west of Jordan: *in the land of the Canaanites*; of that particular tribe or nation which were eminently called Canaanites, for these dwelt by the sea by the coast of Jordan, Numb. xiii. 29. or as further described, *that dwell in the champaign over-against Gilgal*; in the plain open champaign country opposite to Gilgal; not that Gilgal Joshua encamped at before he came to Jericho, which in Moses's time was not known by that name, but another, as Dr. Lightfoot[u] observes, and he thinks Galilee is meant: *beside the plains of Moreh*; near to Shechem, Gen. xii. 6. and that Gerizzim, one of these mountains, was not far from Shechem, is evident from Judg. ix. 6, 7. and so in the Misnah[w] it is said, that these mountains were on the side of Shechem, which is in the plains of Moreh, as in Deut. xi. 30. Gen. xii. 6. as the plains of Moreh here denote Shechem, so there: Benjamin of Tudela says[x] there is a valley between them, in which lies Shechem; and in his time there were on Mount Gerizzim fountains and orchards, but Mount Ebal was dry like stones and rocks. The Targum of Jonathan here, instead of Moreh, reads Mamre; see Gen. xiii. 18.

Ver. 31. *For ye shall pass over Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you*, &c.] They were now near it, and by this they are assured they should pass over it, in order to take possession of the land God had given them, and which gift of his was a sufficient title to it: *and ye shall possess it, and dwell therein*; should not only take possession of it, but make their abode in it; they are assured hereby of continuance in it, on condition they obeyed the laws of God, as follows.

Ver. 32. *And ye shall observe to do all the statutes and judgments*, &c.] Take notice of them, and heed unto them, so as to practise them: *which I set before you this day*; repeated in order to them, on the observance of which depended their continuance in the land of Canaan; and therefore this is so often repeated and urged.

CHAP. XII.

In this chapter orders are given to destroy all altars, pillars, groves, and images, made for the worship of idols in the land of Canaan, ver. 1, 2, 3. and to bring all sacrifices and holy things unto the place which the Lord should choose for his habitation, and not do as they then did, not being come to their rest, ver. 4—14. flesh for their common food might be killed and eaten in their own houses, provided they did not eat the blood, but poured it out upon the earth, ver. 15—25. tithes, vows, and free-will offerings, were to be eaten in the holy place, ver. 17, 18, 19. and burnt-offerings to be offered on the altar of the Lord, and the blood of them to be poured out upon the altar, ver. 26, 27, 28. all which they were carefully to observe, ver. 29. and they are cautioned against idolatry, and inquiring after the manner of it, as practised by the old inhabitants of the land, and introducing their customs into the service of God, ver. 30—32.

Ver. 1. *These are the statutes and judgments which ye shall observe to do*, &c.] Which are recorded in this and the following chapters; here a new discourse begins, and which perhaps was delivered at another time, and

[s] Sotah, c. 7. sect. 5.
[t] Ibid.
[u] Chorograph. Cent. c. 48.
[w] Sotah, c. 7. sect. 5.
[x] Itinerarium, p. 39, 40.

respects things that were to be observed: *in the land which the Lord God of thy fathers giveth thee to possess it;* the land of Canaan, often described by this circumlocution, to put them in mind that it was promised to their fathers by their covenant-God, was his gift to them, and which they would quickly be in the possession of; and therefore when in it should be careful to observe the statutes and judgments of God constantly: even *all the days that ye live upon the earth;* or land, the land of Canaan; for though there were some laws binding upon them, live where they would, there were others peculiar to the land of Canaan, which they were to observe as long as they and their posterity lived there; see 1 Kings viii. 40.

Ver. 2. *Ye shall utterly destroy all the places wherein the nations which ye shall possess served their gods,* &c.] The temples erected for the worship of them by the Canaanites, of which there were many, as appears by the various names of places given them from the temples in them, as Beth-shemesh, Beth-baalmeon, Beth-peor, and others: *upon the high mountains and upon the hills;* which they chose to worship on, being nearer the heavens, and which they thought most acceptable to their gods; and some of them had their names from hence, as Baal-peor, in like manner as Jupiter Olympius was called by the Greeks; see Jer. ii. 20. and iii. 6. *and under every green tree;* which being shady and solitary, and pleasant to the sight, they fancied their gods delighted in, and this notion prevailed among other nations; and there is scarce any deity but what had some tree or another devoted to it; as the oak to Jupiter, the laurel to Apollo, the ivy to Bacchus, the olive to Minerva, the myrtle to Venus, &c. see Jer. ii. 20. and iii. 6.

Ver. 3. *And you shall overthrow their altars,* &c.] Which were of stone, as Jarchi observes; whereas the altar ordered to be made by the Lord, before the altar of burnt-offering in the tabernacle was made, was of earth, Exod. xx. 24. these were to be demolished, lest the Israelites should be tempted to make use of them; and besides, the Lord would not have any remains of idolatry in the land where his tabernacle and worship were, as being abominable to him: *and break down their pillars;* or statues erected to the honour of their idols; according to Jarchi it was a single stone hewed out at first for the basis of a statue[y]; perhaps such as were called Bætulia, in imitation of the stone Jacob set up for a pillar at Beth-el, Gen. xxviii. 18, 19. *and burn their groves with fire;* which were planted about their temples, and under which also their idols were placed, and where they privately committed the most abominable lewdness under the notion of religion. The Targum of Jonathan renders the word *abominations,* meaning idols; and so Jarchi interprets it by a tree that is worshipped; see the note on ch. vii. 5. *and you shall hew down the graven images of their gods;* which were made of wood: *and destroy the names of them out of the place;* by never making any mention of them in common discourse, and by changing the names of places called from them; and especially by destroying all the relics of them, and whatever appertained to them, which might lead to the mention of them; see Hos. ii. 17.

Ver. 4. *Ye shall not do so unto the Lord your God.*] Not sacrifice to him on hills and mountains, and under green trees; though the Jews commonly refer this to the destruction of the names of God, and of any thing appertaining to the temple; that though the temples and the altars of the Heathens were to be overthrown, yet not a stone was to be taken from the house of God, or that belonged to it, nor any of his names to be blotted out; so the Targum of Jonathan and Maimonides[z], who also observes[a], that whoever removes a stone by way of destruction from the altar, or from the temple, or from the court, is to be beaten; so he that burns the holy wood.

Ver. 5. *But unto the place which the Lord your God,* &c.] The Targum of Jonathan is, that the Word of the Lord your God: *shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there;* to place his tabernacle, set up his worship, take up his residence, and cause the Shechinah, or his divine Majesty, to dwell there, as the next clause explains it; out of what tribe it should be chosen, and where it should be, is not said. Maimonides[b] gives three reasons for it; he says there are three great mysteries why the place is not clearly, but obscurely mentioned; 1. lest the Gentiles should seize upon it, and make war for the sake of it, supposing this place to be the end of the law; 2. lest they in whose hands the place then was should by all means waste and destroy it; 3. which is the chief, lest every tribe should desire to have it in its own lot and jurisdiction; and so strifes might arise among them on account of it, as happened to the priesthood: *even unto his habitation shall ye seek;* the temple at Jerusalem is meant, where the Lord took up his dwelling, and whither men were to come and seek unto him by prayer and supplication for whatsoever they needed, and to inquire of him in matters doubtful, and they wanted counsel in: *and thither thou shalt come;* with sacrifices of every sort, where they were to be slain and offered to the Lord, and become acceptable to him, as is more largely declared in the following part of this chapter.

Ver. 6. *And thither ye shall bring your burnt-offerings,* &c.] For the daily sacrifice, and upon any other account whatsoever; this was before ordered to be brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and now to the place where that should be fixed, Lev. xvii. 8, 9. *and your sacrifices;* all other distinct from burnt-offerings, as sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, and peace-offerings, especially the latter. Jarchi interprets them of peace-offerings of debt, such as a man was obliged to bring; but as the distance of some persons from Jerusalem was very great, and it was troublesome and expensive, they might, according to the Jewish writers, bring them the next grand festival, when all the males were obliged to appear there; so says Maimonides[c], all offerings of a man, whether by obligation (such as he was bound to bring) or free-

[y] Misn. Avodah Zarah, c. 3. sect. 7.
[z] Yesode Hattorah, c. 6. sect. 7, 9.
[a] Ibid. sect. 8.
[b] Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 45. p. 475.
[c] Præfat. ad Yad Chazakah.

will offerings, he must bring at the first feast that comes; and another of their writers observes [d], that if only one feast has passed, and he has not brought his vow, he transgresses an affirmative precept, Deut. xii. 6. the first feast on which thou comest thither, thou must needs bring it; and if three have passed, he transgresses a negative precept, Deut. xxiii. 21. *and your tithes;* tithes of beasts, and the second tithes, according to Jarchi: *and heave-offerings of your hand;* these according to the same writer were the first-fruits, and so it is rendered in the Septuagint version; and thus Maimonides [e] says, the first-fruits are called Trumot, or heave-offerings; see Exod. xxii. 29. *and your vows and your free-will offerings;* which were species of peace-offerings, Lev. vii. 16. *and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks;* which were sanctified and devoted to the Lord, Exod. xiii. 2.

Ver. 7. *And there ye shall eat before the Lord your God,* &c.] The priests and the Levites, what was their portion, so Aben Ezra; but the people also are included, and by what follows seem chiefly designed, who were to eat their part of the sacrifices, particularly of the tithes and peace-offerings, in the holy place that should be chosen and appointed; see ch. xiv. 22, 23, 26, 27. *and ye shall rejoice in all that ye put your hand unto;* in all the labours of their hands, and what they got thereby, which they were cheerfully to enjoy, and express their thankfulness for it in this way; see Eccl. v. 18, 19. *ye and your households;* their wives, sons, daughters, men and maid servants; yea, with them Levites, strangers, fatherless, and widows, were to partake of some of their free-will offerings, ch. xvi. 10, 11. *wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee;* and these offerings were eucharistical, and by way of thanksgiving for the blessing of God upon their labours, for it is that which maketh rich, Prov. x. 22.

Ver. 8. *Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here,* &c.] In the wilderness, where they had no abiding, but were continually removing from place to place, and could not always observe punctually and precisely the exact order and time of their sacrifices and other things, nor offer them at any certain place, and many were doubtless neglected by them; see Amos v. 25. *every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes;* that did he, brought the above things when and where he pleased; not that there was no regard had to the laws and rules given, as if there was no priest in Israel; but they were not so exactly in all circumstances conformed to as they would be obliged to when they came into the land of Canaan, and had a certain place to bring their offerings to; so some in Aben Ezra observe, that one would give the firstling, another not, because it depended on the land, or was what they were obliged to only when they came into the land of Canaan; see Exod. xiii. 11. but he thinks the sense is, that they did not all fear God, and so did not do their duty.

Ver. 9. *For ye are not yet come to the rest,* &c.] The land of Canaan, which was typical of the rest which remains for the people of God in heaven; for though they now enter into a spiritual rest in Christ, they are not yet come to their eternal rest; they are in a world of trouble, through sin, Satan, and wicked men; but they shall come to it, as Israel did to Canaan; for God has promised and prepared it, and it remains for them; Christ prayed for it, is also gone to prepare it, and the Spirit is the seal and earnest of it, and works up the saints, and makes them meet for it: *and to the inheritance which the Lord your God giveth you;* and the land of Canaan being an inheritance, and the gift of God, was also a type of the heavenly inheritance; which saints are now born unto, and have both a right unto, and meetness for, through the righteousness of Christ, and grace of God; but as yet are not entered on it, but that is reserved for them in heaven, and they are preserved and kept for that; and ere long shall inherit it, as the free gift of God their father to them, and which is peculiar to them as children. Jarchi and Ben Melech by the *rest* understand Shiloh, and by the inheritance Jerusalem; so in the Misnah [f]; see 1 Chron. xxiii. 25. the Targum of Jonathan is, "ye are not "come to the house of the sanctuary, which is the "house of rest, and to the inheritance of the land."

Ver. 10. *But when ye go over Jordan,* &c.] Which lay between the place where they now were, and the land of Canaan, and which they would quickly go over: *and dwell in the land which the Lord your God giveth you to inherit;* the land of Canaan, and which shews that that is meant by the inheritance: and when *he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about;* which was done when the land was subdued, and divided among the tribes of Israel, Josh. xxii. 4. and which confirms the sense of Canaan being the rest; though this was more completely fulfilled in the days of David, when he and Israel had rest from all their enemies round about, 2 Sam. vii. 1. and who brought the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem; and into whose heart the Lord put it to prepare to build a temple at Jerusalem for him, and which was erected and finished in the days of his son Solomon: *so that ye dwell in safety;* from their enemies, as they more especially did in the reigns of David and Solomon; which seems plainly to describe the time when the place not named should appear to be chosen by the Lord to put his name in, as follows.

Ver. 11. *Then there shall be a place,* &c.] Fixed and settled, and will be known to be the place: *which the Lord your God shall choose, to cause his name to dwell there;* where he himself would dwell, and where his name would be called, and he would be worshipped: *thither shall ye bring all that I command you, your burnt-offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave-offerings of your hands;* of which see the note on ver. 6. *and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord;* or, *the choice of your vows* [g]; which, as Jarchi observes, was brought of their choicest things, as they ought to be; see Mal. i. 14.

Ver. 12. *And ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God,* &c.] In the place chosen and fixed, where a

[d] Bartenora in Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1. & in Misn. Ediot, c. 7. sect. 6.

[e] In Misn. Meilah, c. 4. sect. 2.

[f] Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. & Bartenora in ib.

[g] מבחר נדריכם ἐκλεκτὸν τῶν δώρων ὑμῶν, Sept. optima votorum vestrorum, Fagius.

temple would be built for him, and he would take up his residence; eating with joy and gladness that part of the offerings which belonged to them, keeping as it were a feast before the Lord, in token of gratitude for what they had received from him: *ye and your sons, and your daughters, and your men-servants, and your maid-servants;* which explains what is meant by their household, ver. 7. wives are not mentioned, because it could not be thought they would eat and rejoice, or keep such a feast, without them, and therefore needless to name them: *and the Levite that is within your gates;* such also were to partake of this entertainment, who were useful in instructing their families in the knowledge of divine things, and serviceable to them on many accounts in the worship of God: *forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you;* in the division of the land, and so having nothing to manure and cultivate, was destitute of the fruits of the earth, and could make no improvement and increase of his substance, as they could.

Ver. 13. *Take heed to thyself, that thou offer not thy burnt-offerings,* &c.] And so any other, this is put for all the rest: *in every place that thou seest;* which might take with their fancy, seem pleasant, and so a proper and suitable place to sacrifice in, as on high places, and under green trees; but they were not to indulge their own fancies and imaginations, or follow the customs of others, but keep to the rules prescribed them by the Lord, and to the place fixed by him for his worship.

Ver. 14. *But in the place which the Lord shall choose in one of thy tribes,* &c.] Which tribe is not named, nor what place in that tribe; see the note on ver. 5. *there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings;* on the altar of burnt-offering there placed: *and there shalt thou do all that I command thee;* respecting sanctuary-service, and particularly those things observed in ver. 6.

Ver. 15. *Notwithstanding, thou mayest kill and eat flesh in all thy gates,* &c.] They might kill such cattle that were allowed for food, and eat the flesh of them in the several cities and houses in which they dwelt; they were not obliged to bring these to the place God should choose, and kill them there, as they had been wont to bring them to the tabernacle whilst in the wilderness: *whatsoever thy soul lusteth after;* whatever they had a mind to, or their appetite craved, and were desirous of, provided it was not any thing forbidden, but was allowed to be eaten: *according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee;* which it was in the power of their hands to procure for themselves; they might live according to their abilities, and keep a table answerable to what God had blessed them with; from which they were so far from being restrained, that it was rather commendable in them so to do, provided they did not indulge to luxury and intemperance: *the clean and the unclean may eat thereof;* that is, such in their families who laboured under any ceremonial uncleanness by the touch of a dead body, or by reason of issues and menstrues; these, as well as those who were free from any thing of this kind, might eat of common food in their houses, though they might not eat of the holy things; see Lev. vii. 20, 21. *as of the roebuck, and as of the hart;* that is, as those were clean creatures, and allowed for food, ch. xiv. 5. so they might eat of oxen or sheep, or lambs or rams, and goats, though they were creatures used in sacrifice.

Ver. 16. *Only ye shall not eat the blood,* &c.] All manner of blood being forbidden, of fowl or of beasts, whether slain for sacrifice or for common food: *ye shall pour it out upon the earth as water;* which cannot be gathered up again for use, but is swallowed up in the earth.

Ver. 17. *Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil,* &c.] This can't be understood of the tithe given to the Levites, or of that which the Levites out of theirs gave to the priests, for that was only eaten by them; but of the tithe which every three years they were to lay up within their gates, and which they were to eat with their families and others; but the other two years they were to carry it to the place the Lord chose, or turn it into money, and when they came thither purchase with it what they pleased, and eat it, they and their household, and others with them, before the Lord; see Deut. xiv. 22—29. *the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flocks;* these also the first-born males belonged to the Lord, and so to the priests, and could not be eaten by the people any where; and must be understood either of the next firstlings, which were the people's, or of the female firstlings, which they might devote to the Lord, and so not allowed to eat at home, but in the chosen place: *nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy free-will offerings;* which were species of peace-offerings, and so to be eaten not in their own cities, but in the place appointed: *or heave-offerings of thine hand;* the first-fruits; see ch. xxvi. 1—11. these were such they were not bound to bring, but brought them freely.

Ver. 18. *But thou must eat them before the Lord thy God, in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose,* &c.] Which may be said to be eaten before him, being eaten in the place where his sanctuary stood, in which he dwelt: *thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates;* who were all to come with him to this place; see the note on ver. 12. *and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God in all that thou puttest thine hand unto;* cheerfully make and keep this feast in the manner directed to, rejoicing with his family and his friends, with the Levites and with the poor, expressing his thankfulness to God for his blessing on his labour.

Ver. 19. *Take heed to thyself that thou forsake not the Levite,* &c.] By withholding from him the tithes appointed for his maintenance; or rather by neglecting to take him with him in order to partake of the feast or entertainment before spoken of: *as long as thou livest upon the earth;* so that it was not one time only, but always; whenever he ate these holy things before the Lord, as long as he lived, he was to be careful he had the Levite with him, for a reason given, ver. 12.

Ver. 20. *When the Lord thy God shall enlarge thy border, as he hath promised thee,* &c.] Brought them into the land of Canaan, where they should have large and good pastures for the feeding of their cattle, which they had not in the wilderness, and so a greater in-

crease of them: *and thou shalt say, I will eat flesh:* which they were sparing of, or ate but little of in the wilderness, lest their herds and their flocks should be consumed; but now having room to feed them, and an increase of them, they would give themselves a greater liberty of eating flesh: *because thy soul longeth to eat flesh;* would have a craving appetite unto it, having so long ate none, or very little: *thou mayest eat flesh, whatsoever thy soul lusteth after:* of any sort that is clean, and allowed to be eaten, and as much of it as is craved, only intemperance must be guarded against.

Ver. 21. *If the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to put his name be too far from thee,* &c.] Or rather *for*[h], or *seeing* the place will be too far from thee; for it is allowed before that they might kill and eat flesh for common food in their gates, ver. 15. *then thou shalt kill of thy herd and of thy flock;* of thy oxen and of thy sheep, creatures used in sacrifice; but this was no bar to the use of them for common food also: *which the Lord hath given thee, as I have commanded thee:* ver. 15. *and thou shalt eat in thy gates whatsoever thy soul lusteth after;* flesh of any sort, lawful to be eaten.

Ver. 22. *Even as the roebuck and the hart is eaten,* &c.] Which were not only clean creatures, as before observed, but were commonly and frequently eaten, there being plenty of them in those parts: *so thou shalt eat them;* their oxen and calves, their sheep and lambs, their goats and their kids: *the unclean and the clean shall eat of them alike:* no difference being to be made on that account, with respect to common food; see the note on ver. 15. which all alike might partake of, notwithstanding any ceremonial uncleanness that any might be attended with.

Ver. 23. *Only be sure that thou eat not the blood,* &c.] This is repeated again, that they might be careful to observe the law concerning that: *for the blood is the life;* which is the reason given for the prohibition of it, Lev. xvii. 11. see the note there: *and thou mayest not eat the life with the flesh;* by which it seems that the meaning of the law was, that the blood might not be eaten in or with the flesh, but to be let out of it, or the flesh not to be eaten raw, but dressed; for there were divers laws about eating of blood, which are differently expressed.

Ver. 24. *Thou shalt not eat it,* &c.] Neither with the flesh, nor separately: *thou shalt pour it upon the earth as water;* as the blood of sacrifices was poured upon the altar, the blood of common flesh was to be poured upon the earth, signifying it was not to be used, and no account to be made of it; see the note on ver. 16.

Ver. 25. *Thou shalt not eat it, that it may be well with thee, and with thy children after thee,* &c.] That they and their posterity might be spared, and continue long, and enjoy much prosperity; for those that eat blood, contrary to this command of God, it is threatened that he would set his face against them, and they should be cut off, Lev. vii. 27. and xvii. 10. *when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord;* not only observe this command, but all others.

Ver. 26. *Only thy holy things which thou hast,* &c.] Which the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan interpret of the tithe of their holy things, and Aben Ezra of their burnt-offerings and peace-offerings; they seem to include all in ver. 17. *and thy vows thou shalt take, and go unto the place which the Lord shall choose;* so often referred to, but not named; see ver. 5.

Ver. 27. *And thou shalt offer thy burnt-offerings, the flesh and the blood, upon the altar of the Lord thy God,* &c.] And on that only, even the altar of burnt-offering: *and the blood of thy sacrifices;* one as well as another, not only of the burnt-offerings, but of the sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, and peace-offerings: *shall be poured out upon the altar of the Lord thy God;* either sprinkled on it, or poured out at the bottom of it; see Lev. i. and iii. and iv. *and thou shalt eat the flesh;* that is, of the peace-offerings, for of them only might the people eat, and that only before the Lord.

Ver. 28. *Observe and hear all these words which I command thee,* &c.] Respecting the demolition of all monuments of idolatry, and bringing all holy things to the place the Lord should choose to dwell in; and eating common flesh in their own houses, only to be careful not to eat blood: *that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee for ever;* for, as has been often observed, their continuance in the land of Canaan, and enjoyment of all good things in it, depended upon their obedience to the commands of God; see Isa. i. 19. *when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God;* which is to do all his commandments; for these are what are good and right in his sight, and it is for the good of men to do them.

Ver. 29. *When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee,* &c.] The seven nations of the land of Canaan, ch. vii. 1. *whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land;* or to inherit them, and thou dost inherit them, by dwelling in their land.

Ver. 30. *Take heed to thyself, that thou be not snared by following them,* &c.] Their examples and customs, and so be drawn into the same idolatrous practices; see Psal. cvi. 35, 36. *after that they be destroyed from before thee;* for their idolatries and other sins: *and that thou inquire not after their gods;* what they were, their names, forms, and figures: *saying, how did these nations serve their gods?* what was the manner of worship they gave them? what rites, customs, and ceremonies did they use in their adoration of them? *even so will I do likewise;* or however, if this was not determined on when the inquiries were made, there was danger that this would be the result of them, and therefore the caution is given.

Ver. 31. *Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God,* &c.] Not serve and worship him after the manner of the Gentiles, nor introduce their rites and customs into his service, used by them in the worship of their gods: *for every abomination which he hateth have they done unto their gods;* as murder, adultery, &c. which God has expressed his aversion to, and indignation at; one instance of the former sort is given here: *for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to*

[h] כי cum, Pagninus, Montanus.

their gods; not only men have they sacrificed to them, but such near relations; and not only caused them to pass through the fire, but burnt them in it; so the Carthaginians are said to do, who learned this inhuman practice from the Phœnicians; they were a colony of the inhabitants of this land of Canaan. Of the Phœnicians Porphyry says[1], that in great calamities, as war or pestilence, they sacrificed to Saturn some one of those that were dearest to them, appointed by suffrage. The Phœnician history, adds he, is full of such sacrifices, which Sanchoniatho wrote in the Phœnician language; and Curtius says[2], the custom of sacrificing a fine boy to Saturn was received by the Carthaginians from their founders (the Tyrians and Phœnicians), and which they continued even to the destruction of their city.

Ver. 32. *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it,* &c.] In the manner it is commanded and directed to; the laws of God, both as to matter and manner, were to be obeyed just as they were delivered: *thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it;* neither add any customs and rites of the Heathens to them, nor neglect any thing enjoined on them; see Prov. xxx. 6. Rev. xxii. 18, 19.

CHAP. XIII.

In this chapter the Israelites are taught how to discern a false prophet, shun and punish him, ver. 1—5. what to do with enticers to idolatry, not only not to consent to them, but, without favour and affection to them, endeavour to bring them to just punishment, and be the first that should inflict it on them, ver. 6—11. and how to behave towards a city drawn into idolatry, as to inquire the truth of it; then make war against it; destroy all in it, men, women, children, and cattle; and burn the spoil of it, and suffer not any thing at all belonging to it to cleave unto them, ver. 12—18.

Ver. 1. *If there arise among you a prophet,* &c.] A false prophet, a lying prophet, as the Targum of Jonathan; one that pretends to be a true prophet, and to be sent of God, and to come from him with a message from him, a new revelation or doctrine, or in his name, to foretel things to come; the former is chiefly meant. Such prophets did arise in Israel before the time of Christ, and have since arose under the Christian name; see 2 Pet. ii. 1. *or a dreamer of dreams;* the same with the prophet, only to be distinguished by the different manner of their having the mind and will of God revealed to them, pretended to; either by vision or by dream, which were the two usual ways in which the Lord spake to the true prophets, Numb. xii. 6. so that the prophet is one who pretended he had a vision from the Lord, and the dreamer one that had a dream from him, or something revealed to him in a dream; and dreams are sometimes used for false doctrines, vain, deceitful, and illusory; see Jer. xxiii. 25—28. The Targum of Jonathan calls him "a dreamer "of a dream of pride:" such persons are generally prompted by the pride of their own hearts to take such a method to make themselves famous and respected among men; and usually bring such doctrines with them which are agreeable to the pride and vanity of human nature: *and giving thee a sign or a wonder;* for the confirmation of his mission and doctrine; such as Moses wrought before the children of Israel and before Pharaoh. Signs are expressions or representations of things to come to pass; wonders, such as either do, or seem to exceed the common course of nature, or be contrary to it.

Ver. 2. *And the sign and wonder come to pass whereof he spake unto thee,* &c.] The sign he promised to give, or the miracle he proposed to do, to shew the reality of his mission, and the truth of his doctrine, which is performed, or seemingly performed, by legerdemain, by magic art, or by the help of the devil; which the Lord sometimes suffered for the trial of the faith and obedience of his people, and for the hardening of others in their unbelief, and which issues in their destruction; see 2 Thess. ii. 9—12. *saying, let us go after other gods (which thou hast not known), and let us serve them;* other gods besides the one living and true God, the Creator of all things; strange gods, the idols of the people, as the Targum of Jonathan; such as they had never heard of, nor had any knowledge of, nor any benefit from, as they had of the Lord their God. Now the doctrines of these, and of their worship, are what the false prophet or dreamer is supposed to come with, and inculcate into the minds of the people; and for the confirmation of which, and in order to draw them into the reception of them, and act according to them, he proposed to give a sign or wonder.

Ver. 3. *Thou shalt not hearken to the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams,* &c.] Even though he does give the sign, and work the wonder; for it might be reasonably concluded there must be fallacy in him, and that neither he nor his miraculous sign could come from God, who would never send a person to enable him to do signs and wonders, to persuade men to believe and act contrary to a former declaration of his mind and will; to break a plain law of his, as in ch. v. 7, 8, 9. this would be to contradict and deny himself; whatever therefore is contrary to a known law or established doctrine, either of law or Gospel, let it come from whom it will, or pretend to be confirmed by miracles, is not to be received; see Gal. i. 8, 9. *for the Lord your God proveth you, whether you love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul;* for should they be prevailed upon by such a prophet to hearken to his doctrine, and embrace it, and act according to it, it would be a plain case that they did not cordially love the Lord, since they could so easily, and by such pretences, be drawn aside from the true worship of him, and serve other gods; on the other hand, it would be a proof of their sincere affection for God, and of their close and strict attachment to him, that notwithstanding such specious pretences

[1] De Abstinentia, l. 2. sect. 56.

[2] Hist. l. 4. c. 3.

made, and such miracles wrought, yet abode by him and his worship, and could not be wrought upon to forsake him and follow other gods and serve them; see 1 Cor. xi. 19.

Ver. 4. *Ye shall walk after the Lord your God*, &c.] As he has directed, according to the laws and rules which he has given, both with respect to their moral and civil conduct, and their religious worship of him; and so the Targum of Jonathan, "ye shall walk after "the worship of the Lord your God:" *and fear him, and keep his commandments*: fear to offend him, and so keep his commandments; or keep his commandments from or through fear; not a servile but a filial one, a reverential affection for him; this is the whole duty of man, Eccl. xii. 13. *and obey his voice*; in his word, or by his prophets and ministers: it may very well be understood of the voice of Christ, the Angel that went before them, whose voice they were continually to hearken to and obey, Exod. xxiii. 21, 22. *and you shall serve him, and cleave unto him*; it may respect all religious worship, both private and public; the Targum of Jonathan restrains it to prayer, but it not only includes that, but all other acts of piety and devotion, and which are to be constantly performed and not departed from; for so to do is to cleave to the Lord, as a man to his wife, or a woman to her husband, in which conjugal relation God and his people Israel were, he was an husband unto them, and to do otherwise is to go a whoring from him after other gods.

Ver. 5. *And that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams, shall be put to death*, &c.] Which death, according to the Targum of Jonathan, was to be killed with the sword: *because he hath spoken to turn you away from the Lord your God*; or *spoken revolt against the Lord*[1], high treason against him, delivering out doctrine that tends to cause his subjects to rebel against him, and revolt from him; and therefore he is justly deserving of death, to draw off a people from him he had been so good and kind unto; so that to apostacy would be added the sin of ingratitude: *which brought you out of the land of Egypt, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage*; and so was not only their Lord by creation whom they ought to serve, but by redemption, which laid them under double obligation to serve him: *to thrust thee out of the way which the Lord thy God commanded thee to walk in*; not by external force, but by the power of persuasion, by enticing words and arguments: *so shalt thou put the evil away from the midst of thee*; the evil man, by putting him to death, and the evil of idolatry, by not listening to the words of the false prophet.

Ver. 6. *If thy brother, the son of thy mother*, &c.] A brother by mother's side, which is generally supposed to be the nearest relation, at least most out of question, so more liable to be regarded as being beloved: *or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom*; most dearly beloved by him, as indeed each of these relations are by a man, there being none nearer or dearer to him: *or thy friend, which is as thine own soul*; as dear to him as himself, and so strictly united in friendship, as if one soul dwelt in two bodies; such close friends were Jonathan and David, 1 Sam. xviii. 1. Some Jewish writers think the father is not mentioned, because of the reverence of him, with which all afterdealings with him obliged to would seem inconsistent; but the reverence of God is to be preferred to the reverence of parents; and besides, if such near relations that are here mentioned, than which there are none nearer, are not to be spared if guilty of the sin after warned against, then not a father, who is in the same transgression: *entice thee secretly*; when alone with him, which might be judged the most proper time to work upon him, there being none to oppose the enticer, or to assist the enticed; so Satan took the opportunity of Eve being alone when he attacked her with his temptation, and the same method is taken by his children: *saying, let me go and serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou nor thy fathers*; not even their immediate ancestors, and so the calf was not of these gods; nor their more remote ancestors, as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were no idolaters; nor even Terah, though he was one, yet the gods of the Canaanites and of the neighbouring nations, which seem to be here meant, at least principally, were such that he knew not. This circumstance may seem to carry in it an argument rather why they should not than why they should serve such gods; wherefore the words of the enticer seem to be only these, *let us go and serve other gods*, and what follows are the words of the Lord, descriptive of those gods, and so a dissuasive from serving them.

Ver. 7. Namely, *of the gods of the people which are round about you*, &c.] As of the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, and Phœnicians: *nigh unto thee*; as the above were, being on the borders of their land: the Targum of Jonathan interprets this of the idols of the seven nations, that is, of the land of Canaan: or *far off from thee*; as the Babylonians, Persians, and others: *from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth*; which includes all the idols in the world, worshipped by whatsoever nation, and which were forbidden; and which shews the universality of idolatry in those times, and that that is an insufficient argument in its favour. Jarchi interprets this of the sun and moon, and the host of heaven, who go from one end of the world to the other; and this seems to have been the first and most common idolatry of the Gentile world, and which were worshipped in the several deities they set up.

Ver. 8. *Thou shalt not consent unto him*, &c.] To commit the idolatry enticed unto, or join with him in it: *nor hearken to him*; not so much as patiently to hear him, but at once express an abhorrence of and indignation at what he recommends: *neither shall thine eye pity him*; pitied he might be for his ignorance, stupidity, and wickedness, and on account of the miserable estate and condition he was in, and of those dreadful consequences which would follow upon it, if not converted from it; but no mercy was to be shewn him on account of nearness of relation: *neither shalt thou spare*; to reprove him sharply and to expose him to public vengeance: *neither shalt thou conceal him*; neither him nor his sin, but make both public, acquaint others with it, and endeavour to bring him before the civil

[1] סרה apostasiam, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; defectionem, Tigurine version.

magistrate to be examined, tried, and jugded; so far should they be from hiding his offence from others, or excusing and extenuating it, or from harbouring his person privately when sought for upon information.

Ver. 9. *But thou shalt surely kill him*, &c.] Not privately and secretly, when and where he entices, nor the enticed himself by his own authority, but after being examined, judged, and condemned by the civil magistrate; and none might judge a false prophet but the sanhedrim at Jerusalem, the sanhedrim of seventy-one[m]; see Luke xiii. 33. but the difficulty is how such an one could be convicted, since the affair was transacted secretly, ver. 6. and there were none present to be witnesses, none but the enticer and the enticed; so that either the enticer must be brought to a confession of his guilt, or the testimony of the enticed alone must be taken. The Jewish doctors say[n], that they laid in wait for the enticer, which they never did for any other person, and the method they took was this; the enticed brought two persons, and put them behind a hedge, so that they might see the enticer, and hear his words, and he not see them; and he said to the enticer, say what thou hast said to me privately; which said, the enticed answered to him, how shall we leave our God which is in heaven, and go and serve wood and stone? if he returned (from his evil) hereby, or was silent, he was free; but if he said unto him, so we are obliged, and thus it is comely for us; they that stood afar off, behind the hedge (or in a dark room), brought him to the sanhedrim, and stoned him, that is, after examination, trial, judgment, and condemnation: *thine hand shall be first upon him, to put him to death;* he was to throw the first stone at him, partly to shew his indignation against the sin he had enticed him to, and that it had not at all affected him so as to incline him unto it; and partly to shew that he had bore a true testimony, of which a suspicion might have been created in the minds of some, had he been backward to the execution of him: *and afterwards the hand of all the people;* who then could proceed with more certainty and satisfaction: this shews that the person enticed had not a right to kill the enticer, without a judicial process, and the order of the civil magistrate.

Ver. 10. *And thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die*, &c.] It was not sufficient to answer the end of the law to cast a few stones at him, but he was to be stoned to death: *because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God;* to compel by force of argument, or the dint of persuasion, to relinquish the profession of the true God, faith in him, and the worship of him: *which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage:* which aggravated the sin of the enticer, and would have made the sin of the enticed the more heinous had he fallen into it.

Ver. 11. *And all Israel shall hear, and fear*, &c.] Shall hear of the death the enticer was put unto, and shall fear to act such a part he did, and be upon their guard against any such person, and be cautious that they are not drawn into sin by him: *and shall do no more any such wickedness as this is among you;* either to entice unto idolatry or commit it; which is a piece of wickedness against the first table of the law, and a very heinous one, and exceeding offensive and provoking to God, being so directly against his being, perfections, and glory.

Ver. 12. *If thou shalt hear say in one of thy cities*, &c.] A report concerning them, any one of them: *which the Lord thy God had given thee to dwell there;* which he had not only given them, but had put them into the possession of, and it was become their dwelling-place, or was inhabited by Israelites; otherwise they were already given unto them, but did not inherit and inhabit them, and it might be possible that there might be some city or cities, at least for a time, which, though given them, were not inhabited by them, but by the Canaanites, and such cities this law did not concern: *saying:* as follows.

Ver. 13. *Certain men, the children of Belial*, &c.] Which signify either persons without a yoke, who have thrown off the yoke of God's law, and will not submit to it, or unprofitable ones, as wicked men be, both to God, themselves, and others: *are gone out from among you;* not locally, but with respect to their religious sentiments and practices, having separated themselves from the people of God, and from the service of the sanctuary, the true worship of God, and a profession of it, and given into the worship of idols: *and have withdrawn the inhabitants of their city;* withdrawn them by the force of persuasion from the worship of the true God, and drawn them into idolatry: *saying, let us go and serve other gods;* unite as one man in the worship of the gods of the Gentiles: *(which ye have not known;)* this was not said by the children of Belial, but is added by the Lord by way of explanation, shewing what gods they were that these men advised them to serve, and confirms the observation made on ver. 6.

Ver. 14. *Then shalt thou inquire, make search, and ask diligently*, &c.] That is, of the witnesses, as the Targum of Jonathan; and this is a case that is only taken into consideration and judged of by the great sanhedrim, or that of seventy-one, at Jerusalem[o]; and the method they took was this, when it fell under their cognizance: the great sanhedrim send and inquire and search till they know clearly that the whole city, or the greater part of it, are thrust away, and are turned to idolatry; after that they send two disciples of the wise men to admonish them and bring them back; if they return and repent, it is well, but if they continue in their folly, the sanhedrim order all Israel to go up against them to war, and they besiege them, and set themselves in battle array against them, until the city be broken up; and when it is broken up, immediately they set up many courts of judicature, and they judge them: and against whomsoever two witnesses come that he served idols, after they have admonished him they separate him; if all the worshippers be the fewest, they stone them, and the rest of the city are delivered; if they are found the greater number, they bring them to the great sanhedrim, and finish their judgment there, and they slay all those that have served with the sword: *and, behold*, if it be *truth*, and

[m] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 7.
[n] Ibid. c. 7. sect. 10. Maimon. Obede Cochabim, c. 5. sect. 3.

[o] Maimon. ut supra, c. 4. sect. 2. 6.

the thing certain: that such wicked men have risen and have prevailed upon the inhabitants of the city where they live, to leave the worship of the true God, and go into idolatry, when there is full proof of this, and it is past all question that *such abomination is wrought among you*: as idolatry is, which is an abomination to God, and ought to be so to all mankind, and especially to a people that profess his name.

Ver. 15. *Thou shalt surely smite the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword*, &c.] This could not be the work of a single person, nor of the whole sanhedrim, but was what the whole nation was to join in, according to the above note: *destroying it utterly*: pulling down the houses, and demolishing its walls and fortifications, or burning it, as afterwards explained: *and all that is therein*; men, women, and children: *and the cattle thereof, with the edge of the sword*; this severity was used to shew the Lord's indignation against the sin of idolatry, and to deter persons from it, both individuals and bodies of men.

Ver. 16. *And thou shalt gather all the spoil of it into the midst of the street thereof*, &c.] All the wealth and substance of the inhabitants, their household goods, shop-goods, merchandise, utensils in trade and business, and every thing that can be named. The Jews say [p], if there is no street, they make one (or a market-place); if that is without it, they bring them into the midst of it: *and shall burn with fire the city, and all the spoil thereof every whit*; be it what it may, or let it be whose property it will; and all this shall be done: *for the Lord thy God*; as by his appointment and command, and in obedience to him, so for his honour and glory, and the vindication of his righteous law; *and it shall be an heap for ever, it shall not be built again*; but lie a waste as Jericho, though not an entire waste; for according to the Jewish writers, though it might not be built as it was before, it might be made into gardens and orchards [q].

Ver. 17. *And there shall cleave nought of the cursed thing to thine hand*, &c.] That is, they might not take any thing whatever to their own use; for all being devoted to destruction, was cursed, and brought a curse upon the man that should make it his own property, as Achan did, when Jericho was destroyed: *that the Lord may turn from the fierceness of his anger*; stirred up by the idolatry of the city: *and shew thee mercy, and have compassion upon thee*; who, seeing wrath gone forth, might dread the consequences, lest it should spread itself further: *and multiply thee, as he hath sworn to thy fathers*; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; this is observed to encourage them to execute his orders punctually in the destruction of the idolatrous city; since God could and would multiply them, as he had promised their fathers, with an oath, so that they should not be the fewer by such an instance of his severity.

Ver. 18. *When thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God*, &c.] Not only in this case, but in all others: *to keep all his commandments which I command thee this day*; the repetition of which he made unto them, and enjoined the observance of them in the name of the Lord: *to do that which is right in the eyes of the Lord thy God*; which they would do, if they kept the commandments of the Lord, which are holy, just, and good, and must be right in his sight because commanded by him.

CHAP. XIV.

IN this chapter some cautions are given against the use of some rites and ceremonies in mourning for the dead, with the reason thereof, ver. 1, 2. and instructions about what are lawful to be eaten, and what not, whether of beasts, fishes, or fowl, ver. 3—21. and concerning eating one sort of tithes both at the place God should choose, and within their own gates, ver. 22—29.

Ver. 1. *Ye are the children of the Lord your God*, &c.] Some of them were so by the special grace of adoption, and all of them by national adoption; which was the peculiar privilege of the people of Israel, and laid them under great obligation to honour and obey the Lord their God, who stood in the relation of a father to them, and they of children to him, Mal. i. 6. The Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it *beloved children*; so the apostle calls the saints, the *dear children* of God, who therefore ought to be followers of him, Eph. v. 1. and for a like reason this relation is observed here, namely, to quicken a regard to the exhortations of the Lord, his cautions, commands, laws, and ordinances, particularly to what follows: *ye shall not cut yourselves*; for the dead, as appears from the next clause, as the Heathens did, who not only tore their garments, but their flesh in several parts of their bodies, in their mouths, cheeks, breasts, &c. [r]; and used other extravagant signs of mourning, which the apostle cautions against, 1 Thess. iv. 13. and were condemned by the Heathens themselves [s]. Though some think this refers to incisions the Heathens made in their flesh to the honour of their gods, cutting the names of them therein to whom they devoted themselves; or lashing their bodies at the worship of them, as the worshippers of Baal did when they called upon him, 1 Kings xviii. 28. and so the Jerusalem Targum, " make not marks, marks," that is, here and there, in many places, or bruises black and blue by striping and beating themselves, for strange worship, or at it, in honour of their gods; but the former sense seems best to agree with what follows; see Lev. xix. 28. *nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead*: by shaving the fore-part of their head or their eyebrows, or both, which used to be done in lamentations for the dead; see Jer. xvi. 6, 7. if this could be thought

[p] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 6.
[q] Ibid. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

[r] Vid. Virgil. Æneid. 12. ver. 870, 871. and Servium in Æneid. 1. ver. 78. and in l. 12.
[s] Vid. Cicero de Leg. l. 2. c. 23. and Tusculan. Quæst. l. 3. c. 27.

to have any respect to rites and ceremonies used in the worship of dead and lifeless idols, the customs of the Egyptians might be referred to, who are said to shave their heads and their eyebrows in their sacred rites to Isis [t].

Ver. 2. *For thou* art *an holy people unto the Lord thy God*, &c.] Set apart by him from all other people, and devoted to his worship and service, and many of them were sanctified and made holy in a special and spiritual sense; and therefore should not conform to the customs of Gentiles, whether in their extravagant mourning for the dead, or in their religious services; see ch. vii. 6. *and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people, above all the nations that* are *upon the earth;* to be his peculiar treasure, to be his peculiar servants and worshippers, to enjoy peculiar blessings and privileges, and behave in a peculiar manner different from all other people; and have no connexion with them, especially in things sacred; and, in order to keep them a distinct peculiar people from all others, a peculiar diet was appointed them, that so being prohibited to eat such things as others did, they might be kept out of their company and conversation, and so from being drawn into their idolatrous practices; the rules concerning which follow; see ch. vii. 6.

Ver. 3. *Thou shalt not eat any abominable thing.*] That is so either in its own nature, or because forbidden by the Lord; what are such are declared in the following verses.

Ver. 4. *These* are *the beasts which they shall eat*, &c.] That is, which they might lawfully eat of, which were allowed for their food; for they were not obliged to eat of them if they did not choose it: *the ox, the sheep, and the goat;* which were creatures used in sacrifice, and the only ones, yet nevertheless they might be used for food if chosen.

Ver. 5. *The hart, the roebuck, and the fallow-deer*, &c.] All of the deer-kind, and very agreeable food; harts were very common in the land of Canaan and parts adjacent; Ælianus says [u] harts are bred in the great mountains in Syria, Amanus, Lebanon, and Carmel: the roebuck, or *dorcas*, from whence a good woman had her name, Acts ix. 36. is spoken of by Martial [w] as very delicious food, and so are fallow-deer; the word *jachmur*, here used, having the signification of redness in it, may be used for that sort which are called red-deer: it is observed that in the Arabic language it is used for an animal with two horns, living in the woods, not unlike an hart, but swifter than that; and it is asked, is it not the *alce* or *elch* [x]? *and the wild goat, and the pygarg, and the wild ox, and the chamois;* the *wild goat* is reckoned by Pliny [y] among the half-wild creatures in Africa; according to the philosopher [z] there are none but in Syria, on which Canaan bordered, and were very remarkable ones, having ears a span and nine inches long, and some reached to the ground. The Hebrew name for this creature is *akko*; and there is a four-footed wild beast, by the Tartarians called *akkyk*, and by the Turks *akoim*, and which with the Scythians and Sarmatians are to be met with in flocks; it is between a hart and a ram, its body whitish, and the flesh exceeding sweet [a]; it seems to be the same with the *tragelaphus*, of which there were in Arabia, as Diodorus Siculus [b] says; the next is the *pygarg*, which we so render from the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, or white buttocks, so called from the hinder part of it being white; a species of the eagle with a white tail is called a pygarg, but here a four-footed animal is meant; and which is mentioned as such, along with hinds, does, and goats, by Herodotus [c], Ælian [d], and Pliny [e]: it has its name *dishon*, in Hebrew, from its ash-colour, and the *tragelaphus*, or goat-deer, has part of its back ash-coloured, and has ash-coloured spots or streaks on its sides [f]: some take it to be the *strepsiceros*, a kind of buck or goat with writhed horns, which the Africans, as Pliny says [g], call *addaca*, which is thought by some to be a corruption of *al-dashen*, so Junius; the Targum of Jonathan takes it for the *unicorn* or *rhinoceros;* and the Talmudists say [h] that the unicorn, though it has but one horn, is *free*, *i. e.* lawful to be eaten: the *wild ox* was common in Arabia; Strabo [i] speaks of multitudes of wild oxen in some parts of Arabia, on the flesh of which and other animals the Arabians live; in the Septuagint version it is called the *oryx*, which is a creature that has but one horn, and divides the hoof [k], and so might be eaten; see the note on Isa. li. 20. the last, the *chamois*, has a French name, and is a creature of the goat-kind, from whose skin the chamois leather is made; in the figure of its body it seems to approach very much to the stag-kind [l]; perhaps it is the same with the *cemas* of Ælian [m], mentioned by him along with roebucks. Some take it to be the *tarandus*, of which Pliny says [n] it is of the bigness of an ox, has a head bigger than a hart, and not unlike it; its horns are branched, hoofs cloven, and is hairy like a bear. In the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan this is the *pygarg;* these several sorts of beasts were allowed to be eaten; the three first there is no difficulty about them, but the other seven it is hard to determine what they are, at least some of them. Dr. Shaw [o] thinks that the deer, the antelope, the wild bear, the goat-deer, the white buttocks, the buffalo, and jeraffa, may lay in the best claim to the *ailee*, *tzebi*, *yachmur*, *akko*, *dishon*, *thau*, and *zomer*, here.

Ver. 6, 7, 8. *And every beast that parted the hoof*, &c.] In this and the two following verses two general rules are given, by which it might be known what beasts were fit for food and what not; one is if they parted the hoof, and the other if they chewed the cud,

[t] Ambros. Epist. l. 4. c. 30. p. 259.
[u] Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 56.
[w] Delicium parvo, &c. Epigram. l. 13. 92.
[x] Castel. Lex. Polyglott. Col. 1. 294.
[y] Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 53.
[z] Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 28.
[a] Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 415.
[b] Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 134. Vid. Plin. l. 8. c. 33.
[c] Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 192.
[d] Hist. Animal. l. 7. c. 19.
[e] Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 53.
[f] Calmet's Dictionary on the word *Pygarg*.
[g] Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 39.
[h] T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 59. 2.
[i] Geograph. l. 16. p. 530.
[k] Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 1.
[l] Supplement to Chambers's Dictionary on the word *Rupicapra*.
[m] Hist. Animal. l. 14. c. 14.
[n] Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 34.
[o] Travels, p. 418.

such might be eaten; but such that only chewed the cud, but did not divide the hoof, as the camel, hare, and coney, might not be eaten; and so if they divided the hoof, and did not chew the cud, as the swine, they were alike unlawful; see the notes on Lev. xi. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8.

Ver. 9, 10. *These ye shall eat of, all that* are *in the waters*, &c.] The fishes there, even such as have fins and scales, but they that have not were not to be eaten: see the notes on Lev. xi. 9, 10, 11, 12.

Ver. 11. *Of all clean birds ye shall eat.*] Which the Targum of Jonathan describes, every one that has a craw, and whose crop is naked, and has a superfluous talon, and is not rapacious; but such as are unclean are expressed by name in the following verses, so that all except them might be reckoned clean and fit for food. Maimonides [p] observes, that only the number of the unclean are reckoned, so that all the rest are free.

Ver. 12. *But these* are they *of which they shall not eat*, &c.] Jarchi observes, that the unclean birds are particularly mentioned, to teach that the clean sort are more than the unclean, and therefore the particulars of the fewest are given: these are all the same names as in Lev. xi. 13—19. excepting one, *the glede*, ver. 13. which is a kind of kite or puttock; the Jerusalem Targum renders it the vulture, and the Targum of Jonathan the white *dayetha* or vulture; and Aristotle says [q] there are two sorts of vultures, the one small and whiter, the other larger and of many forms or colours; in Hebrew its name here is *raah*, and is thought to be the same with *daah* in Lev. xi. 14. there translated the *vulture*, which has its name there from flying, and here from seeing, for which it is remarkable; see Job xxviii. 7. and the letters ד and ר are pretty much alike, and are sometimes changed, but there is another here, in ver. 13. mentioned, the *dayah*, which is not mentioned in Lev. xi. though some think it the same with the *ayah*, rendered both here and there the *kite*: perhaps it means another sort of vulture, the black vulture, as the Targum of Jonathan.

Ver. 19. *And every creeping thing that flieth is unclean*, &c.] Which the Targum of Jonathan thus paraphrases; "all flies and wasps (or hornets), and worms "of lentiles and of beans, which are separated from "food, and fly as birds, they are unclean;" see the notes on Lev. xi. 20, 23.

Ver. 20. But *of all clean fowls ye may eat.*] Even of all fowls but those before excepted; Aben Ezra instances in the locust, as being a clean fowl, that might be eaten; and so the Targum of Jonathan is "every clean locust ye may eat;" see Lev. xi. 22.

Ver. 21. *Ye shall not eat of any thing that dieth of itself*, &c.] This law is repeated from Lev. xvii. 15. see the note there: *thou shalt give it unto the stranger that is in thy gates, that he may eat it*; not to the proselyte of righteousness, for he might not eat of it any more than an Israelite, and if he did, he was obliged to wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water, and was unclean until the evening, as in Lev. xvii. 15. but to a proselyte of the gate, who took upon him, as Jarchi observes, not to serve idols, one that has renounced idolatry, but has not embraced the Jewish religion; such an one might eat of things that died of themselves, or were not killed in a proper manner. The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan call him an uncircumcised stranger or proselyte, who had not submitted to circumcision, as the proselyte of righteousness did: *or thou mayest sell it unto an alien*; an idolater, one that was neither a proselyte of righteousness nor of the gate, an entire alien from the commonwealth of Israel; one that was occasionally in the land of Canaan, or was travelling in it or through it, to such an one it might be sold: *for thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God*; separated from all others, and devoted to his service, and therefore must live on clean food and good meat, and not eat what others might: *thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk*; this is the third time this law is mentioned; see Exod. xxiii. 19. and xxxiv. 26. and the notes there: the reason of which repetition, the Jewish writers say [r], is, that it is once said to forbid the eating it, a second time to forbid any use of it or profit by it, and a third time to forbid the boiling of it.

Ver. 22. *Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed*, &c.] This was a different tithe from that which was made and given to the Levites, and out of which a tithe was taken and given to the priests, and which they only ate of; but this, as appears by the following verse, was what the owners themselves ate of, and so the tithing was left to be made by them themselves, and which they were to be sure to make, and to make it truly and faithfully: *that the field bringeth forth year by year*; being ploughed and sowed yearly, the produce of it was to be tithed yearly; the Jewish writers [s] observe on this, that it must be what the earth produces, and is fit for food: and it must be *thy seed*, which is specially thine, and is not common, but has an owner, and this excludes mushrooms, *&c.* which thou sowest not, and therefore can't be called thy seed.

Ver. 23. *And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there*, &c.] See ch. xii. 5. there the tithe of all the fruits of the earth was to be eaten; this is the second tithe, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi, and which is more particularly described as follows: *the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil*; see ch. xii. 17. and the note there: *and the firstlings of thine herds, and of thy flocks*; of which see the note on the above place: *that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always*; which such a constant practice would inure unto; see ch. x. 12.

Ver. 24. *And if the way be too long for thee*, &c.] The way from the place where any Israelite might live: *to carry it*; the tithe and the firstlings, it would be too expensive or too troublesome in any way that could be devised: or *if the place shall be too far from thee, which the Lord thy God shall choose to set his name there*; which by the event appeared to be the city of Jerusalem, and this from some parts of the land of Canaan was very distant: *when the Lord thy God hath*

[p] Hilchot. Maacolot Asurot, c. 1. sect. 14.
[q] Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 3.

[r] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 9.
[s] Ib. in Misn. Maaserot, c. 1. sect. 1.

blessed thee: with a large increase of the fruits of the earth, and of flocks and herds.

Ver. 25. *Thou shalt then turn it into money*, &c.] The tithe, which would be lighter and easier carriage: *and bind up the money in thine hand*: put it into a bag or purse, and tie it up and carry it in the hand: which some think was ordered, that it might not be mixed with other money; but it seems only to have respect to journeying, and making it fit for that. The Jewish writers [u], some of them, give a different sense of the word we render *bind up*, and interpret it of marking the silver, or impressing a form, figure, or image on it with the hand; they mean that it must be coined money; so Maimonides [w], they may not profane the sacred tithe with money not coined, nor with money not current, nor with money which is not in a man's power; for it is said, *in thine hand*; which the man is possessed of and is his own property: *and shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose*: carrying the money along with him, for which he sold the tithe.

Ver. 26. *And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after*, &c.] He might buy what provision he would with it, what he best liked, and was most agreeable to his appetite: *for oxen, or for sheep*: he might purchase beef or mutton, or any other sort of meat that could be got, and was lawful to be eaten, as before directed: *or for wine, or for strong drink*: to drink with his food, whether wine or any other liquor; the Targum of Jonathan is, wine new or old, which he chose; but the latter, strong drink, Aben Ezra says, was a liquor made of honey and of dates, of wheat and of barley: *or for whatsoever thy soul desireth*: whether eatable or drinkable: *and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God*; he having put his name in that place, and dwelling there, as the Lord did in the temple of Jerusalem: *and thou shalt rejoice, thou and thy household*; eat their food with cheerfulness and gladness, making a feast of it and keeping it as such, he and his whole family, his wife and children, or as many as were with him; and all males were obliged to appear at the three grand yearly festivals, and it was at one of these this was to be done.

Ver. 27. *And the Levite that is within thy gates, thou shalt not forsake him*, &c.] As not from giving him the first tithe, as Jarchi remarks, so he was not to forget him in this; he was not to leave him behind, but take him with him to partake of this entertainment: *for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee* in the land: see ch. xii. 12.

Ver. 28. *At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year*, &c.] This, according to Aben Ezra, was a third tithe, and did not excuse the second tithe; so Tobit says, ch. i. 7. "I gave the third tithe to the repair of the temple," as in one copy, but, according to another, to the stranger, fatherless, and widow, which better agrees with what follows; but the Jewish writers generally understand this as the same with the second tithe, which on the two first years from the sabbatical year was carried to Jerusalem, or money in lieu of it, with which provisions were bought and eaten there, but on the third year were eaten in their own cities with the poor, and in the stead of the other; so says Maimonides [x], on the third and sixth years from the sabbatical year, after they have separated the first tithe they separate from what remains another tithe, and give it to the poor, and it is called the poor's tithe, and not on those two years is the second tithe, but the poor's tithe, as it is said, *at the end of three years*, &c. and still more expressly elsewhere [y]; after they have separated the first tithe every year, they separate the second tithe, Deut. xiv. 22. and on the third and sixth years they separate the poor's tithe instead of the second: and this was done, not at the latter end of the third year, but, as Aben Ezra interprets it, at the beginning; for the word used signifies an extremity, and the beginning of the year is one extremity of it as well as the latter end of it: and *lay it up within thy gates*; not to be hoarded up, or to be sold at a proper time, but to be disposed and made use of as follows.

Ver. 29. *And the Levite, because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee*, &c.] Shall come and take the first tithe, according to Jarchi; but though this he was to do, yet is not what is intended here, but he was to partake of the second tithe, or what was in the room of it, the poor's tithe, with whom he is here joined: *and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come*; and take the second tithe, as the above writer rightly interprets it, and which he says is the poor's of this year; see ch. xii. 12, 18. *and shall eat and be satisfied*; make a plentiful meal, eat freely as at a feast; and, as the same writer observes, they were not obliged to eat it at Jerusalem, according to the way they were bound to eat the second tithe of the two years, that is, the two preceding this: *that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest*: as might be expected, when his commands, and particularly those respecting the tithes and firstlings, were obeyed.

CHAP. XV.

THIS chapter treats of a release of debts every seventh year, to which a blessing is promised if attended to, ver. 1—6. which seventh year of release should not hinder lending to a poor man in distress, even though it was nigh at hand, ver. 7—11. and of letting servants go free, whether man-servant or maid-servant, at the end of six years' servitude, ver. 12—15. but if unwilling to go, and desirous of staying, must have his ear bored

[u] Bartenora in Misn. Beracot, c. 7. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 11. sect. 2. & in Misn. Sabbat, c. 18. sect. 1.
[w] In Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 11. sect. 2.
[x] Hilchot Mattanot. Anayim, c. 6. sect. 4.
[y] In Maaser Sheni, c. 1. sect. 1.

through with an awl, and serve to the year of jubilee, ver. 16, 17, 18. and of sanctifying and eating the firstlings of the herd and flock where the Lord directs, ver. 19—23.

Ver. 1. *At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release.*] Not of servants, for they were not to be dismissed from their service until they had served six years, as is directed to in a following law; for if they were to be set free whenever a sabbatical year came, they might be discharged when they had not served more than a year, or than half a year, or than a month or two. Indeed when the year of jubilee intervened, they were released be it at what time it would; but not in a sabbatical year, which was a year of release of debts, as the following verses shew, as well as there was then a rest of the land from tillage, Lev. xxv. 2, 3, 4. Now this was done at the end or extremity of every seventh year; not at the latter end or extremity of it, for if the debt of a poor man might be exacted of him in the year, and until the end of it, it would not in this respect have been a sabbatical year, or a year of rest and quiet; but this was done at the first extremity of it, at the beginning of it, as Aben Ezra and Ben Melech observe; though Maimonides[b] asserts it to be after the seven years were ended; for he says, "the seventh year releaseth not monies but at the "end of it," according to Deut. xv. 1. that as in Deut. xxxi. 10. after seven years is meant, so the release of monies is after seven years.

Ver. 2. *And this is the manner of the release, &c.*] Or the rules to be observed in making it: *every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it*; that is, forgive the debt, or free the debtor from any obligation to payment. Some think this was only a release of debts for this year, in which there was no ploughing nor sowing, and so a poor man could not be in any circumstances to pay his debts; but might be exacted afterwards; but it rather seems to be a full release, so as the payment of them might not be demanded, neither this year nor afterwards; indeed, if a person afterwards should be in a capacity to pay his debts, he would be obliged, in conscience, duty, and honour, to pay them, though no reserve was made in this law, which nowhere appears: *he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother*; he might receive it, if payment was offered, but he might not demand it, or sue for it; or give his neighbour or brother, whether in a natural or religious sense, any trouble about it: the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, "his "brother, an Israelite;" one of the same nation and religion with him, though he might not be related in the bonds of consanguinity: *because it is called the Lord's release*; appointed and commanded by him, and was for his honour and glory, as a God gracious and merciful to the poor, and beneficent to those creditors; and which was proclaimed in his name, by the civil magistrate, according to his order; so the Targum of Jonathan, "because the house of judgment, or the "sanhedrim, proclaimed it a release before the Lord." Now this was typical of a release of debts, or of forgiveness of sins, which is an act of God's grace through Christ, and for his sake. Sins are called debts, not what men owe to God, for then it would be right to commit them, and they might be committed with impunity; yea, with praise, since it would be doing what is fit and right, and well-pleasing to God; but men are debtors to fulfil the law, and in case of failure, or a breach of it, are bound to the debt of punishment; and these debts are very numerous, and men are incapable of paying them: and by a release of these is meant not a liberty of sinning, nor a freedom from the being or bondage of sin, but from the guilt of it, and from obligation to punishment for it; and is properly the forgiveness of sin, which is expressed by various phrases, as a non-imputation, a non-remembrance, a covering, blotting out, and removing of sin, and here typically a release of debts; see Matt. vi. 12. and God only can make it; he is the creditor; sin is committed against him, and he only can forgive it, which he does freely, fully, and at once; see Luke vii. 41, 42.

Ver. 3. *Of a foreigner thou mayest exact it again, &c.*] Either on the seventh year, or after it: *but that which is thine with thy brother, thine hand shall release*; a debt that lies between them, where the one is the creditor, and the other debtor, the creditor shall freely and fully forgive the debtor. So those only are released or forgiven by the Lord who are his own, whom he has reserved for himself, or chosen to everlasting life; who are interested in the covenant of his grace, one article in which is the forgiveness of sins; and who are redeemed by the blood of Christ, a branch of which redemption is remission of sin; and who are called by grace, and believe in Christ, to whom pardon of sins is promised; but those who are foreigners and strangers, and are not the Lord's chosen, redeemed, and called people, have no share in this blessing of grace; nor such who are rich in their own esteem, and need nothing; but those who are poor and unable to pay their debts, and are sensible of their spiritual poverty, and apply to the Lord for the forgiveness of their sins.

Ver. 4. *Save when there shall be no poor among you, &c.*] Then such a law could not take place, there would be no debts to be released; for this was never designed to screen rich persons from the payment of their just debts, or whoever were in a capacity of so doing, only such as were really poor, and unable to pay; and it supposes that this might sometimes be the case, that there were none poor in Israel, or needed the benefit of such a law; and, according to the Targum of Jonathan, it is suggested there would be none, if they were observant of the commands of God: and some take it for a promise, rendering the words *nevertheless*[c], notwithstanding such a law, *there shall be no poor among you*; but then it must be understood conditionally: others interpret this as the end to be answered by this law, *to the end*[d] *there may be no poor among you*; by observing this law, all debts being released once in seven years, it would prevent persons falling into distress and poverty, to such a degree as to be in want, and become beggars; and Julian the emperor observes, that none of the Jews begged[e], which

[b] Hilchot Shemittah & Yobel, c. 9. sect. 4.

[c] אפס כי verumtamen, Munster.

[d] To the end that there be not, Ainsworth; so the margin of the Bible.

[e] Opera, par. 2. Ep. 49. p. 204.

he attributes to the care that was taken of their poor: *for the Lord shall greatly bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it*; which is either a reason why there would be no poor, should they observe the commandments of the Lord; or a reason why they should release the debts of the poor, because they were so greatly blessed with a fruitful land, which brought them such an increase, as enabled them to free their poor debtors, when in circumstances unable to pay them.

Ver. 5. *Only if thou carefully hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God*, &c.] In his word, and by his prophets; this being the case, there would be no more poor among them, or however they would be so blessed of God, that they would be capable of releasing the debts of the poor, without hurting themselves and their families: *to observe to do all these commandments which I command thee this day*; a phrase often used to put them in mind of the commands of God, and the necessity of keeping them, their temporal happiness depending thereon.

Ver. 6. *For the Lord thy God blesseth thee, as he promised thee*, &c.] He is faithful that has promised, and he always gives the blessing he promises according to the nature of the promise; if absolute, and without conditions, he gives it without respect to any; but if conditional, as the promises of temporal good things to Israel were, he gives according as the condition is performed: *and thou shalt lend unto many nations, but thou shalt not borrow*; signifying they should be so rich and increased in goods, and worldly substance, that they should be able to lend to their neighbouring nations round about, but should stand in no need of borrowing of any of them. This is sometimes said of the language of these people, the Hebrew language, that it lends to all, but borrows of none, being an original primitive language; see ch. xxviii. 12. *and thou shalt reign over many nations*: which was fulfilled in the times of David and Solomon: *but they shall not reign over thee*; that is, as long as they observed the commands of God; otherwise, when they did not, they were carried captive into other countries, and other people reigned over them, as at this day.

Ver. 7. *If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren*, &c.] As there would be, according to the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, if they did not keep the commandments of the law, and continue therein: *within any of thy gates, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*; a native of the land was to be preferred to a foreigner, and a brother, whether in relation or religion, to a proselyte of the gate; and the poor of a city to which a man belonged, to the poor of another city, as Jarchi observes; which he gathers from this phrase, *within any of thy gates*: *thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy brother*; so as not to pity his distressed case, and have no bowels of compassion for him, and feel for his want, and so as not to distribute to his necessities, and relieve him.

Ver. 8. *But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him*, &c.] And give him bountifully and liberally; in order to which the heart must be first opened, the affections moved, and a willing mind disposed to give generously: *and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need in that which he wanteth*; enough to answer his present exigencies, but not to cause him to abound, or to supply him with things needless and superfluous.

Ver. 9. *Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart*, &c.] Or, *thy heart of Belial*[r]; thy worthless heart, and which is without a yoke unsubjected to the law of God, as every carnal heart is; and in which Belial, Satan, the prince of this world, works effectually, and inclines to evil thoughts, affections, and desires, which are to be guarded against: *saying, the seventh year, the year of release, is at hand*; perhaps the next year, or within a few months: *and thine eye be evil against thy brother, and thou give him nought*; being of an uncompassionate and covetous disposition, shall refuse to give or lend him any thing on this consideration, because the year of release will quickly come, when, if poor and unable to pay him, he would be obliged to release his debt: *and he cry unto the Lord against thee*; go to the throne of grace, and in prayer bring a charge, and lodge a complaint of unkindness and uncharitableness: *and it be a sin unto thee*; the Lord shall reckon it as a sin, a very heinous one, and call to an account for it.

Ver. 10. *Thou shalt surely give him*, &c.] Or lend to him; though lending in such a case and circumstances, that person being extremely poor, and the year of release at hand, is the same as giving. Jarchi remarks that money must be given him, even a hundred times if he asks it; but the limitation is to what he wants, and what is sufficient for his present wants, ver. 8. *and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him*; grieved at parting with his money he has little or no hope of seeing again, grudging it to him to whom it is given; when, on the other hand, it should be given freely and cheerfully, for God loves a cheerful giver: *because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all thou puttest thine hand unto*; that is, for lending or giving largely, liberally, and cheerfully, to persons in distress; see Prov. xi. 24, 25. Isa. xxxii. 8. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7, 8, 9.

Ver. 11. *For the poor shall never cease out of the land*, &c.] There would be always such objects to exercise their charity and beneficence towards, John xii. 8. which is no contradiction to ver. 4. for had they been obedient to the laws of God, they would have been so blessed that there would have been none; so the Targums; but he foresaw that they would not keep his commands, and so this would be the case, and which he foretels that they might expect it, and do their duty to them, as here directed: *therefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother*; not give sparingly, but largely, in proportion to the necessities of the poor, and according to the abilities of the lender or giver; and this must be done to a brother, one that is near in the bonds of consanguinity, and to him a man must give or lend first, as Aben Ezra observes, and then *to thy poor*; the poor of thy family, as the same writer: *and to thy needy in the land*: that are in very distressed circumstances,

[r] לבבך בליעל corde tuo Belial, Montanus.

though not related, and particularly such as are in the same place where a man dwells; for, as the same writer remarks, the poor of thy land are to be preferred to the poor of another place.

Ver. 12. And *if thy brother, an Hebrew man, or an Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, &c.*] By others, as by the sanhedrim for theft, for which a man might be sold, but not a woman, as Jarchi observes; but then a father might sell his daughter for an handmaid, if little and under age; and to such cases this law is supposed to refer; see Exod. xxi. 2, 7. and xxii. 3. though a man on account of poverty might sell himself: *and serve thee six years;* as he was bound to do, if his master lived so long; if he died before the six years were out, he was obliged to serve his son, but not his daughter, nor his brother, nor his heirs, as the Jewish writers affirm [g]: *then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee;* that is, at the end of the sixth, and beginning of the seventh year; see Exod. xxi. 2.

Ver. 13. *And when thou sendest him out free from thee, &c.*] When he discharged him from his servitude, and made him a free man: *thou shalt not let him go away empty;* without any thing to support himself, or to put himself in a way of business; he having in the time of his servitude worked entirely for his master, and so could not have got and saved any thing for himself.

Ver. 14. *Thou shalt furnish him liberally, &c.*] Not only to supply his present wants, but for his future use, and to set him up in the world: *loading thou shalt load him* [h], so some render the words; give him as much as he can carry, and well stand up under; the word used has the signification of chains wore about the neck for honour or ornament, and so may signify he should be very honourably dismissed, with plain marks of honour and respect; and the order is, to supply him *out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press;* with sheep or lambs out of the flock, with corn out of the floor, wheat, or barley, or both, and wine out of the wine-press; which take in all the necessaries and comforts of life: of that *wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee thou shalt give unto him;* be it what it will, and in proportion to it, as of money as well as goods; it is asked, how much shall be given to him? not less than the value of 30 shekels, whether of one kind or whether of many kinds, according to the thirty shekels for the mulct of a servant, Exod. xxi. 32 [i]. All this may be an emblem both of the servitude the people of God are in to sin, Satan, and the law, whilst in a state of nature; and of their freedom from it by Christ, and of the sufficiency and fulness of food and raiment, and large measures of divine grace; even all things richly to enjoy, all things pertaining to life and godliness, which are given to them when brought out of that state; who otherwise come out of it destitute of all good things, having neither food nor clothes, nor money to buy either, but have all from Christ freely and fully.

Ver. 15. *And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, &c.*] Where they were used hardly, and their lives were made bitter in hard bondage; and therefore should shew the greater compassion to servants, whose case they could not but sympathize with, and have a fellow-feeling of: *and the Lord thy God redeemed thee;* from the house of bondage and state of slavery, after they had been in it many years: *therefore I command thee this thing to day;* to release their servants at the end of six years, and not send them away empty, but generously contribute to them at their dismission; since when he redeemed them he gave them the spoil of Egypt, and of the sea, as Jarchi remarks; they came out of their bondage-state with jewels, and gold, and silver, and raiment, even with great substance; and at the Red sea their spoil was increased which they took from Pharaoh and his host when drowned there; now as they came out of their servitude not empty but full, being sufficiently paid for their hard service, so they should remember to give to their servants liberally, when they made them free.

Ver. 16. *And it shall be, if he say unto thee, I will not go away from thee, &c.*] Out of his house, nor quit his service: *because he loveth thee and thine house;* his master and his family, and so loth to leave them, but chooses rather to stay with them than have his liberty; hence the Jews say [k], if his master has not a wife and children, his ear is not to be bored: *because he is well with thee;* lives well with him, is well used by him, wants for nothing, and enjoys peace and quietness, and has every thing to make him happy as such a state will admit of, and with the which he is well contented, and highly pleased. This is an emblem of the cheerful and constant obedience of the people of Christ to him their master, flowing from love to him; whom they love above all persons and things, with all their heart and soul, and his house also, the place of his worship, his ordinances, truths, ministers and children; and therefore choose to be where they are, finding that they are there well used, fare well, having bread enough and to spare, spiritual provisions in plenty; are well clothed with the righteousness of Christ, have the good company of the saints and excellent in the earth, in whom is all their delight; and, above all, the presence of their Lord and master, and the smiles of his countenance.

Ver. 17. *Then thou shalt take an awl, and thrust it through his ear unto the door, &c.*] Not of his master's house, but of the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, according to the Targum of Jonathan, before whom he was to be brought, and declare his desire to continue with his master; see the note on Exod. xxi. 6. *and he shall be thy servant for ever;* that is, unto the jubilee, as the same Targum; for then all servants were released, and so Jarchi calls it the ever of jubilee: *and also unto thy maid-servant thou shalt do likewise;* not bore her ear, for, as both Jarchi and Aben Ezra, and others say, she was not to be bored; though some are of opinion that a maid-servant who was willing to continue with her master was to be bored as a man-servant; but this respects the manner of dismissing her, or letting her go free, when she was not to go empty,

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[g] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin. c. 1. sect. 2.

[h] הענק תעניק onerando onerabis, Munster, Pagninus, Vatablus.

[i] Maimon. Hilchut Obedim, c. 3. sect. 14.

[k] Maimon. in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 2.

but to be liberally furnished and supplied, as a man-servant was.

Ver. 18. *It shall not seem hard to thee when thou sendest him away free from thee, &c.*] He should not grudge him his liberty, nor what he gives to him when he dismisses him: *for he hath been worth a double hired servant* to thee *in serving thee six years;* since a hired servant a man is obliged to pay him wages for his work, besides his food, whereas a bond-servant received no wages. Aben Ezra remarks, that this proves that a man might not hire himself for more than three years; or however, whereas a hired servant was sometimes hired for so many years, and this is the longest time of any we read of, a servant serving his master six years, his service must be worth double the service of an hired servant, which at most was but three years: *and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thou doest:* thus well-using thy servants, whether men-servants or maid-servants.

Ver. 19. *All the firstling males that come of thy herd, or of thy flock, thou shalt sanctify unto the Lord thy God, &c.*] According to the law in Exod. xiii. 2, 12, 13. see the notes there: *thou shalt do no work with the firstling of thy bullock;* as to plough or tread out the corn with it, which were done with other heifers: *nor shear the firstling of thy sheep;* nor was the wool shorn of it to be made use of; one of the Jewish canons runs thus, "if any man weave an hand's breadth of the "wool of a firstling into cloth, the cloth is to be burnt[t]."

Ver. 20. *Thou shalt eat it before the Lord thy God, year by year, &c.*] Which, if understood of male firstlings, as in connexion with the preceding verse, only priests might eat of them, being devoted to the Lord; so Jarchi says, to the priest he speaks; but if this respects the Israelites in common, then they must be understood either of female firstlings or second firstlings, which the people voluntarily separated, and which they were not to eat in their own houses, *but in the place which the Lord shall choose,* which was the city of Jerusalem; see ch. xii. 5. *thou and thy household;* the household of the priest, as Aben Ezra interprets it; but if it designs the same as in ch. xii. 17, 18. then the Israelites and their families are meant.

Ver. 21. *And if there be any blemish therein, &c.*] In the firstling, as if it be *lame or blind,* or have *any ill blemish: thou shalt not sacrifice it unto the Lord thy God;* blemishes in any beast made it unfit for sacrifices which were required; and so all peace-offerings, vows, and free-will offerings, were to be free from any, Lev. xxii. 19—24. see Mal. i. 14. such were not fit for an holy sacrifice or an holy feast.

Ver. 22. *Thou shalt eat it within thy gates, &c.*] Though it might not be sacrificed, nor eaten as an eucharistic feast at Jerusalem, it might be eaten as common food in their own houses: *the unclean and the clean person shall eat it alike;* such as were ceremonially unclean, by the touch of a dead body or the like, might partake of it with those that were clean, no difference was to be made: *as the roebuck and as the hart;* which were clean creatures, and used for food, though not for sacrifice; see ch. xii. 15, 22.

Ver. 23. *Only thou shalt not eat the blood thereof, &c.*] Of the firstling: *thou shalt pour it upon the ground as water;* see the note on ch. xii. 16, 23, 24.

CHAP. XVI.

THIS chapter treats of the three grand yearly festivals, of the feast of passover, when, where, and what was to be sacrificed, how to be dressed, and in what manner to be eaten, ver. 1—8. of the feast of pentecost, when to begin it, where and how it was to be observed, ver. 9—12. and of the feast of tabernacles, when, where, and how long it was to be kept, ver. 13, 14, 15. which three times in the year all the males were to appear before the Lord, and not empty, ver. 16, 17. an order is given for the appointment of judges in the land, to execute judgment, ver. 18, 19, 20. and the chapter is closed with a caution against planting groves, and setting up images, ver. 21, 22.

Ver. 1. *Observe the month of Abib, &c.*] Sometimes called Nisan; it answered to part of our March, and part of April; it was an observable month, to be taken notice of; it was called Abib, from the corn then appearing in ear, and beginning to ripen, and all things being in their verdure; the Septuagint calls it the month of new fruit; it was appointed the first of the months for ecclesiastic things, and was the month in which the Israelites went out of Egypt, and the first passover was kept in it, and therefore deserving of regard; see Exod. xii. 2. and xiii. 4. *for in the month of Abib the Lord thy God brought thee forth out of Egypt by night:* for though they did not set out until morning, when it was day-light, and are said to come out in the day, yet it was in the night the Lord did wonders for them, as Onkelos paraphrases this clause; that he smote all the first-born in Egypt, and passed over the houses of the Israelites, the door-posts being sprinkled with the blood of the passover-lamb slain that night, and therefore was a night much to be observed; and it was in the night Pharaoh arose and gave them leave to go; and from that time they were no more under his power, and from thence may be reckoned their coming out of bondage; see Exod xii. 12, 29, 30, 31, 42.

Ver. 2. *Thou shalt therefore sacrifice the passover unto the Lord thy God, &c.*] In the month Abib, and in the night of that month they came out of Egypt, even on the fourteenth day of it at night, between the two evenings, as the Targum of Jonathan; which was a lamb, and typical of Christ, the passover sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. v. 7. *of the flock and of the herd;* the particle *of* may be left out, and the words be rendered *the flock and the herd;* that is, thou shalt sacrifice also the offerings which were offered throughout the seven days of unleavened bread, and these were both sheep and

[t] Misn. Orlah, c. 3. sect. 3.

oxen, Numb. xxviii. 19, 24. and are expressly called passover-offerings and peace-offerings, 2 Chron. xxx. 21—24. and xxxv. 7, 8, 9. for what was strictly and properly the passover was only of the flock, a lamb, and not of the herd, or a bullock; though Aben Ezra says there were some that thought that in Egypt it was only a lamb or a kid, but now it might be a bullock; which he observes is not right. It may be indeed that the word passover here is a general term, comprehending the whole passover-solemnity, and all the sacrifices of the seven days: the Jews commonly understand this clause of the Chagigah, or feast of the 15th day, the first day of unleavened bread, and so the Targum of Jonathan, "and the sheep and the oxen on the morrow;" some distinguish them thus, the flock for the duty of the passover, the herd for the peace-offerings, so Aben Ezra; or as Jarchi interprets it, the flock of the lambs and kids, and the herd for the Chagigah or festival; in the Talmud [m]; the flock, this is the passover; the herd, this is the Chagigah, so Abendana: there was a Chagigah of the fourteenth day, which was brought with the lamb and eaten first, when the company was too large for the lamb, that they might eat with satiety [n]; but this was not reckoned obligatory upon them [o], but they were bound to bring their Chagigah on the 15th day: *in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there;* that is, at Jerusalem, as the event has shewn; hence we read of the parents of our Lord going up to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover, Luke ii. 41.

Ver. 3. *Thou shalt eat no leavened bread with it,* &c.] With the passover, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it; that is, with the passover-lamb, nor indeed with any of the passover, or peace-offerings, as follows; see Exod. xii. 8. *seven days shall ye eat unleavened bread therewith;* with the passover; this plainly shews, that by the passover in the preceding verse is not meant strictly the passover-lamb, for that was eaten at once on the night of the 14th of the month, and not seven days running, and therefore must be put for the whole solemnity of the feast, and all the sacrifices of it, both the lamb of the 14th, and the Chagigah of the 15th, and every of the peace-offerings of the rest of the days were to be eaten with unleavened bread: even *the bread of affliction;* so called either from the nature of its being heavy and lumpish, not grateful to the taste nor easy of digestion, and was mortifying and afflicting to be obliged to eat of it seven days together; or rather from the use of it, which was, as Jarchi observes, to bring to remembrance the affliction they were afflicted with in Egypt: *for thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt in haste;* and had not time to leaven their dough; so that at first they were obliged through necessity to eat unleavened bread, and afterwards by the command of God in remembrance of it; see Exod. xii. 33, 34, 39. *that thou mayest remember the day when thou camest forth out of the land of Egypt all the days of thy life;* how it was with them then, how they were hurried out with their unleavened dough; and that this might be imprinted on their minds, the master of the family used [p], at the time of the passover, to break a cake of unleavened bread, and say, this is the bread of affliction, *&c.* or bread of poverty; as it is the way of poor men to have broken bread, so here is broken bread.

Ver. 4. *And there shall be no leavened bread seen with thee in all thy coasts seven days,* &c.] For before the passover they were to search diligently every room in the house, and every hole and crevice, that none might remain any where; see Exod. xii. 15, 19. and xiii. 7. *neither shall there be* any thing *of the flesh, which thou sacrificedst the first day at even, remain all night until the morning;* which may be understood both of the flesh of the passover-lamb, as Aben Ezra, according to Exod. xii. 10. and of the flesh of flocks and herds, or of the Chagigah; according to Jarchi this Scripture speaks of the Chagigah of the fourteenth, which was not to remain on the first day of the feast (the 15th) until the morning of the second day (the 16th).

Ver. 5. *Thou mayest not sacrifice the passover within any of thy gates,* &c.] Or cities, as the Targum of Jonathan, so called because they usually had gates to them, in which public affairs were transacted; but in none of these, only in the city of Jerusalem, the place the Lord chose, might they kill the passover and eat it, and other passover-offerings: *which the Lord thy God giveth thee;* in the land of Canaan, and which land was given them of God.

Ver. 6. *But at the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name in,* &c.] To place the ark and the mercy-seat with the cherubim over them, where he caused his Shechinah, or divine Majesty, to dwell; and this was at Jerusalem, where the temple was built by Solomon: *there thou shalt sacrifice the passover;* kill and eat the paschal lamb: *at even, at the going down of the sun;* between the two evenings it was killed, before the sun was set, and afterwards at night it was eaten; the Targum of Jonathan is, "and at evening, at the setting of the sun, ye shall "eat it until the middle of the night:" *at the season that thou camest forth out of Egypt;* or as the same Targum, "the time of the beginning of your redemp-"tion out of Egypt;" which was when Pharaoh rose at midnight, and gave them leave to go; from thence their redemption commenced, though they did not actually set out until the morning.

Ver. 7. *And thou shalt roast and eat it in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose,* &c.] The word for *roast* signifies to *boil,* and is justly so used, and so Onkelos here renders it, and the Septuagint version both *roast* and *boil:* but it is certain that the passover-lamb was not to be boiled, it is expressly forbidden, Exod. xii. 8, 9. wherefore some think the Chagigah is here meant, and the other offerings that were offered at this feast; and so in the times of Josiah they roasted the passover with fire, according to the ordinance of God; but the other holy offerings sod or boiled they in pots, cauldrons and pans, and divided them speedily among the people, 2 Chron xxxv. 13. but the passover-lamb seems plainly to be meant here by the connexion of this verse with the preceding verses; wherefore Jarchi observes, that this is to be

[m] T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 70. 2.
[n] Jarchi in loc. Maimon. Hilchot Corban Pesach, c. 8. l. 3.
[o] T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 71. 1, 2. Maimon. ut supra, c. 10. sect. 12. Aruch in voc. חר, fol. 58. 1.

[p] Haggadah Shel Pesach, in Seder Tephillot, fol. 242. Maimon. Chametz Umetzah, c. 8. sect. 6.

understood of roasting with fire, though expressed by this word: *and thou shalt turn in the morning, and go unto thy tents;* not in the morning of the 15th, after the passover had been killed and eaten on the 14th, but in the morning, after the feast of unleavened bread, which lasted seven days, was over; though some think that they might if they would depart home after the passover had been observed, and were not obliged to stay and keep the feast of unleavened bread at Jerusalem, but march to their own cities; and so Aben Ezra observes, that some say a man may go on a feast-day to his house and country, but, says he, we don't agree to it; and it appears from the observation of other feasts, which lasted as long as these, that the people did not depart to their tents till the whole was over; see 1 Kings viii. 66. 2 Chron. vii. 10. and with this agrees the Targum of Jonathan, "and thou shalt turn "in the morning of the going out of the feast, and go "to thy cities." Jarchi indeed interprets it afterwards of the second day.

Ver. 8. *Six days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, &c.*] In other places it is ordered to be eaten seven days, Exod. xii. 15, 19. and xiii. 6, 7. and here it is not said six only; it was to be eaten on the seventh as on the other, though that is here distinguished from the six, because of special and peculiar service assigned to it, but not because of an exemption from eating unleavened bread on it. The Jews seem to understand this of different corn of which the bread was made, and not of different sort of bread; the Targum of Jonathan is, on the first day ye shall offer the sheaf (the first-fruits of the barley-harvest), and on the six days which remain ye shall begin to eat the unleavened bread of the new fruits, and so Jarchi: *and on the seventh day* shall be *a solemn assembly to the Lord thy God;* a holy convocation, devoted to religious exercises, and the people were restrained, according to the sense of the word, from all servile work, as follows: *thou shalt do no work* therein; that is, the business of their callings, their trades and manufactories; they were obliged to abstain from all kind of work excepting what was necessary for the dressing of food, and in this it differed from a sabbath; see Exod. xii. 16. Lev. xxiii. 8.

Ver. 9. *Seven weeks then shalt thou number unto thee, &c.*] And then another feast was to take place, called from hence the feast of weeks, and sometimes Pentecost, from its being the 50th day: *begin to number the seven weeks from* such time as *thou beginnest* to put *the sickle to the corn;* for the sheaf of the wave-offering, as the first-fruits of barley-harvest, which was done on the morrow after the sabbath in the passover-week, and from thence 7 weeks or 50 days were reckoned, and the 50th day was the feast here ordered to be kept; so the Targum of Jonathan, "after the reaping "of the sheaf ye shall begin to number seven weeks;" see Lev. xxiii. 15.

Ver. 10. *And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God, &c.*] The feast of Pentecost, at which time the spirit was poured down upon the apostles, Acts ii. 1. *with a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand:* there were two wave-loaves which were ordered to be brought and seven lambs, one young bullock and two rams for a burnt-offering, together with the meat and drink offerings belonging thereunto, and a kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs for a peace-offering, Lev. xxiii. 17, 18, 19. and besides all this, there was to be a voluntary contribution brought in their hands; for this was one of those feasts at which all the males were to appear before the Lord, and none of them empty: *which thou shalt give* unto the Lord thy God, *according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee;* no certain rate was fixed, it was to be a free gift, and in proportion to a man's abilities, or what the Lord had blessed him with.

Ver. 11. *And thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God, &c.*] Make a liberal feast, and keep it cheerfully, in the presence of God, in the place where he resides, thankfully acknowledging all his mercies and favours: *thou, and thy son, and thy man-servant, and thy maid-servant, and the Levite that is within thy gates;* that dwelt in the same city, who were all to come with him to Jerusalem at this feast, and to partake of it with him: *and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that* are *among you, in the place which the Lord thy God hath chosen to place his name there;* who should be at Jerusalem at this time.

Ver. 12. *And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt, &c.*] And now delivered from that bondage; the consideration of which should make them liberal in their free-will offering, and generous in the feast they provided, and compassionate to the stranger, widow, and fatherless: *and thou shalt observe and do these statutes;* concerning the passover, the feast of unleavened bread, and of Pentecost, and the peace-offerings and the free-will offerings belonging to them: and nothing could more strongly oblige them to observe them than their redemption from their bondage in Egypt; as nothing more engages to the performance of good works than the consideration of our spiritual and eternal redemption by Christ, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. Tit. i. 14. 1 Pet. i. 17, 18, 19.

Ver. 13. *Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, &c.*] Which began on the fifteenth day of Tisri, or September; see Lev. xxiii. 34, &c. *after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine;* and therefore sometimes called the feast of in-gathering, Exod. xxiii. 16. barley-harvest began at the passover, and wheat-harvest at Pentecost; and before the feast of tabernacles began, the vintage and the gathering of the olives were over, as well as all other summer-fruits were got in.

Ver. 14. *And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, &c.*] At this feast of tabernacles and in-gathering of the fruits of the earth, in token of gratitude and thankfulness for the goodness of God bestowed on them: the Targum of Jonathan adds, with the flute and the pipe, making use of instrumental music to increase the joy on this occasion: *thou and thy son, &c.* see the note on ver. 11.

Ver. 15. *Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God, &c.*] The feast of tabernacles still spoken of: *in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose;* the city of Jerusalem: *because the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy increase, and in all the works of thine hands;* both in the increase of their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, and also in their

several handicraft trades and occupations they were employed in; so Aben Ezra interprets all the works of their hands of merchandise and manufactories: *therefore thou shalt surely rejoice:* extremely, heartily, and sincerely, and not fail to express joy on this occasion, and manifest it by a generous free-will offering to the Lord, and a bountiful entertainment for himself, his family, friends, and others.

Ver. 16. *Three times a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God,* &c.] This has been observed before, Exod. xxiii. 17. and xxxiv. 23. and is repeated here for the sake of mentioning the place where they were to appear, which before now was not observed, and indeed it is chiefly for that the other festivals are here recited: *in the place which he shall choose;* which though not expressed is now easily understood; and the three times at which they were to appear there were, *in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles;* or passover, Pentecost, and tabernacles; and of numbers of people going up from the country to each of these feasts, we have instances in the New Testament; to the passover, Luke ii. 42, 44. John xi. 55. to Pentecost, Acts ii. 5—11. to tabernacles, John vii. 2, 10. *and they shall not appear before the Lord empty:* Aben Ezra observes, the meaning is, not empty of the tribute of the free-will offering of their hand, and which Jarchi more fully explains of the burnt-offerings of appearance, and of the peace-offerings of the Chagigah, or money answerable to them; which, according to the Misnah [q], was a meah of silver for a burnt-offering, and two pieces of silver for the Chagigah, which weighed 32 barley-corns [r].

Ver. 17. *Every man* shall give *as he is able,* &c.] The quantity to be given is not fixed in the law, but the wise men appointed it, as observed on ver. 16. but it is left by the Lord to the generosity of the people, only giving this general rule, that they should do according to their ability, and as the Lord had prospered them; see 1 Cor. xvi. 2. so Jarchi, "every man that "hath many eatables and much goods shall bring "many burnt-offerings and many peace-offerings."

Ver. 18. *Judges and officers shalt thou make thee,* &c.] Judges were fixed in the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, and those that have law-suits come before them; officers are masters of the staff and whip, and they stand before the judges, and go into markets, streets, and shops, to order the weights and measures, and to smite all that do wrong; and all they do is by order of the judges; so Maimonides [s]: the qualifications of judges to be chosen and constituted by the people are thus described by him. In the sanhedrim, greater or lesser, they place only men wise and understanding, expert in the wisdom of the law, and masters of great knowledge, and that know some of the other sciences, as medicine, arithmetic, astronomy, and astrology, the ways of soothsayers, diviners, and wizards, and the vanities of idolatry, that they may know how to judge them; and they set in the sanhedrim only priests, Levites, and Israelites, who are genealogized; nor do they set an old man there, nor an eunuch, nor a king, but an high-priest, if he is qualified with wisdom; and they must be free from blemishes, and of a good stature and appearance, and understand many languages, and not hear by an interpreter; and though all this was not precisely required of the sanhedrim of three judges, yet these same things ought to be in every one of them, wisdom, and meekness, and fear, and hatred of money, and love of truth, and love of men, and to be of a good report [t]: and these were to be placed in *all thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee throughout thy tribes;* that is, in every city, as Onkelos, and so Jarchi; and usually the courts of judicature were held in the gates of cities, and it was only in the land of Israel, not without it, that they were obliged to set up courts of judicature, as Maimonides [u] observes; who also asks, how many courts were fixed in Israel, and what the number they consisted of? to which he answers, they fixed at first the great court in the sanctuary, and it was called the great sanhedrim, and its number were 71; and again, they set up two courts of 23, one at the door of the court, and the other at the door of the mountain of the house (and so in the Misnah) [w]; and they set up in every city in Israel, in which were 120 (men or families) or more, a lesser sanhedrim, which sat in the gate, and their number were 23 judges; in a city in which there were not 120, they placed three judges, for there is no court less than three [x]: *and they shall judge the people with just judgment:* give a right and just sentence in all cases that come before them, according to the laws of God, and the rules of justice and equity.

Ver. 19. *Thou shalt not wrest judgment,* &c.] Or pervert it, pass a wrong sentence, or act contrary to justice; this is said to the judges as a direction to them, and so what follows: *thou shalt not respect persons;* so as to give the cause on account of outward circumstances and relations; as in favour of a rich man against a poor man merely for that reason, or of a near relation or intimate friend and acquaintance against a stranger, but justice should be administered without favour or affection to any; as Jarchi puts it, he was to make no difference in his address and behaviour to contending parties before him; he was not to be tender and soft to one and hard to the other, or let one stand and another sit: *neither take a gift;* as a bribe to give the cause wrong: at Thebes, in Egypt, as Diodorus Siculus [y] relates, in a court on a wall, were images of judges to the number of thirty; in the midst of them was the chief judge, having Truth hanging down from his neck (which seems to be in imitation of the Urim of the high-priest of the Jews), his eyes shut, and many books by him; by which image was shewn, that judges should receive nothing, and that the chief judge should look to truth only: *for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and pervert the words of the righteous;* see Exod. xxiii. 8. the Jews have a saying, that a judge that takes a bribe, and perverts judgment, does not die of old age, or till his eyes become dim [z].

[q] Chagigah, c. 1. sect. 2.
[r] Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.
[s] Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 1.
[t] Ib. c. 2. sect. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.
[u] Ib. c. 1. sect. 2.
[w] Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 2.
[x] Ib. sect. 3, 4.
[y] Bibliothec. l. 1. c. 45.
[z] Misn. Peah, c. 8. sect. 9.

Ver. 20. *That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, &c.*] Or *justice, justice* [a], strict justice, and nothing else: *that thou mayest live and inherit the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*; that is, continue in the possession of it.

Ver. 21. *Thou shalt not plant thee a grove of any trees, &c.*] Of any sort of trees, as oaks or any other; not but that it was lawful to plant trees and groves of them, but not for a religious or idolatrous use: particularly *near unto the altar of the Lord thy God, which thou shalt make thee*: as the Heathens did near their altars, lest it should be thought to be done for a like superstitious and idolatrous use; which evil the Jews sometimes fell into in the times of wicked reigns, and which their good and pious kings removed and destroyed; see 2 Kings xviii. 4. and xxi. 3. and xxiii. 4, 7, 14, 15. and Hecatæus [b], an Heathen historian, relates of the city of Jerusalem, that there were there no image, nor plantation, nor grove, nor any such thing.

Ver. 22. *Neither shalt thou set up any image, &c.*] Graven or molten, of man, beast, fish, or fowl; the word signifies a *statue* or *pillar* [c] which was set up for idolatry; for, as Aben Ezra observes, what was not set up for idolatry was not forbidden, as when erected in memory of any action or remarkable event; see Josh. xxii. 10, *&c. which the Lord thy God hateth*; as he does every species of idolatry, or that has any tendency to it; it being so opposite to his being, perfections, and glory; and therefore nothing should be done like it, because it is so hateful to him.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter begins with a caution not to sacrifice any thing to the Lord that is blemished or ill-favoured, ver. 1. an order is given to put to death men or women guilty of idolatry, where it is clearly proved upon them, ver. 2—7. and it is directed that when cases are too hard for inferior judges to determine, they should be brought to Jerusalem to the priests, Levites, and judges, which formed the great consistory there, whose sentence was to be adhered unto on pain of death, ver. 8—13. and rules are given about the choice of a king, and he is informed what he must not do, and what he should do, ver. 14—20.

Ver. 1. *Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord thy God any bullock or sheep wherein is blemish, &c.*] No sacrifice of any sort, whether burnt-offering, sin-offering, or peace-offering, was to have any blemish in it; typical of the unblemished and immaculate Lamb of God, who, being without sin, offered himself without spot to God, and so could take away the sins of others by the sacrifice of himself; see Lev. xxii. 18—25. *or any ill-favouredness*; any sickness or disease upon it of any sort, which made it ill-favoured to the sight, or disagreeable to the smell, or however unacceptable for sacrifice: *for that is an abomination to the Lord thy God*: every such blemished and ill-favoured sacrifice; see Mal. i. 8, 14.

Ver. 2. *If there be found among you, within any of thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee, &c.*] In any of their cities in the land of Canaan: *man or woman that hath wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord thy God*; as all that is wrought is in the sight of the omniscient God; here it means not any kind of wickedness, for there is none lives without committing sin of one sort or another, all which is known to God the searcher of hearts, but such wickedness as is after described: *in transgressing his covenant*: that is, his law, and particularly the first table of it, which respects divine worship, and which is in the nature of a marriage-contract or covenant; which, as that is transgressed by adultery committed by either party, so the covenant between God and Israel was transgressed by idolatry, which is spiritual adultery, and going a whoring after other gods, as it follows:

Ver. 3. *And hath gone, &c.*] The Targum of Jonathan adds, after the evil imagination or concupiscense, lusting after other lovers, and forsaking the true God, and departing from his worship: *and served other gods*; strange gods, the idols of the people, other gods besides the true God; the creature besides the Creator: *and worshipped them*; by bowing down before them, praying to them, or ascribing their mercies and blessings to them, and giving them the glory of them: *either the sun, or moon, or any of the host of heaven*; the two great luminaries, and the planets, constellations, and stars, any of them; which kind of idolatry very early obtained, and was in use at this time among the Heathens, and was an iniquity to be punished by the judge, Job xxxi. 26, 27, 28. which sin, though so strictly forbidden, the people of Israel sometimes fell into, 2 Kings xxi. 3. and xxiii. 4. *which I have not commanded*; and which is a sufficient reason, in matters of worship, to avoid and abstain from any thing, that God has not commanded it; for in things of that nature nothing should be done but what he has ordered, who is a jealous God, and will not suffer any to take upon them to direct what should be done as a religious service and duty; and if any are so presumptuous, they must expect it will be resented; see Isa. i. 12. and especially with respect to the object of worship, as here, and which relate to things if not forbid expressly, yet tacitly, to do which was an abomination to the Lord.

Ver. 4. *And it be told thee, and thou hast heard of it, and inquired diligently, &c.*] A report of this kind was not to be neglected; though it was not to be concluded upon as certain by hearsay, it was to be looked into, and the persons that brought it thoroughly examined; so the Targum of Jonathan, "and inquired "the witnesses well," what proof and evidence they could give of the fact, who the persons were, when

[a] צדק צדק.
[b] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 4. p. 408.
[c] מצבה στήλη, Sept. statuam, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurin. Fagius, Drusius, Grotius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Ainsworth.

and where, and in what manner the sin was committed: *and, behold, it be true,* and *the thing certain:* upon examining the witnesses the case is plain and out of all question: that *such abomination is wrought in Israel;* to do it in any country was abominable, but much more so in the land of Israel, among the professing people of God, who had the knowledge of the true God, and had had so many proofs of his deity, his power and providence, as well as received so many favours and blessings from him, and had such laws and statutes given them as no other people had.

Ver. 5. *Thou shalt bring forth that man or that woman which have committed the wicked thing,* &c.] Idolatry in any of the above instances: this must be supposed to be done after he or she have been had before a court of judicature, and have been tried and found guilty, and sentence passed on them, then they were to be brought forth to execution: *unto thy gates;* the Targum of Jonathan says, unto the gates of your sanhedrim, or court of judicature; but Jarchi observes, that this is a mistake of the paraphrast, for he says, we are taught by tradition that *thy gate* is the gate in which he has served or commited idolatry; and so says Maimonides[d], they don't stone a man but at the gate where he served or worshipped; but if the greatest part of the city are Heathens, they stone him at the door of the sanhedrim; and this is received from tradition, that *to thy gates* is the gate at which he served, and not where his judgment is finished: even *that man or that woman:* this is repeated, and the woman as well as the man is expressed, to shew that no compassion is to be had on her as is usual, nor to be spared on account of the weakness and tenderness of her sex, but she as well as the man must be brought forth and executed according to her sentence, without any mercy shewn; and this is observed to shew the resentment of the divine Majesty, and his indignation at this sin: *and shalt stone them with stones until they die;* of the manner of stoning men and women, see the note on Acts vii. 58.

Ver. 6. *At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death,* &c.] The idolater found guilty was to be stoned; two witnesses were sufficient to prove a fact, if three the better, but, on the testimony of one, sentence might not be pronounced. Aben Ezra observes, that some say, if two witnesses contradict two other, a third turns the scale and determines the matter; and others say, that two who are wise men will do, and three of others; and because it is said *at the mouth* of these witnesses, it is concluded, that a testimony should be verbal and not written; should not be recorded, neither in pecuniary cases nor in capital ones, but from the mouth of the witnesses, as it is said *at the mouth,* &c. at their mouth, and not from their hand-writing[e]: but *at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death;* so careful is the Lord of the lives of men, that none should be taken away but upon full and sufficient evidence, even in cases in which his own glory and honour is so much concerned.

Ver. 7. *The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death,* &c.] Of every one of them, as Aben Ezra; they were to cast the first stone at him, which would be a further trial and confirmation of their testimony; for if they readily and without reluctance first began the stoning of the idolater, it would not only shew their zeal for the honour of the divine Being, but an unconsciousness of guilt in their testimony, and be an encouragement to others to proceed with safety: *and afterwards the hands of all the people;* should be employed in taking up stones, and casting at him until he was dead: *so thou shalt put the evil away from among you;* both the evil man and the evil committed by him, which by this means would be prevented from spreading, seeing by his death others would be deterred from following his example; as well as the evil of punishment, which otherwise would have come upon the nation, had they connived at so gross an iniquity.

Ver. 8. *If there arise a matter too hard for thee in judgment,* &c.] This is spoken to inferior judges in cities in the country, who sometimes might have cases too wonderful and mysterious, as the word signifies, or secret and hidden, such as were out of their reach and beyond their capacity, and so be very difficult for them to determine what should be done: *between blood and blood:* that is, whether a man is guilty of shedding innocent blood or not; when such a case is depending between a person charged with it and the relatives of the deceased, or between a man-slayer and the avenger of blood, and the question is, whether he may have the benefit of a city of refuge or not, and there are some circumstances attending it which make it difficult how to determine: *between plea and plea;* of the plaintiff on one side and of the defendant on the other, and both have so much to say in their own cause, that it is hard to decide which is in the right and which is in the wrong, whether in capital or pecuniary cases; it chiefly if not solely respects civil things in controversy: *and between stroke and stroke;* blow or wound which one man received from another, and for which he commences a suit of law upon it, Exod. xxi. 18, 19. or for assault and battery; and so Aben Ezra interprets it of blows and bruises; but the Jewish writers generally interpret it of the plague, or stroke of leprosy; so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; but the examination of such a case did not belong to the civil magistrate, but to a priest; nor was such a person had up to Jerusalem to be searched, but was shut up in a house until further evidence could be got; and, besides, the signs of the leprosy are so distinctly given, that at waiting a proper time, there was seldom or ever any difficulty about determining it: being *matter of controversy within thy gates;* or what are matters of controversy about any thing else; for the phrase is general, as Aben Ezra observes, and takes in every thing in which any thing difficult might occur; so Jarchi interprets it of things which the wise men of a city are divided about; one pronounces a person or thing unclean, another clean, one condemning and another justifying, and so far rightly; for this respects not controversies between men, that may be brought into courts of judicature, but controversies or divisions arising in these courts upon them, between the judges themselves, they not agreeing in their opinions: *then shalt thou arise and get thee up into the place which the*

[d] Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 15. sect. 2.

[e] Maimon. Hilchot Eduth, c. 3. sect. 4.

Lord thy God shall choose: to Jerusalem, to the great sanhedrim or court of judicature, to which the inferior judges were to apply themselves, in matters of moment and difficulty, for instruction, information, and direction; it being supposed that in such a court such-like cases may have been brought before them, and they were expert and understanding in them.

Ver. 9. *Thou shalt come unto the priests, the Levites,* &c.] The priests that are of the tribe of Levi, as the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi; for Aben Ezra says there are priests that are not of the genealogy of Levi; such there were indeed in Jeroboam's time, 1 Kings xii. 31. and xiii. 33. Maimonides[f] observes, that it is ordered that there should be in the great sanhedrim priests and Levites, as it is said: *and thou shalt come unto the priests, and the judge that shall be in those days, and inquire;* judge is here put for judges, of which the great court consisted, being priests, Levites, and Israelites; see the note on ch. xvi. 18. though others think that only a single person is meant, such as Othniel, Ehud, Gideon, Samson, &c. but then as there was not always such an one in being, I should rather think that the judge here, if a single person, is the president or prince of the great sanhedrim, who succeeded Moses, and sat in his place; and of him and his court, the priests, and Levites and Israelites that composed it, inquiry was to be made: *and they shall shew thee the sentence of judgment;* give their judgment in the difficult case proposed, and declare what is right to be done, and what sentence is to be pronounced.

Ver. 10. *And thou shalt do according to the sentence which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall shew thee,* &c.] The judges of the inferior courts were to return and proceed on the difficult case according to the judgment of the great court at Jerusalem, and follow the directions and instructions they should give them: *and thou shalt observe to do according to all that they inform thee;* not only observe and take notice of what they say, but put it in practice, and not in some things and some circumstances only, but in all and every thing they should give them information about relating to the case in question.

Ver. 11. *According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach thee,* &c.] For they were not to make any new law, but to teach the law of God, and so far as their sense and opinion of things agreed with that law they were to be regarded: *and according to the judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do;* what were law and justice, what were fit and right to be done, according to the will of God, which they should declare unto them, that was carefully to be done by them: *thou shalt not decline from the sentence they shall shew thee, to the right hand nor to the left;* by setting up after all their own judgments against theirs to whom they had applied for information and direction, which to have done would have been very insolent and affronting: they were not to depart from the determination they made of the case, on pretence of knowing better, nor even in any minute circumstance to deviate from it, but strictly and closely to keep unto it; though not to follow them so implicitly as to receive from them and embrace things the most absurd and unreasonable, as Jarchi suggests; who says, that their sense was to be abided by, even if they should say that the right hand is the left, and the left hand the right.

Ver. 12. *And the man that will do presumptuously,* &c.] The judge of the country court that makes his application to that at Jerusalem for information and direction; if, after all, he is conceited in his own opinion, and rejects theirs, and is obstinate, and will not be guided and directed, but will take his own way, and pursue his own sense of things, and act according to that: *and will not hearken to the priest that standeth to minister there before the Lord thy God:* the priests of the tribe of Levi, of whom the court generally consisted, ver. 9. priest for priests; though some think the high-priest is meant, to whom the character very well agrees; but he was not always at the head of the sanhedrim, nor indeed a member of it, unless he had the proper qualifications; see ch. xviii. 18. *or unto the judge;* or judges; see the note on ver. 9. L'Empereur[g] thinks, that the supreme senate, or grand sanhedrim, was two-fold, according to the diversity of ecclesiastic and political matters; since where it treats of the supreme senators, or chief persons in the court, the priest is manifestly distinguished from the judge (*i. e.* priests or judges); now the man that has asked advice of them, and will not be directed by it, but takes his own way, this being so great a contempt of, and insult upon, the great senate of the nation: *even that man shall die;* and this was by strangling, for so the rebellious elder, as such an one is called, was to die according to the Misnah[h]; and it is said[i], that the death spoken of in the law absolutely (without specifying what kind of death) is strangling: *and thou shalt put away the evil from Israel;* the evil man that is rebellious against the supreme legislature of the nation, and the evil of contumacy he is guilty of, deterring others from it by his death.

Ver. 13. *And all the people shall hear, and fear,* &c.] All the people of Israel in their several cities, and particularly the judges in those cities; they shall hear of what is done to the obstinate and disobedient elder, and shall be afraid to commit the like offence, lest they should come into the same punishment: *and do no more presumptuously;* after his example; hence, Jarchi says, they wait till the feast comes, and then put him to death; and so it is said[k], they bring him up to the great sanhedrim which is at Jerusalem, and there keep him until the feast (the next feast), and put him to death at the feast, as it is said, *all the people shall hear, and fear.*

Ver. 14. *When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee,* &c.] The land of Canaan: *and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein;* be entirely in the possession of it, and settled in it; it seems to denote some time of continuance in it, as it was, before they thought of setting a king over them, about which are the following instructions: *and shalt say,*

[f] Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 2.
[g] In Misn. Middoth, c. 5. sect. 3.
[h] Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 2.
[i] Maimon. Issure Biah, c. 1. sect. 6.
[k] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 4.

I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are round about me; which was what would and did lead them to such a thought and resolution; observing that the neighbouring nations had kings over them, they were desirous of being like them as to the form of their civil government, and have a king as they had.

Ver. 15. *Thou shalt in any wise set* him *king over thee whom the Lord thy God shall choose,* &c.] The Jews take this to be a command to set a king over them: whereas it is only a permission in case they should desire and determine on having one, as God foresaw they would; and this with a limitation and restriction to appoint none but whom God should choose, and which was their duty and interest to attend unto; for none could choose better for them, and was what he had a right unto, and it became them to submit to it, since he was their King in a civil and special sense, and another was only his vicegerent; accordingly we find, when they expressed their desire to have a king in the time of Samuel, and it was granted, though not without some resentment, the Lord chose their first king for them, Saul, and, after him, David, and even Solomon, David's son; and though, in after-times, they appointed kings without consulting him, it is complained of, Hos. viii. 4. hence this clause is prefaced in the Targum of Jonathan, "ye "shall seek instruction from the Lord, and after set "him king, &c." which was to be done by the mouth of a prophet, or by Urim, as Aben Ezra observes: one *from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee:* that is, one of their own nation, an Israelite, a brother both by nation and religion: *thou mayest not set a stranger over thee that is not thy brother:* one of another nation, that is not of the family of Israel, as Aben Ezra notes, even not an Edomite, though called sometimes their brother: and Herod, who was an Idumean, was set up, not by them, but by the Romans; now in this their king was a type of the King Messiah, of whom it is said, *their nobles shall be of themselves,* Jer. xxx. 21.

Ver. 16. *But he shall not multiply horses to himself,* &c.] That he might not put his trust and confidence in outward things, as some are apt to trust in horses and chariots; and, that he might not tyrannise over and distress his subjects by keeping a number of horses and chariots as a standing army, and chiefly for a reason that follows; he was to have no more than for his own chariot, so Jarchi, and so the Misnah[l] and Maimonides[m]; the Targum of Jonathan restrains it to two: *nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses:* which was a country that abounded with them, and therefore he was not to encourage, and much less oblige his subjects to travel thither or trade with that people for the sake of increasing his stock of horses, Isa. xxxi. 1, 3. *forasmuch as the Lord hath said unto you, ye shall henceforth return no more that way;* not that going into Egypt on any account whatsoever was forbidden, as for trade and merchandise in other things, or for shelter and safety, for which some good men fled thither; but for outward help and assistance against enemies, and for horses on that account, and particularly in order to dwell there, from which the Jews in the times of Jeremiah were dissuaded by him, and threatened by the Lord with destruction, in case they should, Jer. xlii. 15—22. When the Lord said this is not certain; it may be when they proposed to make a captain, and return unto Egypt; or he said this in his providence, this was the language of it ever since they came out of it, or however this he now said; see ch. xxviii. 68.

Ver. 17. *Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away,* &c.] From attending to the duty of his office, the care and government of his people, and from serious religion; and particularly from the worship of the true God, as the heart of Solomon was turned away from it by his numerous idolatrous wives, 1 Kings xi. 3, 4. it is a common notion of the Jews that a king might have eighteen wives, and no more[k]: *neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold;* he might increase his wealth, but not greatly, lest his heart should be lifted up with pride by it, and lest his subjects should be oppressed and burdened with taxes for that purpose; or he, being possessed of so much, should make use of it to enslave them, and especially should be so elated with it as to deny God, and despise his providence, and disobey his laws; see Prov. xxx. 9. The Jews generally say[l], that he ought not to multiply more than what will pay the stipends or wages of his servants, and only for the treasury of the house of the Lord, and for the necessity of the congregation (or commonwealth), and for their wars; but not for himself, and his own treasury.

Ver. 18. *And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom,* &c.] When he is settled on it, and is even amidst all the pomp and glory of it: *that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book;* which copy the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions interpret of this book of Deuteronomy, which is a summary abstract and repetition of the several laws of God to the people of Israel; though the Jewish writers commonly understand it of the whole Pentateuch, the five books of Moses; which perhaps may be enlarging it too much, as it would be reducing it to too little to restrain it to this law concerning kings, as the Targum of Jonathan. The word *Mishneh,* rendered *copy,* signifies *double;* hence some take it to mean a double exemplar or copy of the law he was obliged to write out, whereby it would be the more imprinted on his mind, and he would be furnished with it for his use at home and abroad, as the Jewish writers observe; so Jarchi by the copy understands two books of the law, one to be left in his treasury, the other to go out and in with him. The same is said in the Talmud[m], and with which Maimonides[n] agrees, whose words are, "at the "time a king sits on the throne of his kingdom, he "writes for himself a book of the law, besides what "his fathers left him; and he copies it out of the "book of the court by the order of the sanhedrin of "seventy-one; if his fathers have left him none, or it

[l] Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 4.
[m] Hilchot Melachim, c. 3. sect. 3.
[k] Maimon. ib. sect. 2. Misn. ut supra. T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 1. Targum Jon. & Jarchi in loc.

[l] Maimon. ib. sect. 4. Misn. ut supra.
[m] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2.
[n] Ut supra, sect. 1.

" is lost, he writes two books of the law, one he leaves " in the house of his treasures, which he is com- " manded, as every one of Israel is, and the second " never departs from him;" but one may seem sufficient on all occasions, and for all purposes; and this was to be wrote *out of* that which is *before the priests and Levites;* the original copy of it, which was deposited in the side of the ark; see Deut. xxxi. 26. 2 Kings xxii. 8.

Ver. 19. *And it shall be with him,* &c.] Always, when at home or abroad, sitting on his throne or lying down, or wherever he went, unless in such places where it was not proper to read it, as the Jews observe[*]: *and he shall read therein all the days of his life:* every day of his life; meditate on it night and day, as a good man does, that he might be well versed in it, and know how to govern his people according to it: *that he may learn to fear the Lord his God;* to serve and worship him both internally and externally, he having the fear of God always before his eyes, and on his heart, which the holy law of God directs to and instructs in: *to keep all the words of this law, and these statutes, to do them;* not only such as concerned him as a king, but all others that concerned him as a man, a creature subject to the Lord, and as an Israelite belonging to the church and commonwealth of Israel, and so includes all laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

Ver. 20. *That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren,* &c.] On account of his office, the dignity of it, considering that he was subject to the law of God, and accountable to the Lord for all his actions: *and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand or to the left;* not in the least deviate from the law of God in the whole of his conduct, and particularly in the exercise of his kingly office: *to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom;* ruling well according to the laws of God being the way to rule long: *he and his children in the midst of Israel;* this shews, as Jarchi observes, that if his son was fit for the kingdom, he was to be preferred to any other man; for though it was elective, yet to be continued in the same family, provided they walked in the ways of the Lord, and observed his laws.

CHAP. XVIII.

THIS chapter gives an account of the provision made for the priests and Levites, with the reason of it, ver. 1—5. of allowance of a country Levite to minister at Jerusalem, and take his portion with the rest, ver. 6, 7, 8. and of several persons of bad practices not to be suffered among the people of Israel, ver. 9—14. and of an extraordinary prophet that should be raised up among them, to whom they should hearken, or it would be the worse for them, ver. 15—19. but a false prophet was to be put to death, of whom a sign is given by which he might be known, ver. 20, 21, 22.

Ver. 1. *The priests, the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel,* &c.] That is, in the land of Canaan, in the division of it among the tribes: *they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and his inheritance;* the meat-offerings, see Lev. ii. 2, 3. and vi. 17, 18. and whatsoever of the sin-offerings and peace-offerings which were the Lord's; so Ben Melech says, the flesh of the offerings which belonged to the priests was called fire-offerings, after part of it was consumed by fire. All these, with other things, Numb. xviii. 8, 9. were given, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, for their inheritance, in lieu of their having none in the land of Canaan.

Ver. 2. *Therefore shall they have none inheritance among their brethren,* &c.] Neither of the field, nor of the vineyard, as the above Targum, because provision was made for them otherwise, and especially because *the Lord is their inheritance, as he hath said unto them,* Numb. xviii. 20. see the note there; which as it may be understood in a spiritual sense of their interest in God, as their covenant-God, and of their enjoyment of him, and communion with him; so chiefly in a temporal sense of all those things in the sacrifices which the Lord claimed to himself, and these he gave unto them; so the same Targum interprets this of the twenty-four gifts of the priesthood, enumerated Numb. xviii.

Ver. 3. *And this shall be the priest's due from the people, from them that offer sacrifice,* &c.] Not from the priests, as Jarchi observes, but from those that bring the sacrifices to the priests, particularly the peace-offerings: *whether* it be *ox or sheep;* the one of the herd, the other of the flock, creatures used in sacrifice, and takes in goats and the kids of them, rams and lambs: *and they shall give unto the priest the shoulder, and the two cheeks, and the maw;* the first of these designs the upper part of the arm that joins to the neck and back, and the next the two cheeks with the tongue, as both Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe, and indeed the whole head is meant; the maw, which the Septuagint interpreters call ἤνυστρον, and other writers ἔνυστρον, is, according to the philosopher[p], the fourth and last ventricle or stomach, and which he thus describes; " after " the echinus or rough tripe is that which is called " ἔνυστρον, the maw, which is in bigness larger than the " echinus, and in form longer, and has many large " and smooth folds;" and ἔνυστρον βοὸς, the maw of an ox, and the belly of a swine, are reckoned by the poet[q] as delicious food.

Ver. 4. *The first-fruit* also *of thy corn, and of thy wine, and of thy oil,* &c.] This is the *terumah,* or heave-offering, the offering of the first-fruits; what the measure or quantity was is not declared, but is fixed by the Jews; see the note on Exod. xxii. 29. *and the first of the fleece of thy sheep shalt thou give*

[*] Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 3. sect. 1.
[p] Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 17.
[q] Aristophan. Equites, Act. 1. Sc. 3. p. 307. & Act. 4. Sc. 1. p. 355.

him: concerning which in the Misnah[r] it is said, the first of the fleece is used in the land and without the land, of which they give the weight of five shekels in Judea, which are ten shekels in Galilee; *and they give* white wool, and not defiled, enough to make of it a little garment. He that buys a fleece of the sheep of a Gentile, he is free from the first of the fleece; but if he buys it of his neighbour, if he leaves any of it, the seller is bound, if none the buyer is bound; if there are two sorts, russet and white, and he sells the russet but not the white, the males but not the females, every one gives for himself. It may be observed in this account, that as much wool was to be given as would make a small garment; enough, says one of the commentators[s], to make a little garment to minister in: and the least garment fit for a priest to minister in is a girdle. Jarchi's paraphrase of it is, "when thou shearest "thy flock every year, give the first of it to the priest; "it does not determine the quantity, but our Rabbins "fix it to the sixtieth part;" with which agrees the observation of another writer[t], that there is no quantity fixed for the first of the fleece from the law, but from the words of the Scribes it must not be less than the sixtieth part. There is no obligation to the first of the fleece until five sheep are shorn, and the fleece of every one of the five must not be less than twelve shekels' weight; but if there is one fleece of them less than twelve shekels, though the five fleeces are more than sixty shekels, lo, this is free; so that, as Maimonides[u] says, the first of the fleece is not less than the weight of a shekel.

Ver. 5. *For the Lord thy God hath chosen him out of all thy tribes*, &c.] That is, has chosen the tribe of Levi out of all the other tribes of Israel: *to stand to minister in the name of the Lord*: the priests to minister to the Lord by offering sacrifices, and the Levites to minister to the priests in assisting them in their service; and both their ministry were in the name of the Lord, and for his glory, and done standing; for there was no sitting in the sanctuary[w]; the sacerdotal ministry was only performed standing[x], whatever was done sitting was rejected[y]; see Heb. x. 11. *him and his sons for ever*: Levi and his posterity, or the posterity of the tribe of Levi, were chosen by the Lord to this service, to be employed in it as long as the ceremonial law continued, on which stood the Levitical priesthood; but both are now abolished by Christ, having their accomplishment in him, Heb. vii. 11. xii. 18.

Ver. 6. *And if a Levite come from any of thy gates out of Israel, where he sojourned*, &c.] In any of the cities through the land, for they were dispersed all over the country, and employed in instructing and teaching the people; and, excepting the cities which were given them to dwell in out of the several tribes, they were but sojourners: *and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the Lord shall choose*: the city of Jerusalem, where the temple would be built, and sacrifices offered, at which the Levites were assisting to the priests, and in various parts of the service of the sanctuary; and to which they are supposed to come with an hearty good will, with great eagerness of soul, and a vehement desire of being employed in the work of the Lord. Though Jarchi interprets it of a priest, that comes and offers his free-will offerings, or what he is obliged to, and even in a ward not his own; or, as otherwise expressed, of the priests that come to the feast, who offer in the ward, and serve in the offerings that come by virtue of the feast, as the additions of the feast, though it is not in their own ward; and indeed every priest was a Levite, though every Levite was not a priest; and the description of him after given, as standing ministering in the name of the Lord, best agrees with a priest.

Ver. 7. *And he shall minister in the name of the Lord his God*, &c.] The Targum of Jonathan is, "he shall minister in the name of the Word of the Lord his God;" in the name of Christ, as a type of him, as every priest and every sacrifice were: he was to be allowed to officiate, though it was not his course or turn: *as all his brethren the Levites do, which stand there before the Lord*; daily offering the same sacrifices, and whatsoever are brought unto them; who might be said to stand before the Lord, because they stood at the altar of the Lord, and offered the sacrifices of the people to him; and a country Levite or priest was to be admitted to do the same thing at Jerusalem, and in the temple there, as they did; and this shews that a priest is meant by the Levite.

Ver. 8. *They shall have like portions to eat*, &c.] Equal parts of the sacrifices with the priests that usually ministered there; hence we learn, says Jarchi, that they divided the skins and flesh of the sin-offerings; perhaps even such as did not come by virtue of the feast, as the daily sacrifices, and the additions of the sabbath, and the vows, and the free-will offerings: *beside that which cometh by the sale of his patrimony*: for though the priests and Levites had no inheritance divided to them in the land, yet they might buy houses and fields, and leave them to their children, and this may be called their patrimony; now it was not reasonable that they should wholly live upon this, or spend what their fathers left them; but, besides the income of that, were to have their part and portion with their brethren in the sacrifices of the sanctuary. But some interpret these words in a different way, as if they had respect to the gifts and oblations in the several wards in which the priests ministered, as they were ordered by their fathers, Eleazar, Ithamar, Samuel, David, and Solomon; so the Targums of Onkelos, Jonathan, and Jarchi. In the times of Eleazar and Ithamar, there were only eight wards or courses, which ministered in their turns, but in the days of David they were divided into twenty-four; see Luke i. 8. and the note there; now the ordering and fixing these in their turns is called a vendition or sale; and these country priests might partake of all sacrifices at the feast, excepting those which belonged to him whose course it was that week.

Ver. 9. *When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*, &c.] The land of Canaan, often thus described, to express the goodness of God

[r] Cholin, c. 11. sect. 1, 2.
[s] Bartenora in ib.
[t] Ibid.
[u] In Misn. ib.

[w] Maimon. in Misn. Zebachim, c. 2. sect. 1.
[x] Bartenora in ib.
[y] Misn. ib.

in bestowing it on them, as a mere favour of his, without any desert of theirs; and so typical of the heavenly Canaan, or eternal life, which is the free gift of God through Christ: *thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of these nations*: the seven nations which before inhabited it; they might learn, as Jarchi observes, to know how corrupt their works were, and to shew to their children, that they might not do so; but they were not to learn them so as to practise them, but to have them in the utmost abhorrence, as being abominable to God, and which should be so to them; some of which are as follow.

Ver. 10. *There shall not be found among you* any one *that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire*, &c.] To Moloch, which was a sort of lustration by fire, two fires being made, and the child led by a priest between them, and which was an initiation of him into the religion of that deity, and devoting him to it; so Jarchi says, this is the service of Moloch, making piles of fire here and there (on this side and on that), and causing (the children) to pass between them both. Besides this they used to burn them with fire to this deity, perhaps after the performance of this ceremony; see ch. xii. 31. and the note there: or that *useth divination*: according to Aben Ezra this is a general name, and so Ben Melech, the particulars of which are what follow, *an observer of times*, &c. Cicero says[z], there are two sorts of divination, one is of art, the other of nature. What nation or what city is not moved by prediction, either by the entrails of beasts, or of those that interpret strange things and lightnings, or of soothsayers, or astrologers, or of lots (for these are mostly of art); or of dreams or prophecies, for these two are thought to be natural? Again he says[a], the Phrygians, Pisidians, and Cilicians, pay a great respect to the signs of birds—from the beginning of the world it was that certain signs were forerunners of certain things; some in the entrails of beasts, some in birds, others in lightnings, others in marvellous things, others in the stars; some in visions and dreams, and others in the words of frantic persons. So the comedian remarks[b], that if a strange black dog comes into a house, or a snake falls from the tiles through rain, or a hen crows, these are observed as ominous, by the diviner or soothsayer. Porphyry says[c], that soothsayers divine by the noise of crows and ravens; and it is said[d] the Arabians, from birds as from oracles, divine what shall come to pass; and that they attain to, as they say, by eating the heart and liver of dragons. Jarchi on this place asks, who is the diviner? one that lays hold on his staff, and says, shall I go? or shall I not go? that is, to such a place; and according as it fell, so judgment was made; see Hos. iv. 12. Now such sort of diviners and divinations are cautioned against, as not to be admitted amongst the people of Israel, and regarded by them: or *an observer of times*: and such things the Egyptians were very inquisitive about, what month or day belonged to the gods, what day any one was born on, what shall befall him, how he will die, and what he shall be, as Herodotus[e] relates; and such are they who are here meant, according to R. Akiba[f], that count times and hours, and say such a time is beautiful (or seasonable) to go out in and trade; but the wise men say, as Jarchi observes, these are they that hold the eyes, cast a mist over people's eyes, that they cannot perceive their juggling tricks. Some think the word has the signification of clouds, and so designs such that observed them and their motions, and made their conclusions according to them; see Lev. xix. 26. *or an enchanter*: according to Jarchi, one that remarks things as ominous; as when a morsel falls out of a man's mouth, a roe stops him in the way, or his staff falls out of his hands: the word has the signification of a serpent in it, and so may signify one that enchants them; see Psal. lviii. 4, 5. or makes observations by them, as portending this and that, and the other, as before observed of the snake falling from the tiles; and Horace[g] speaks of a serpent lying in the way, and frighting horses, as taken notice of by soothsayers: *or a witch*: of whom see Exod. xxii. 18.

Ver. 11. *Or a charmer*, &c.] That pretends to cure diseases by charms, or a charmer of serpents; according to Jarchi, one that gathers together serpents and scorpions, and other animals, into one place; with which agree the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, "which bind serpents and scorpions, and all kind of "creeping things;" but, according to Aben Ezra, one that says certain words to gather dæmons together: *or a consulter with familiar spirits*: or the inquirer of *Ob*, or the bottle, which the Jews interpret of Python, or one that has the spirit of Python; see Acts xvi. 16, a ventriloquist, one that spoke or seemed to speak out of his belly, or from under his arm-pits; so it is said in the Misnah[h] of Ob, this is Python, one that speaks out of his arm-holes; agreeably to which, Jarchi says, this is that sort of witchcraft which is called Python, and he speaks from his arm-holes, and brings up the dead thither: of Baal Ob, or the master of the bottle, say some Jewish writers, one way he uses is, he takes the skull of a dead man, the flesh of which is consumed from it, and he hides it and burns incense to it, and mutters words by it, and hears from it, as if from a dead man[k]: *or a wizard*: a knowing one, as the word signifies, such an one as we call a cunning man; see the note on Lev. xix. 31. *or a necromancer*: that inquires of the dead, or seeks instruction from them, as the Targum of Jerusalem. Aben Ezra describes him as one that goes to burying-grounds, and takes the bone of a dead man, and because of his wild imagination there appears to him the likeness of forms; or as Maimonides[l], better still, he is one that fasts and sleeps in grave-yards, and utters words; and, according to his imagination, sees future things in dreams.

Ver. 12. *For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord*, &c.] Not that do all these things, but whoever does any of them, as Jarchi notes; all

[z] De Divinatione, l. 1. c. 8.
[a] Ibid.
[b] Terent. Phormio, Act. 4. Sc. 4. introit in ædes, &c.
[c] De Abstinentia, l. 3. c. 4.
[d] Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 1. c. 14.
[e] Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 82.

[f] Apud R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 21. 1.
[g] Rumpat & serpens iter institutum, &c. Horat. Carmin. l. 3. Ode 27.
[h] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 7.
[k] Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.
[l] In ib.

such persons that use such unlawful methods, or any of them, to gain knowledge; and likewise all those that consult them, and make use of them; and especially it must be very abominable in the people of Israel to encourage such persons and practices, who had the knowledge of the true God, and him to consult on all occasions; had his law and testimony to attend unto as the rule of their conduct, and his prophets to advise with in matters of difficulty; see Isa. viii. 20. *and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee;* as well as for other sins mentioned in Lev. xviii. 24—28. and, as before observed from Cicero, all nations have been addicted to the arts of divination here condemned.

Ver. 13. *Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God.*] Sincerely serve and worship him, faithfully adhere to his word, laws, statutes, and ordinances, and walk uprightly before him.

Ver. 14. *For those nations, which thou shalt possess hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners,* &c.] Such as are before mentioned, and did as they directed them: *but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so* to do; or, *but thou not so*[m]; thou shouldest not do so, not hearken to such persons, but to the Lord thy God, and to his law and testimony; nor art thou left to the deception of such persons: *the Lord thy God hath given thee;* his word and statutes, as a rule to go by, which he has not given to other nations: the Targum of Jonathan adds, " the priests shall ask by Urim and Thummim, and a true prophet shall the Lord your God give unto you;" so that they had no need to hearken to such impostors and deceivers: or, *as for thee, not so are they whom the Lord thy God giveth thee*[n]; that is, the prophets whom the Lord would give unto them would not be like the diviners of the Heathens, who imposed on the people and deceived them; but would be men sent and inspired by God, and true and faithful in the discharge of their office; and to hearken to these they are encouraged by the promise of a very eminent one, like to Moses, in the next verse.

Ver. 15. *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet,* &c.] Not Joshua, as Aben Ezra, not Jeremiah, as Baal Haturim, nor David[o], as others; nor a succession of prophets, as Jarchi; for a single person is only spoken of; and there is a dissimilitude between Moses and any one of the prophets, and all of them in succession, ch. xxxiv. 10, 11, 12. but the Messiah, with whom the whole agrees; and upon this the expectation of a prophet among the Jews was raised, John vi. 14. and is applied to him, and referred to as belonging to him in Acts iii. 22. and vii. 37. who was a prophet mighty in word and deed, and not only foretold future events, as his own sufferings and death, and resurrection from the dead, the destruction of Jerusalem, and other things; but taught and instructed men in the knowledge of divine things, spake as never man did, preached the Gospel fully and faithfully, so that as the law came by Moses, the doctrine of grace and truth came by him; and he was raised up of God, called, sent, commissioned and qualified by him for the office of a prophet, as well as was raised from the dead as a confirmation of his being that extraordinary person: *from the midst of thee;* he was of Israel, according to the flesh, of the tribe of Judah, and of the house of David, born of a virgin in Bethlehem, preached only in Judea, and was raised from the dead in the midst of them, and of which they were witnesses: *of thy brethren;* the Israelites, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, and to whom he was sent as a prophet, and among whom he only preached: *like unto me;* the Targum of Jonathan adds, " in the " Holy Spirit;" which he received without measure, and in respect of which was superior to Moses, or any of the prophets: he was like to Moses in the faithful discharge of his office, in his familiar converse with God, in the miracles which he wrought; as well as in his being a Mediator, and the Redeemer of his people, as Moses was a mediator between God and the people of Israel, and the deliverer of them out of Egypt; and it is a saying of the Jews[p] themselves, " as was the first redeemer, so is the second:" *unto him ye shall hearken;* externally attend on his ministry, internally receive his doctrine, embrace and profess it; do what is heard from him, hear him, and not another, always and in all things; see Matt. xvii. 5.

Ver. 16. *According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God at Horeb,* &c.] This was promised them, in answer to their request at Horeb or Mount Sinai, when the law was delivered to them in the terrible manner it was: *in the day of the assembly;* in which the tribes were gathered together to receive the law, when they were assembled at the foot of the mount for that purpose: *saying, let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God;* which was such a voice of words, attended with so much terror, that they that heard entreated the word might not be spoken to them any more, as the apostle says in Heb. xii. 19. *neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not;* out of which the Lord spoke; the congregation of Israel is here represented speaking as if a single person.

Ver. 17. *And the Lord said unto me,* &c.] Unto Moses, who carried the above request to the Lord: *they have well* spoken that *which they have spoken;* see ch. v. 28.

Ver. 18. *I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren like unto thee,* &c.] So that it seems this promise or prophecy was first made at Mount Sinai, but now renewed and repeated, and which is nowhere else recorded; see ver. 15. when they were not only made easy for the present by appointing Moses to receive from the Lord all further notices of his mind and will, but were assured that when it was his pleasure to make a new revelation, or a further discovery of his mind and will, in future times, he would not do it in that terrible way he had delivered the law to them; but would raise up a person of their own flesh and blood, by whom it should be delivered, which was sufficient to prevent their fears for the future: *and will put my word in his mouth;* the doctrines of the Gospel, which come from God, and are the words of truth,

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[m] ואתה לא כן & tu non sic, Montanus.

[n] De te autem non ita sunt quos dat tibi Jehova Deus tuus, Junius & Tremellius.

[o] Herbanus in Disputat. cum Gregent. p. 13. col. 2.

[p] Midrash Kohelet, fol. 63. 2.

faith, righteousness, peace, pardon, life, and salvation; and which Christ says were not his own, as man and Mediator, but his father's, which he gave unto him, and put into his mouth, as what he should say, teach, and deliver to others; see John vii. 16. and viii. 28. and xvii. 6, 8. *and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him*; nor did he keep back, but faithfully declared the whole counsel of God; and as he gave him a commandment what he should say, and what he should speak, he was entirely obedient to it; see John xii. 49, 50. and xv. 15.

Ver. 19. *And it shall come to pass*, that *whosoever will not hearken unto my words*, &c.] To the doctrines of the Gospel, but slight and despise them: *which he shall speak in my name*; in whose name he came, and whose words or doctrines he declared them to be; not as his own, but his father's, John v. 43. and vii. 16. *I will require it of him*; or, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, "my Word shall require it of him, or take vengeance on him;" as Christ the Word of God did in the destruction of the Jewish nation, city, and temple; see Luke xix. 27, 44.

Ver. 20. *But the prophet which shall presume to speak in my name*, &c.] Pretending a mission and commission from God, and yet was never sent by him, like the prophets in Jer. xxiii. 21. *which I have not commanded him to speak*; which though true was not to be spoken in a public manner, by assuming a public office, without a divine authority or a commission from God, and much less what was false, and never commanded to be spoken at all by any: *or, that shall speak in the name of other gods*; the idols of the people, as the Targum; as if any should affirm they were sent by Jove, or inspired by Apollo, as some are said to prophesy by Baal, as if they had received their orders and instructions from him, and were inspired by him, Jer. ii. 8. *even that prophet shall die*; the Targum of Jonathan is, be killed by the sword, but the Jews[q] generally interpret it of strangling.

Ver. 21. *And if thou say in thine heart*, &c.] Such a thought arises in the mind, and it appears to be a difficulty, and a query is made upon it, *how shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?* what marks, signs, and criterions are those by which it may be known that it is not a word that comes from the Lord?

Ver. 22. *When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord*, &c.] Says he comes from God, is sent by him, and has a commission from him to say so: *if the thing follow not, nor come to pass*; as the prophecy of Hananiah, Jer. xxviii. 3. *that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken*; or otherwise it would have come to pass, unless when a condition is either expressed or implied, as the repentance or disobedience of a people; see Jer. xviii. 7—10. *but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously*; in a bold and daring manner, with great impiety and impudence, out of his own head and heart, being a mere device and imagination of his own, which, not having the fear of God, he delivered as coming from the Lord: *thou shalt not be afraid of him*; not only to reprove him for his wickedness, but also to punish him for it; shewing no regard to the high character he assumes, nor to the great pretensions he makes to sanctity, knowledge, and familiarity with God.

CHAP. XIX.

THIS chapter contains an order to separate three cities of refuge in the land of Canaan, for such that killed a man unawares to flee to, of which those who were guilty of murder purposely were to have no benefit, ver. 1—13. a law is given against removing landmarks, ver. 14. and others concerning witnesses, that they should be more than one; be two, or three, ver. 15. and that a false witness, on conviction, should be punished, ver. 16—21.

Ver. 1. *When the Lord thy God hath cut off the nations whose land the Lord thy God giveth thee*, &c.] The seven nations of the land of Canaan, whose destruction was of the Lord for their sins, and whose land was a gift of him that had a right to dispose of it to the children of Israel; see ch. xii. 29. *and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their cities, and in their houses*; should possess their land in their stead, by virtue of the gift of it to them by the Lord, and inhabit their cities and houses built by them.

Ver. 2. *Thou shalt separate three cities for thee in the midst of thy land*, &c.] From the cities they took possession of and dwelt in; and indeed from the cities of the Levites, which were given to them to inhabit; three were before ordered to be separated from those inhabited by the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, ch. iv. 41—43. but these were to be in the midst of the land of Canaan; see Josh. xxx. 7, 8. *which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it*; which as it is often mentioned when this land is spoken of, so it carries in it a reason here why this order of the Lord's should be readily complied with, the whole land and all the cities of it being the gift of his to them.

Ver. 3. *Thou shalt prepare thee a way*, &c.] A road, an high way to those cities: on the first of Adar, or February, the magistrates used to meet, and proclaimed, or ordered to be proclaimed, that the ways be repaired[r], particularly those leading to the cities of refuge; which was done by making them smooth and plain, so that there was not an hill or dale to be seen; and by building bridges over rivers and brooks, that he might escape who had killed any one through mistake, and not be hindered, lest the avenger of blood should overtake him and kill him[s]; and therefore

[q] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 10. sect. 1. Bartenora in ib. sect. 5. and Jarchi in loc.

[r] Misn. Shekalim, c. 1. sect. 1.

[s] Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

every obstruction was removed out of the way, that there might be a clear course for him; and at the parting of ways, or where two or more ways met, that he might not be at a loss one moment which way to take, *refuge* was written, as Jarchi and other writers observe, upon posts or pillars erected for that purpose: see the note on Numb. xxxv. 6. *and divide the coasts of thy land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee to inherit, in three parts*; in each of which was to be a city of refuge, and those at an equal distance: so Jarchi observes, that this was done that there might be from the beginning of the border (of the land) unto the first city of the cities of refuge, according to the measure of a journey, that there is from that to the second, and so from the second to the third, and so from the third to the other border of the land of Israel: of the situation of these cities, so as to answer to those on the other side Jordan, see the note on Numb. xxxv. 14. *that every slayer may flee thither*; to that which is nearest and most convenient for him, that is, who had slain a man unawares, as follows.

Ver. 4. *And this is the case of the slayer, which shall flee thither, that he may live*, &c.] It was not any slayer that might have protection in these cities, but such who were thus and thus circumstanced, or whose case was as follows: *whoso killeth his neighbour ignorantly*; without intention, as the Targum of Jonathan, did not design it, but was done by him unawares: *whom he hated not in time past*; had never shewn by words or deeds that he had any hatred of him or enmity to him three days ago; so that if there were no marks of hatred, or proofs of it three days before this happened, it was reckoned an accidental thing, and not done on purpose, as this phrase is usually interpreted; see Exod. xxi. 29.

Ver. 5. *As when* a man *goeth into the wood with his neighbour to hew wood*, &c.] A wood is a place common to men, and cutting down wood a business which any man might do; whereas a private place, where a man had no right to be, and doing what he had no business with, rendered a case suspicious, and such a man was liable to be taken up when any affair happened of the kind here spoken of; so the Jewish writers observe[t], "a wood is a public place for him that hurts and "him that is hurt to enter there;" both had a right to go thither, the one as well as the other, he to whom the accident came, and he by whom it came; but they say, a court that belongs to a master of a house (a private court) is excepted, where there is no power or liberty for him that hurts or for him that is hurt to enter. Abba Saul says, What is hewing wood? It is what a man has a right to do, or is in his power; it is what is public and common, and not peculiar to any: *and his hand fetcheth a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree*; lifts up the axe and is about to strike with it, in order to cut down the tree pitched upon by him or by his neighbour, or both: *and the head slippeth from the helve*; the head of the axe from the handle of it, or the *iron from the wood*[u]; the iron part of the axe, which is properly the head, from the wooden part, which is laid hold on by the hand; and this not being well fastened, slips and falls off as the blow is fetching, or the stroke just ready to be given: *and lighteth upon his neighbour, that he die*; hits him in some part as he stands by him, which proves mortal: *he shall flee unto one of these cities, and live*; be safe and secure from the avenger of blood; such an one might have the benefit of one of these cities, for, for such they were designed: the rule with the Jews is, what is done by way of descent (*i. e.* which comes down and lights upon a man, and is not levelled against him, or thrown up at him) he is to be exiled (or to have the benefit of a city of refuge), but what is not by way of descent, he is not to have it. Some think this is spoken of the wood which is cleaved, and not of the wood in which the iron is fixed; but the wise men say it is to be so understood[x]; in which they are right.

Ver. 6. *Lest the avenger of blood pursue the slayer*, &c.] These words are to be connected with ver. 3. where it is ordered to prepare the way to the cities of refuge, and to divide the land into three parts, for the convenience of the slayer to flee thither, lest he that was next of kin, and incensed against the slayer, and determined to avenge what was done, should pursue after him: *while his heart is hot*; by reason of the loss of his relation, upon which his passions being raised, his heart becomes inflamed with wrath and anger; which pushes him upon an eager and hasty pursuit of the slayer, before he sits down and coolly considers and deliberates on the affair: *and overtake him, because the way is long, and slay him*; wherefore it was proper that every thing should be done to make the way to these cities as easy and as short as it could be: *whereas he was not worthy of death*; had not committed an action deserving of it, it being done ignorantly and without notice, as follows: *inasmuch as he hated him not in time past*; see the note on ver. 4.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore I command thee, saying, thou shalt separate three cities for thee.*] This was to be done immediately, as soon as they were settled in the land of Canaan, and established in the possession of it, the inhabitants being cut off, or driven out, or however subdued.

Ver. 8. *And if the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast*, &c.] Extend it further than it was upon their first settlement, even carry it as far as the river Euphrates, as in the times of Solomon, 1 Kings iv. 21, 24. Jarchi interprets it of such an enlargement as to give them the land of the Kenites, the Kenizites and Kadmonites: (*as he hath sworn unto thy fathers*), *and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers*: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; see Gen. xv. 18, 19, xxvi. 3, 4. and xxviii. 13, 14.

Ver. 9. *If thou shalt keep all these commandments to do them, which I command thee this day*, &c.] A phrase often met with before, and signifies the putting in practice the several laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, which Moses was now making a repetition of, and enjoining the observance of them by a divine authority: *to love the Lord thy God*; which is the source and spring of genuine obedience to the

[t] Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 2.

[u] הברזל מן העץ ferrum e ligno, Pagninus, Montanus.

[x] Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

commands of God: *and to walk ever in his ways*; denoting constancy and perseverance in them; now all this is mentioned as the condition of the enlargement of their coast, which would be the case if a due and constant regard was had to the laws of God: and *then shalt thou add three cities more besides these three*; three more in the land of Canaan, besides the three now ordered to be separated in it, and besides the three on the other side of Jordan; so that there would have been nine in all, if these had been ever added; but that time never came: the Jews expect the addition of these three cities in the days of the Messiah[y]; but the Messiah is already come, and all those cities, as they were typical of him, have had their accomplishment in him the antitype of them, of which see the note on Numb. xxxv. 29.

Ver. 10. *That innocent blood be not shed*, &c.] As it would be if such a slayer as before described was killed by the avenger of blood, before he could get to one of these cities of refuge, or supposing that they had not been appointed, or a sufficient number of them: *which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance*; to be enjoyed by them and their children after them, provided they did not defile it by their sins, but observed the commands of the Lord to obey them: and so *blood be upon thee*; the guilt of innocent blood crying for vengeance, as would be the case if such a man's blood was shed as before described; it seems as if the guilt would rather affect the whole land, for not having a proper provision of *asylums* for such persons, than the avenger of blood.

Ver. 11. *But if any man hate his neighbour*, &c.] Has conceived enmity in his heart against him, bears him a mortal hatred, and has formed a scheme in his mind to take away his life: *and lie in wait for him*; knowing and expecting he will come by in such a way at such a time: and *rise up against him*; out of the place where he lay in wait, just at the time he is passing by: *and smite him mortally that he die*; or smite him *in soul or life*[z]; in such a part where life is in danger, and the consequence of it is that he dies: *and fleeth into one of these cities*; for shelter from the avenger of blood.

Ver. 12. *Then the elders of his city shall send and fetch him thence*, &c.] The Targum of Jonathan is, "the wise men of his city," the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, or at least the civil magistrates of that city, to which such a murderer belonged, had a power to send to the city of refuge whither he was fled, and demand the delivering of him up to them, that his case might be tried before them, and it might appear whether he was a proper person to receive the benefit of the city of refuge or not, and if not, to pass sentence of death upon him, and see it executed as follows: *and deliver him into the hand of the avenger of blood, that he may die*; that is, after the examination and trial of him, and when he is found guilty, and sentence is passed upon him, then he was to be delivered into the hands of the avenger of blood, to be the executioner of that sentence.

Ver. 13. *Thine eye shall not pity him*, &c.] This is not said to the avenger of blood, who is not to be supposed to have any pity or compassion on such a person, but to the elders, judges, and civil magistrates of the city to which he belonged, who took cognizance of his case; these were to shew him no favour on account of his being a citizen, a neighbour, a relation or friend, or a rich man, or on any account whatever; but without favour or affection were to judge him and put him to death as a murderer; see Numb. xxxv. 21. *but thou shalt put away* the guilt of *innocent blood from Israel*; by which they would be defiled, and be liable to punishment for it; see Numb. xxxv. 33, 34. the Targum of Jonathan is, "shall put away those that "shed innocent blood out of Israel;" put them away by death: *that it may go well with thee*; with the whole land and its inhabitants, and with the city particularly, and the magistrates, and men of it, to which the murderer adjudged to death belonged, being continued in the enjoyment of all temporal blessings and mercies.

Ver. 14. *Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark*, &c.] By which one man's land is distinguished from another; for so to do is to injure a man's property, and alienate his lands to the use of another, which must be a very great evil, and render those that do it obnoxious to a curse, ch. xxvii. 17. *which they of old have set in thine inheritance, which thou shalt inherit in the land that the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it*; the land of Canaan: this is thought to refer to the bounds and limits set in the land by Eleazar and Joshua, and those concerned with them at the division of it; when not only the tribes were bounded; and distinguished by certain marks, but every man's estate, and the possession of every family in every tribe; which though not as yet done when this law was made, yet, as it respects future times, might be said to be done of old, whenever there was any transgression of it, which it cannot be supposed would be very quickly done; and it is a law not only binding on the inhabitants of the land of Canaan, but all others, it being agreeably to the light and law of nature, and which was regarded among the Heathens, Prov. xxii. 28. and xxiii. 10. see the note on Hos. v. 10.

Ver. 15. *One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth*, &c.] Whether capital sins, or pecuniary debts; or whatsoever sins a man may be guilty of, whether sins against the first or second table of the law, whether greater or lesser sins, whether in moral or civil things; the Jews except only in the case of a woman suspected of adultery and of beheading the heifer: *at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established*; either for acquittance or condemnation; and the witnesses may not, as Jarchi says, write their testimony in a letter, and send it to the sanhedrim, nor may an interpreter stand between the witnesses and the judges; see the note on ch. xvii. 6.

Ver. 16. *If a false witness rise up against any man*, &c.] In a court of judicature: *to testify against him*; that which is not true of him, let it be in what case it will; Aben Ezra instances in idolatry, but it holds good of any other.

[y] Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 4.

[z] נפש, anima, Montanus, Vatablus.

Ver. 17. *Then both the men between whom the controversy is, &c.*] The man that bears the false witness, and the man against whom it is borne: *shall stand before the Lord;* as in the presence of him, the omniscient God, and as represented by judges and civil magistrates, whose vicegerents they are; so it seems to be explained in the next words, which are exegetical of these: *before the priests and the judges which shall be in those days;* which shall compose the sanhedrim, or court of judicature; and this seems to confirm it, that by priest and judge, in ch. xvii. 9, 12. are meant priests and judges; Jarchi says, this Scripture speaks of witnesses, that is, of the false witness that testifies wrong against a man, and another that contradicts his testimony, and teaches that there is no witness by women: and so it is elsewhere said[a], an oath of witness is made by men, and not by women; on which it is observed[b], that a woman is not fit to bear witness, as it is written, *then both the men,* &c. men and not women; and the above writer remarks further, that it teaches that they ought to bear testimony standing.

Ver. 18. *And the judges shall make diligent inquisition, &c.*] Into the case before them, into the nature of the evidence and proof that each witness brings for or against; so the Targum of Jonathan, "the judges "shall interrogate the witness, by whom these things "are said, well;" shall thoroughly examine the testimony given, and look carefully into it: *and, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother;* it appears plainly by full evidence that he has testified a falsehood of him.

Ver. 19. *Then shall ye do unto him as he had thought to have done unto his brother, &c.*] Inflict the same mulct or punishment on him he thought to have brought his brother under by his false testimony of him; whether any pecuniary fine, or whipping and scourging, or the loss of a member, or the value of it, or death itself; whether stoning, strangling, burning, or killing with the sword: though, in the case of accusing a priest's daughter of adultery, as Jarchi observes, such were not to be burnt, as would have been her case if proved, but strangled: *so shalt thou put the evil away from among you;* the evil man that bears a false testimony of his brother, or the guilt of sin which would be incurred by conniving at him.

Ver. 20. *And those which remain shall hear, and fear, &c.*] Those which survive the false witness shall hear of the punishment inflicted on him, and fear to commit the like sin, lest they should be punished in like manner.

Ver. 21. *And thine eye shall not pity, &c.*] The false witness when convicted; this is directed to the judges, who should not spare such an one through favour or affection, but pronounce a righteous sentence on him, and see it executed, in proportion to the crime, and that according to the law of retaliation: but *life* shall go for *life;* in such a case where the life of a person must have gone, if the falsehood of the testimony had not been discovered, the false witness must suffer death; in other cases, where a member would have been lost, or the price of it paid for, the same penalty was to be inflicted: *eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot:* that is, the price of an eye for an eye, *&c.* see Exod. xxi. 23, 24. Lev. xxiv. 19, 20.

CHAP. XX.

IN this chapter rules are given to be observed in times of war. When a battle was near, a priest was to address the soldiers, and encourage them to fight, ver. 1—4. then the officers were to declare who might return home, ver. 5—9. when an enemy's city was approached, peace was to be proclaimed on certain conditions, which, if accepted of, the inhabitants were to be tributaries and servants, but if not, when taken, all were to be put to the sword, excepting women, children, and cattle, ver. 10—15. but those of the seven nations were to be utterly destroyed, ver. 16, 17, 18. and, during a siege, no trees bearing fruit fit for food were to be cut down, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies, &c.*] There were two sorts of war the Israelites were engaged in, one commanded and another permitted, as Maimonides[c] distinguishes: one was by the order and appointment of God, as against the seven nations of Canaan; the other was voluntary and arbitrary, which was left to their own discretion and will, as they saw fit, when they were provoked or distressed, or were invaded by their enemies, or they saw reason to go out against them, and either act the offensive or defensive part, or both; and of each of these some things are said in this chapter: *and seest horses and chariots,* and *a people more than thou:* the Israelites had no horses, and so no chariots, their armies were all infantry; but their neighbouring nations that made war with them had a large cavalry, and multitudes of chariots, which made them very formidable; thus Shishak, king of Egypt, in the times of Rehoboam, came against Jerusalem with 1200 chariots and 60,000 horsemen, and people without number; and Zerah the Ethiopian, in the times of Asa, came against him with an host of 100,000 men, and 300 chariots, 2 Chron. xii. 2, 3. and xiv. 9. *be not afraid of them;* because of the strength of their cavalry, the terrible approaches of their chariots, and the number of their men: *for the Lord thy God is with thee;* hence, as Hezekiah says, more would be with them than with their enemies, with whom was an arm of flesh, but with them the Lord their God, 2 Chron. xxxii. 7, 8. and so the Targum of Jonathan, "for all of them shall be reckoned "as one horse and one chariot before the Lord your "God;" with whom numbers are nothing; and which adds, "for his Word shall be your help;" the eternal Logos, or Word of God; so Onkelos; and if God and his Word, his only-begotten Son, are on the side of

[a] Misn. Shebuot, c. 4. sect. 1.
[b] Bartenora in ib.
[c] Hilchot Melachim, c. 7. sect. 1.

his people, they have nothing to fear from enemies, though ever so many and mighty: *which brought thee out of the land of Egypt*. which is observed for the encouragement of their faith and confidence in him; for he that did that for them, what is it he cannot or will not do?

Ver. 2. *And it shall be, when ye are come nigh unto the battle*, &c.] When all things are preparing for it, and it seems unavoidable: *that the priest shall approach and speak unto the people*; not any priest, but one appointed for this service; who is called *the anointed of war*, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra observe, and concerning whom Maimonides[e] is more particular; he says, "they appoint a priest to speak to the people at the time of "war, and they anoint him with the anointing oil, "and he is called the anointed of war; twice the "anointed of war speaks unto the people, once in a "book at the time they go forth, before they set in "battle array, he says to the people, *what man is there*, "&c. and when he has caused his words to be heard, "he returns; at another time, when they are set in "array, he says, *fear not*, &c." this man seems to be an emblem of Gospel ministers, who are anointed with the gifts and graces of the spirit of God, and whose business it is to encourage the people of God to fight the Lord's battles against sin, Satan, and the world, and not to be afraid of their spiritual enemies; directing them to take to them the whole armour of God, and to endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ, to follow him the captain of their salvation, assuring them of victory through him who makes them more than conquerors, and that their warfare is or shortly will be accomplished.

Ver. 3. *And shall say unto them, hear, O Israel*, &c.] Exciting their attention to what he was about to say, and which, as Jarchi observes, was spoken in the holy tongue, or in the Hebrew language: *you approach this day unto battle against your enemies*; were marching or ready to march, preparing to engage with them, and a battle seemed near at hand: *let not your hearts faint, fear not, and do not tremble, neither be ye terrified because of them*: many words are made use of to animate them against those fears which the strength, number, and appearance of their enemies, would be apt to cause in them. Jarchi observes, that here are four exhortations, answerable to four things which the kings of the nations do (in order to inject terror into their enemies); they shake their shields, to clash them one against another, that hearing their noise they may be afraid of them and flee; they prance their horses, and make them neigh, to cause the noise of the hoofs of their horses to be heard; they shout with their voices, and blow with their trumpets: and accordingly these several clauses are so interpreted in the Misnah[f]: "*and let not your hearts faint*: at the "neighing of the horses, and the brightness of swords: "*fear not*: at the clashing of shields: *and do not tremble*: at the sound of trumpets: *neither be ye terrified*: at the voice of shouting;" and no doubt but it takes in every thing that has a tendency to cause fear, faintness, and dismay, which they are cautioned against.

Ver. 4. *For the Lord your God is he that goeth with you*, &c.] To battle, and therefore they had no reason to fear and be dismayed, to be faint-hearted, terrified, and tremble: *fear not, I am with thee*, &c. Isa. xli. 10. this, according to the Misnah[f], respects the ark, and so Jarchi, which was a symbol of the divine Presence, and went with them to battle; see Josh. vi. 4. 1 Sam. iv. 3, 4, 5. *to fight for you against your enemies, to save you*; to annoy and destroy the one, and to protect and save the other; thus far the anointed priest addressed the people in an oration to this purpose: the account Maimonides gives of it is, that "when they have set their "ranks, and are near to a battle, the anointed of war "stands on an high place, and all the ranks before "him, and says to them in the holy tongue, *hear, O Israel*, &c. unto *to save you*: and then another priest "under him causes it to be heard by all the people "with an high voice[g];" he repeated what the anointed of war had said, and expressed it with a loud voice, that all might hear.

Ver. 5. *And the officers shall speak unto the people*, &c.] What these officers were is not easy to say; they seem not to be officers of the army, for they are distinguished from captains of the armies, ver. 9. unless they can be thought to be general officers; but the word for them is the same that is used of such that attended the judges and were ministers to them, ch. xvi. 18. and perhaps they were a sort of heralds that published and proclaimed what the anointed of war had said; and so the above writer[h] affirms, that what here follows was first spoken by him, and after that (what is said, ver. 3, 4.) the anointed of war speaks, saying, *what man is there*, &c. (to the end of ver. 7.) thus far the anointed of war speaks, and then an officer causes all the people to hear it with an high voice, saying, *what man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it?* or perfected it, as the Targum of Jonathan, not quite finished it, has not, as that paraphrast says, fixed in it the door-posts, or rather perhaps he means the Mezuzah, or writing, which the Jews thought themselves obliged to fasten to the door-posts of their houses; see ch. xi. 20. until this was done, an house was not thought to be completed; though Jarchi interprets this of inhabitation; of a man's having built a house, but has not yet dwelt in it; see ch. xxviii. 30. so Josephus[i] explains it, of its not having been used and enjoyed by a man a full year; but there seems to be something more than all this in dedication; for though it does not signify a consecration or dedication of it to holy uses, as the dedication of the tabernacle and temple, yet there was something done, some ceremony used at entrance into a new house; a good man entered into it, no doubt, with prayer and praise, as the 30th psalm was composed by David at the dedication of his house; see Neh. xii. 27. and perhaps it was usual to have their friends together, and make a cheerful entertainment on the occasion. Ben Melech on the place assures us it was

[e] Hilchot Melachim, c. 7. sect. 1, 2.
[f] Misn. Sotah, c. 8. sect. 1.
[f] Ut supra.

[g] Hilchot Melachim, c. 7. sect. 3.
[h] Ibid.
[i] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 41.

a custom to make a feast and merriment at eating the first meal in a new house: *let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it*; or perfect it, as the above Targum, or dwell in it, as well as have the pleasure of entertaining his friends in it at the first opening of it; this was either a command, enjoining a man, in such a circumstance, to return, and so the rest that follow, or a permission to return, allowing him to do it if he thought fit.

Ver. 6. *And what man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not* yet *eaten of it?* &c.] Which he has a right to do, and it is hard for him to be deprived of it, 1 Cor. ix. 7. or *hath not made it common*[k]; according to the law in Lev. xix. 23, 24, 25. Three years the fruit of trees, and so of vines, might not be eaten; in the fourth, they were devoted to the Lord, and might be redeemed from the priest, and so made common; and on the fifth year were eaten in course; so the Targums of Jerusalem, Jonathan, and Jarchi, interpret it: *let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it*; or make it common, according to the above law: Aben Ezra seems to have another sense of this passage, deriving the word from another, which signifies piping and dancing, and observes, that it was a custom to sing, pipe, and dance in vineyards; and the Septuagint version is, *hath not been made merry of it*: though that may signify not having drank of the wine of it, to be made merry with it.

Ver. 7. *And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her?* &c.] Home to his house and bedded with her; has only betrothed her, but is not properly married to her, the nuptials are not completed; this the Jews understand of any one betrothed to him, whether a virgin or a widow, or the wife of a deceased brother (yea, they say, if his brother is dead in war, he returns and comes home), but not of a former wife divorced and received again[m]: *let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in battle, and another man take her*; or marry her.

Ver. 8. *And the officers shall speak further unto the people*, &c.] According to Maimonides[n], the priest the anointed of war spoke to the end of ver. 7. and which the officers repeated after him to the people aloud, as before observed; and then after that an officer speaks of himself, or in his own words, and not in those of the priest, as follows; *what man that is fearful*, &c. and then another officer causes all the people to hear it: *and they shall say, what man* is there that *is fearful and faint-hearted?* that has not courage to face his enemies, to whom the terrors of war, and especially of death, are dreadful; the Targum of Jonathan adds, "because of his sin;" whose sins stare him in the face, and lie heavy on his conscience; so that he is afraid he shall die in battle, and in his sins, and suffer divine vengeance; both these senses are observed in the Misnah[y]. According to R. Akiba, a fearful and faint-hearted man is one "that can't stand in battle array, "or behold a drawn sword; but R. Jose the Galilean "says, he is one that is afraid of the transgressions "he has committed; and therefore the law joins to "this all those things for which a man may return;" as having built a new house, planted a vineyard, and betrothed a wife; that so it might be thought it was on account of one or other of these that he returned, and not through faint-heartedness, either because of the terrors of war, or of his own conscience for his sins: *let him go and return to his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart*; lest, by his pale looks and trembling joints, his fainting fits and swoons, he discourage the rest in the same company with him, and by his example make them unfit for war also.

Ver. 9. *And it shall be, when the officers have made an end of speaking unto the people*, &c.] By reciting what the anointed of war said unto them, and by speeches of their own framing, to encourage to the battle; and all were dismissed that had leave to depart, and chose to take it: *that they shall make captains of armies to lead* on *the people*; on to battle; that is, either the officers should do this, which may seem to confirm what has been hinted, that they might be generals of the army, who constituted captains under them, to lead the people on to battle: unless this is to be understood of the princes of Israel, or of the king when they had one, and his ministers; for it does not appear in any instance that the people chose their own officers over them, to go out before them, and lead them on to battle; or to be *at the head of them*[z]; which the Jewish writers understand in a very different sense; not to head them, or be at the head of them, to direct and command them, but to keep them from deserting: their sense is, that the officers having dismissed persons in the circumstances before described, and set stout men before them, and others behind them (*i. e.* the army of the people), with iron hatchets in their hands, and every one that sought to return, they had power to cut off his legs; since flight is the beginning of falling before their enemies[a].

Ver. 10. *When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it*, &c.] This is to be understood of an arbitrary war, as Jarchi observes; which they engaged in of themselves, or were provoked to by their enemies; which was their own choice, and according to their own will and pleasure; and their conduct towards their enemies in it was different from that in a war with the seven nations, commanded by the Lord, and distinguished from it, ver. 15, 16. *then proclaim peace unto it*; that is, offer them terms of peace; which were, that the inhabitants of it should renounce idolatry, and become their tributaries and servants.

Ver. 11. *And it shall be, if it make thee answer of peace*, &c.] Comply with the terms of peace offered: *and open unto thee*; the gates of the city and its garrisons, and deliver all into their hands: *then it shall be* that *all the people* that is *found therein*; some having made their escape before the surrender of the city: *shall be tributaries unto thee*; pay a yearly tax imposed upon them, as the Moabites sometimes did, and which was paid in lambs and rams with the wool, 2 Kings

[k] לא חללו necdum fecit eam esse communem, V. L. & non fecit eam communem, Vatablus, Fagius.
[m] Misn. Sotah, ib. sect. 2.
[n] Ut supra.

[y] Misn. Sotah, c. 8. sect. 5.
[z] בראש העם in capite populi, Pagninus, Montanus.
[a] Misn. ut supra, sect. 6.

iii. 4. *and they shall serve thee;* not as slaves, or be in continual bondage and servitude; but upon occasion be called out to any public service, as joining them against their enemies, rebuilding palaces and cities, or repairing walls of cities, and the like; and in general acknowledge their dominion over them, and their own subjection to them, by paying an annual tribute, or sending gifts unto them; thus the Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, became the servants of David, 2 Sam. viii. 2, 6, 14.

Ver. 12. *And if it will make no peace with thee,* &c.] Will not accept of terms of peace offered: *but will make war against thee:* come out and fight, or prepare to defend themselves: *then thou shalt besiege it:* surround and block it up on all sides with their forces; the Jews say only on three sides, leaving one for any to flee and make their escape if they thought fit; see the note on Numb. xxxi. 7.

Ver. 13. *And when the Lord thy God hath delivered it into thine hands,* &c.] When, what with pressures without, and calamities within, the city is obliged to surrender: this is not to be imputed to the methods and arts of war used in besieging, or to the courage and skill of the besiegers; but to the power and providence of God succeeding means used, and sending famine or pestilence among the besieged, and inclining their hearts to deliver up their city: *thou shalt smite every male thereof with the edge of the sword:* the men in it, grown persons, as distinguished from little ones in the next verse; because it was owing to these it was not surrendered at once, when terms of peace were offered.

Ver. 14. *But the women, the little ones, and the cattle,* &c.] These were to be spared; women, because of the weakness of their sex, and subjection to their husbands; and little ones, which take in males as well as females, as Jarchi observes, because of their tender age; and cattle, because of their insensibility; all these having had no concern in holding out the siege: *and all that is in the city, even all the spoil thereof, shalt thou take unto thyself;* gold, silver, merchandise, household goods, utensils in trade, and whatever was of any worth and value to be found in their houses: *and thou shalt eat the spoil of thine enemies, which the Lord thy God hath given thee;* that is, enjoy all their wealth and riches, estates and possessions; for this is not to be restrained to things eatable only.

Ver. 15. *Thus shalt thou do unto all the cities* which are *very far off from thee,* &c.] As all such were reckoned that were without the land of Israel, even all in their neighbouring nations, the Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites, Syrians, *&c.* for the children of Israel never went to war with any very distant nations, unless they came unto them and invaded them; nor did they seek to carry their conquests to any great distance, when the most powerful and victorious, as in the days of David and Solomon: *which* are *not of the cities of these nations;* of these seven nations, as the Targum of Jonathan, the seven nations of the land of Canaan; all that were not of them were accounted foreign cities, and at a distance.

Ver. 16. *But of the cities of those people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee* for *an inheritance,* &c.] The cities of the seven nations, six of which are mentioned by name in the next verse: *thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth;* the reason of this severity was because of their wickedness, the capital crimes and gross abominations they were guilty of, and for which they deserved to die; and on account whereof they were reserved to this destruction, when the measure of their iniquities was full, such as idolatry, incest, witchcraft, soothsaying, necromancy, &c. see Lev. xviii. 3, 24, 25, 27. and xx. 2—23. Deut. xviii. 9—12.

Ver. 17. *But thou shalt utterly destroy them,* &c.] Men, women, and children: some think this is to be understood only of such cities which did not accept of terms of peace; for they are of opinion that Joshua made proclamation of peace to all the cities of Canaan; which being not complied with, he destroyed them as they fell into his hands; and they suppose that the Gibeonites had not heard of such a proclamation, and therefore were spared; and it is certain that there were many who were suffered to live among them, who it may be thought were allowed on their becoming proselytes, which was one of the terms of peace, as Rahab and her household did, and which is the sense of some of the Jewish writers. Jarchi on the following verse observes, that if they repented, and became proselytes, they might be received: namely, *the Hittites and the Amorites, the Canaanites and the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites;* one of the seven nations is here omitted, the Girgashites, as they are also in Exod. xxiii. 23. It is said[b], that "Joshua sent three letters "into the land of Israel before they went into it; in "the first, whoever would turn (and flee) might; in "the second, whoever would make peace might; in "the third, whoever would make war might: the Girgashites, believing God, went to Africa, according "to Isa. xxxvi. 17. the land there is Africa; the Gibeonites made peace and dwelt in the land; thirty-"one kings made war, and fell:" *as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee;* Deut. vii. 1, 2.

Ver. 18. *That they teach you not to do after all their abominations,* &c.] This is another reason why they were to be utterly destroyed, not only because of the abominations which they committed, but to prevent the Israelites being taught by them to do the same; wherefore, as before observed from Jarchi, such as became proselytes were suffered to live among them, because there was no danger of idolatry from them, which even proselytes of the gate renounced; and though all other abominations are included, yet this is particularly respected, as appears from the following clause: *which they have done unto their gods;* to the honour of whom not only many superstitious rites and ceremonies were performed, and idolatrous actions committed, but acts of lewdness, and even unnatural uncleanness: *so should ye sin against the Lord your God;* a sin the most provoking to him, as the sin of idolatry was; and cause his anger to rise to such a degree, as to suffer them to be carried captive from the land he gave them to inherit; and which afterwards was the case, and that through learning the manners and customs of these people; see Psal. cvi. 34—42.

[b] T. Hieros. Shebiith, fol. 37. 3. Debarim Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 241. 2. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 6. sect. 5. & Migdol Oz in ib.

Ver. 19. *When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it*, &c.] Before it will surrender; it holding out the siege a considerable time: the Hebrew text says, *many days*[c]; which the Targum of Jonathan interprets of all the seven days, to make war against it, in order to subdue it on the sabbath-day. Jarchi observes, that *days* signify two, and *many* three; hence it is said, they don't besiege cities of the Gentiles less than three days before the sabbath; and he also says it teaches that peace is opened or proclaimed two or three days first: *thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them*: that is, not cut them down with an axe, such trees as were without the city, and in the power of the besiegers: what sort of trees are meant appears by what follows: *for thou mayest eat of them*; the fruit of them, which shews them to be fruit-trees, and gives a reason for not cutting them down, since they would be useful in supplying them with what was agreeable to eat: *and thou shalt not cut them down to employ* them *in the siege*: in building bulwarks and batteries, and making of machines to cast out stones, and the like, to the annoyance of the besieged; which might as well or better be made of other trees, as in the next verse: *for the tree of the field* is *man's life*: by the fruit of which, among other things, his life is supported and maintained: but some give a different version and sense of this clause, *for the tree of the field* is *man*[d], or is man's; it is his property; but this is not a sufficient reason why it should not be cut down, whether the property of the besieger, in whose hand it is, or of the besieged, to whom it belonged: or, *for*, is *the tree of the field a man*[e]? that has given any reason of being thus used? no; it is no cause of the war, nor of the holding out of the siege; and had it a voice, as Josephus[f] observes, it would complain of injury done it, and apologize for itself. Some supply the negative, *for the tree of the field* is not *a man*; so the Targum of Onkelos, as well as makes it a comparative form of speech; "for not "as a man is the tree of the field, to come out against "thee in a siege;" the Targum of Jonathan is, "for "not as a man is the tree of the field, to be hid from "you in a siege;" or, as some in Aben Ezra express it, "it is not as a man, that it should flee from before "thee;" it can neither annoy thee, nor get out of thy way; and therefore to lift up an axe against it, to cut it down, as if it was a man, and an enemy that stood in the way, is ridiculous and weak; though the sense of the said writer himself is the same with that of our version; but what seems best is to read the words, *for, O man, of the trees of the field* (there is enow of them) to bring *before thee for a bulwark*[g]; to make use of, without cutting down fruit-trees: though some understand it metaphorically, that as the tree of the field is, so is man, or should be, bring forth fruit, that he may not be cut down; see Matt. iii. 10. Plutarch[h] relates, that it was forbidden the worshippers of Osiris to destroy garden-trees.

Ver. 20. *Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat*, &c.] Which might be known not only by their not having fruit upon them, but by other tokens, and even at a time of year when there was no fruit on any, which might be sometimes the season of a siege: *thou shalt destroy and cut them down*; if so to do was of any disservice to the enemy, or of any service to them, as follows; they had a liberty to destroy them if they would: *and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war, until it be subdued*: build bulwarks of the trees cut down, and raise batteries with them, or make machines and engines of the wood of them, to cast stones into the city to annoy the inhabitants of it, in order to make them surrender, and until they do it. All this may be an emblem of the axe being to be laid to fruitless trees in a moral and spiritual sense; and of trees of righteousness, laden with the fruits of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, being preserved and never to be cut down or rooted up; see Matt. iii. 10. Isa. lx. 3. Matt. xv. 13.

CHAP. XXI.

THIS chapter treats of the beheading of the heifer, for the expiation of unknown murder, and the rules to be observed in it, ver. 1—9. of a beautiful captive woman an Israelite is desirous of having for his wife, and what methods he must take to accomplish it, ver. 10—14. of giving the double portion to the first-born, which he must not be deprived of in favour of the son of a beloved wife, ver. 15, 16, 17. and of the stubborn and rebellious son, who remaining so must be put to death, ver. 18—21. and of burying a person hanged on a tree the same day he is executed, ver. 22, 23.

Ver. 1. *If* one *be found slain*, &c.] After public war with an enemy, Moses proceeds to speak of a private quarrel and fight of one man with another, in which one is slain, as Aben Ezra observes: *in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee to possess it*: where murders might be committed more secretly, and remain undiscovered, when they came to live in separate cities, towns, and villages, with fields adjacent to them, than now encamped together: *lying in the field*; where the quarrel begun, and where the fight was fought: or, however, where the murderer met with his enemy, and slew him, and left him; it being common for duels to be fought, and murders committed in a field; the first murder in the world was committed in such a place, Gen. iv. 8. The Targum of Jonathan is, "not hidden under an heap, not "hanging on a tree, nor swimming on the face of "the waters;" which same things are observed in the Misnah[i], and gathered from some words in the text:

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[c] ימים רבים diebus multis, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, &c.

[d] כי האדם עץ השדה quia homo lignum agri, Montanus; quoniam homo est arbor agri, Drusius.

[e] An putas lignum agri esse hominem? Munster; num enim homo est arbor? Fagius.

[f] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 42.

[g] Vid. Reinbeck de Accent. Heb. p. 326.

[h] De Iside, p. 365.

[i] Sotah, c. 9. sect. 2.

in the land, and so not under an heap: *lying*, and so not hanging: *in the field*, and so not swimming on the water: and *it be not known who hath slain him*; the parties being alone, and no witnesses of the fact, at least that appear; for, if it was known, the heifer was not beheaded, after mentioned [k]; and one witness in this case was sufficient, and even one that was not otherwise admitted.

Ver. 2. *Then thy elders and thy judges shall come forth*, &c.] From the city or cities near to which the murder was committed, to make inquiry about it, and expiation for it; so Aben Ezra interprets it of the elders of the cities near, but others understand it of the elders of the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem; so the Targum of Jonathan, "then shall go out from the "great sanhedrim two of thy wise men, and three of "thy judges;" and more expressly the Misnah [l], "three go out from the great sanhedrim in Jerusa- "lem;" R. Judah says five; "it is said *thy elders* "two, and *thy judges* two," and there is no sanhedrim or court of judicature equal (or even), therefore they add to them one more: *and they shall measure unto the cities* which *are round about him that is slain* that is, from the place where the slain lies, as Jarchi rightly interprets it; on all sides of it, from the four corners, as the Targum of Jonathan, the cities round about the slain. Maimonides [m] says, they don't behead the heifer for, nor measure, but to a city in which there is a sanhedrim: if it is found between two cities (that is, at an equal distance), both bring two heifers (Maimonides [n] says they bring one between them, which is most reasonable); but the city of Jerusalem does not bring an heifer to be beheaded: the reason is, because it was not divided to the tribes [o]. This measuring, one would think, should be only necessary when it was not certain which was the nearest city; and yet Maimonides [p] says, even when it was found on the side of a city, which was certainly known to be nearest, they measured; the command, he observes, is to measure.

Ver. 3. *And it shall be, that the city which is next unto the slain man*, &c.] And so suspected, as the Targum of Jonathan, of the murder; or the murderer is in it, or however belonged to it: *even the elders of the city shall take an heifer*; of a year old, as the same Targum, and so Jarchi; and in this the Jewish writers agree, that it must be a year old, but not two; though heifers of three years old were sometimes used in sacrifice, Gen. xv. 9. a type of Christ, in his strength, laboriousness, and patience; see Numb. xix. 2. *which hath not been wrought with*; in ploughing land, or treading out corn: and *which hath not drawn in the yoke*; which never had any yoke put upon it; or however, if attempted to be put upon it, it would not come under it, and draw with it: no mention is made, as usual, that it should be without blemish; because though in some sense expiatory, yet was not properly a sacrifice, it not being slain and offered where sacrifices were; hence it is said in the Misnah [q], that a blemish in it did not make it rejected, or unlawful for use: nevertheless, this heifer may be a type of Christ, whose sufferings, bloodshed, and death, atone for secret and unknown sins, as well as for open and manifest ones, even for all sin; and its being free from labour, and without a yoke, may signify the freedom of Christ from the yoke of sin, and the service of it, and from human traditions; that he was not obliged to any toil and labour he had been concerned in, or to bear the yoke of the law, had he not voluntarily undertaken it of himself; and that he expiated the sins of such who were sons of Belial, children without a yoke; and for the same reason, this heifer not being required to be without blemish, might be because Christ, though he had no sin of his own, was made sin for his people, and reckoned as if he had been a sinner; though indeed, had this been the design of the type, all the sacrifices which typified Christ would not have required such a qualification, to be without blemish, as they did.

Ver. 4. *The elders of that city shall bring down the heifer unto a rough valley*, &c.] Cities being generally built on hills, and so had adjacent valleys, to which there was a descent; but here a rough valley, or the rougher part of it, was selected for this purpose. As a valley is low, and this a rough one, it may be an emblem of Christ's being brought into this lower world, from heaven to earth, to do the will of his father, which was to work out the salvation of his people; and of his coming into the lower parts of the earth, the womb of the virgin, at his incarnation, and to the grave at his death, Psal. cxxxix. 15. Eph. iv. 9. and of the low estate he came into by the assumption of human nature; through appearing in the form of a servant, being in indigent circumstances, and ministered to by others, and needing the assistance of angels in the wilderness and garden, by which it appeared he was made lower than they; by his being despised of men, and forsaken by his father; all which are proofs of the low estate he was brought into, fitly signified by a valley, and which was a rough valley to him; in which he was roughly treated, his life being sought after in his infancy by Herod, which obliged the flight of his parents with him into Egypt; and being not received, but rejected by his own, as the King Messiah, whom they would not have to reign over them, and loaded with opprobrious names by them; and who often sought and attempted by various ways to take away his life; and when apprehended and examined before the high-priest, and in Pilate's hall, was used in the rudest manner, being spit upon, buffeted, and scourged; and when led out to be crucified, was treated in the most barbarous and scornful manner, and was put to death in the most painful and shameful way; and, above all, was severely handled by the justice of God, being numbered among the transgressors, when the sword of justice was awaked against him, and he was not in the least spared, but wrath came upon him to the uttermost for the sins of his people; so that this world he was brought into proved a rough valley indeed to him.

[k] Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 11, 12.
[l] Sotah, ib. sect. 1.
[m] Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 4.
[n] Ib. sect. 8.
[o] Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 8.
[p] Ib. c. 9. sect. 1.
[q] Ut supra, sect. 5.

This some take to be an emblem of the hard heart of the murderer who had committed such a barbarous and cruel action as to kill a man; or of the hard heart of a sinner, into which Christ is brought through the ministry of the word; or of the infamous place, Calvary, where Christ was brought to suffer death: but the former is best. Some interpret it, a *strong stream* [q], or *rapid torrent*; so Maimonides [r] and others; and indeed in valleys there are generally streams or brooks of water, but this seems not so well to agree with what follows: *which is neither eared nor sown*; that is, neither ploughed nor sown, but quite an uncultivated place; and this the Jews understand not of what it had been, or then was, but what it should be hereafter; that from henceforward it should never be manured, but lie barren and useless; so it is said in the Misnah [s], the place is forbid sowing or tilling, but is free to dress flax in, or to dig stones out of it: so R. Joseph Kimchi [t] interprets this of a fat and fruitful valley, which was not to be tilled nor sown from thenceforward for time to come; the reason of which he thinks was, that they might be the more careful of their countries and borders, and how they encouraged bloody-minded men to dwell among them; that no slain person might be found there, and so they lose a choice part of their possessions; and to the same purpose Maimonides [u]: and this became true of the fruitful land of Judea and Jerusalem, after the sufferings and death of Christ there, Luke xxi. 24. *and shall strike off the heifer's neck there in the valley*: with an axe, on the back part of it, in the midst of the valley, as the Targum of Jonathan, and the same is said in the Misnah [w]: in this it was a type of Christ, who was put to death at the instigation of the elders of the Jewish nation, Matt. xxvii. 1, 12, 20. and without the gates of Jerusalem at Golgotha; see Heb. xiii. 11, 12, 13.

Ver. 5. *And the priests the sons of Levi shall come near*, &c.] Who were clearly of the tribe of Levi, as Aben Ezra notes; about whom there could be no dispute; for it seems there sometimes were persons in that office, of whom there was some doubt at least whether they were of that tribe; these seem to be such that belonged to the court of judicature at Jerusalem; see ch. xvii. 9. who were to be present at this solemnity, to direct in the performance of it, and to judge and determine in any matter of difficulty that might arise: *for them the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister unto him*; in the service of the sanctuary, by offering sacrifices, *&c. and to bless in the name of the Lord*; the people; see Numb. vi. 23—27. *and by their word shall every controversy and every stroke be tried*; every controversy between man and man respecting civil things, and every stroke or blow which one man may give another; and whatsoever came before them was tried by them, according to the respective laws given concerning the things in question, and were not determined by them in an arbitrary way, according to their own will and pleasure; see ch. xvii. 8, 9, 10, 11.

Ver. 6. *And all the elders of that city that are next unto the slain man*, &c.] The whole court of judicature belonging to it, all the magistracy of it; even though there were an hundred of them, Maimonides [x] says: *shall wash their hands over the heifer that is beheaded in the valley*; in token of their innocence, and this they did not only for themselves, but for the whole city, being the representatives of it; see Psal. xxvi. 6. Matt. xxvii. 24. Some think that this is a confirmation of the sense embraced by some, that it was a strong stream to which the heifer was brought; and there might be a stream of water here, and a valley also; though it would be no great difficulty to get from the city, which was near, a sufficient quantity of water to wash the hands of the elders with. This may denote the purification of sin by the blood of Christ, when it is confessed over him; and shews that priests and elders, ministers of the word, as well as others, stand in need of it; and that even those concerned in the death of Christ shared in the benefits of it.

Ver. 7. *And they shall answer and say*, &c.] The elders of the city, at the time of the washing of their hands: *our hands have not shed this blood*; have been no ways concerned in it, nor accessory to it: the Targum of Jonathan is, "it is manifest before the Lord "that he did not come into our hands, nor did we "dismiss him that has shed this blood;" which is more fully explained in the Misnah [y]; for had they been aware of him, or had any suspicion of him or his design, they would have detained him, or at least would not have suffered him to have departed alone: *neither have our eyes seen*; it, or him; so the Targum of Jerusalem, "our eyes have not seen him that hath "shed this blood;" by which expression is meant, that they had no manner of knowledge of the murderer, nor of any circumstance that could lead them to suspect or conclude who he was.

Ver. 8. *Be merciful, O Lord, to thy people Israel, whom thou hast redeemed*, &c.] Out of Egyptian bondage, and claimed as his own; and therefore it is requested he would be favourable to them, and shew them mercy, and not punish them for a sin they were entirely ignorant of, though done by some one among them, whom as yet they could not discover. The words seem to be the words of the elders continued, who having made a declaration of their innocence, humbly request mercy of God, not only for themselves, but for all the people of Israel; yet, both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan take them to be the words of the priests, and so does Jarchi, and the same is affirmed in the Misnah [z]: *and lay not innocent blood unto thy people of Israel's charge*; impute not the guilt of innocent blood to a people in general, when only a single person, and he unknown, is chargeable with it: or put it not *in the midst* of thy people; let it not be placed to the whole, because it cannot be found out whose it is, though it is certain it is one in the midst of them: *and the blood shall be forgiven them*: that is, God will not impute it, and place it to their account, or lay it to

[q] אל נחל איתן ad torrentem fortem, Montanus.
[r] Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 2. so Abarbinel in Mais. & Ben Melech.
[s] Ut supra.
[t] Apud D. Kimchi, Sepher Shorash. rad. אית.
[u] Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 40.
[w] Ut supra.
[x] Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 3.
[y] Ut supra, sect. 6.
[z] Ut supra.

their charge; but will graciously consider the beheading of the heifer as an expiation of it: it is said in the Misnah[a], "if the murderer is found before the heifer "is beheaded, it goes forth and feeds among the herd; "but if after it is beheaded, it is buried in the same "place; and again, if the heifer is beheaded, and after "that the murderer is found, he shall be slain;" so the Targums, and Jarchi on the next verse.

Ver. 9. *So shalt thou put away the guilt of innocent blood from among you*, &c.] Which otherwise, the person not being found out, and brought to just punishment for it, would devolve upon the whole. Aben Ezra interprets it the punishment of innocent blood, which, by the above method being taken, would not be inflicted on them: *when thou shalt do that which is right in the sight of the Lord;* as it was to observe this law concerning the beheading of the heifer, with all the rites and ceremonies belonging to it here enjoined; as well as every other command, statute, and ordinance of the Lord, which are all right to be done, Psal. xix. 8.

Ver. 10. *When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies*, &c.] This refers to an arbitrary war, as Jarchi remarks, which they entered into of themselves, of choice, or through being provoked to it by their enemies; and not a war commanded by the Lord, as that against the seven nations of Canaan, and against Amalek; since there were to be no captives in that war, but all were to be destroyed: *and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands:* given them the victory over their enemies, so that they were obliged to surrender themselves to them prisoners of war: *and thou hast taken them captive*, or *led his* or *their captivity*[b] *captive;* led them captive who used to lead others, denoting their conquest of victorious nations; see a like phrase in Psal. lxviii. 18.

Ver. 11. *And seest among the captives a beautiful woman*, &c.] Whether a virgin, wife, or widow, according to the Jewish writers, even though another man's wife; so Jarchi[c], and Maimonides[d]; the marriages of Gentiles being reckoned by the Jews no marriages: *and hast a desire unto her;* being captivated with her beauty; some understand this of the strength and rage of lust, but it rather signifies a passionate desire of enjoying her in a lawful way, as follows: *that thou wouldest have her to thy wife;* to be married to her in a legal manner; for though it was not allowed the Israelites to marry any of the seven nations of Canaan, nor indeed with any of other nations continuing in their idolatry; yet they might marry such as became their captives and servants, and were wholly in their own power; and especially if proselytes to their religion, and which this fair captive was to become before marriage, as is by some gathered from the following things to be done by her; though after all, this was only a permission, because of the hardness of their hearts, as is said of divorce; and that such marriages were not very grateful to God appears, as some have observed, from the ceremonies used before marriage, to render her contemptible; and the easy dismission of her afterwards, according to the sense of some interpreters.

Ver. 12. *Then thou shalt bring her home to thine house*, &c.] In order to make her his wife, after some things were done here directed to; for this is not to be understood of his taking her home with a view to defile her, as Maimonides[e] interprets it; who observes, that when a man's lust so rages that he can't subdue it, yet he ought not publicly to satisfy his lust, but to have the woman into a private and secret place, as it is said, *thou shalt bring her into the midst of thine house;* nor was he permitted to lie with her in the camp, nor was it lawful for him to defile her a second time, until her mourning was at an end; though elsewhere[f] he gives a different sense of this passage, and supposes the man to have lain with the captive woman, before the introduction of her into his house; for it is a notion that prevails with the Jewish writers, that an Israelitish soldier might lie once with an Heathen woman taken captive, to gratify his lust, but might not repeat it; so it is said in the Talmud[g]; yet it must be observed, that there are some, though but few, who are of opinion that the first congress was unlawful, and that he might not touch her until certain conditions were fulfilled, and they were married, as R. Jochanan[h]; and which is embraced, supported, and defended by Abarbinel on the place, and in which he is undoubtedly right; and so it is understood by Josephus[i] and Philo[k]; for this law gives no liberty nor countenance to the violation of the beautiful captive. The plain meaning is, that when a Jewish soldier was passionately in love with a captive, and was desirous of making her his wife, he was to take her home to his house, where she was to remain, to see whether his passion of love would subside, or the woman become a proselyte, or however till certain rites were observed, and then he was permitted to marry her: *and she shall shave her head;* either that she might be the less engaging, her flowing locks, or plaited hair, or modish head-dress, being removed from her, which had served to excite a passion for her; or as a token of mourning for her present afflicted state and condition; and in afflicted circumstances it was usual to shave the head; see Job i. 20; and though it was forbidden the Israelites, yet not Gentiles; ch. xiv. 1. *and pare her nails:* this and the former some think were ordered to make her fit to be his wife, and were a sort of purification of her, and an emblem of her having renounced Heathenism, and having departed from it, and laid aside all superfluity of former naughtiness; but this phrase is interpreted in the Targum of Onkelos, *let her nails grow;* and so the Arabic version: and this the Jewish writers say was ordered to be done, that she might appear ugly and disagreeable to him, and be abhorred by him: so Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Ben Melech; the same is observed by Maimonides[l], and is the sense of R. Akiba[m].

[a] Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 9. sect. 7.
[b] ושבית שביו & captivam duxerit captivitatem ejus, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.
[c] Vid. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 21. 2.
[d] Hilchot Melachim, c. 8. sect. 3.
[e] Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41.
[f] Hilchot Melachim, c. 8. sect. 2.
[g] T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 21. 2.
[h] Apud Abarbinel in loc. & R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 14. 1.
[i] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 23.
[k] De Charitate, p. 706.
[l] Ut supra. sect. 5.
[m] In T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 48 2.

Another of their writers[n] think it refers to a custom in some nations to die their nails. "The daughters "of the Heathens (he says) used to adorn the nails of "their hands and feet, and die them with various co-"lours, according to the custom of the Ishmaelites "(or Turks); that there might be a variety in their "hands, and men might look at them, take them "and handle them, until the fire of hell, and an evil "concupiscence, burned; wherefore this is ordered "that they might let them grow, without any prepa-"ration or die." But perhaps this neglect of their nails, and suffering them to grow, was in token of mourning as well as shaving the head, as also sometimes even paring the nails was done on the same account.

Ver. 13. *And she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her*, &c.] Her beautiful garments, and gay apparel, in which she was taken captive; and which tended to stir up the stronger affection for her, and greater desire after her; and therefore, as some think, were ordered to be removed, to abate the ardour of love to her. Jarchi observes, that the daughters of the Gentiles used to adorn themselves in war, that they might cause others to commit fornication with them; and another writer before referred to says[o], the daughters of Heathens used to adorn themselves in raiment of silk, and purple, and fine linen, and needle-work, to allure and entice men with them; and therefore the law obliges to put off her beautiful garments, and clothe her with old worn-out ones, that she might be less agreeable to him; though the putting off her fine clothes, and being clad with sordid ones, might be only as a token of mourning; as it was customary at such times to lay aside richer clothing, and put on sackcloth, Jon. iii. 6. *and shall remain in thine house*; shut up there, and never stir out, as the same writer interprets it. Maimonides[p] says, that she was to be with him in the house, that going in and out he might see her, and she become abominable to him; though perhaps it was only that he might have an opportunity of observing her manners, and of conversing with her, in order to make a proselyte of her; so the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of dipping herself, and becoming a proselytess in his house; or else, as the rest, her abiding in the house, and not going out, might be on account of mourning, as follows: *and bewail her father and her mother a full month*: who were either dead in the battle, or however she had no hope of seeing them any more, being a captive, and likely to be settled in another man's house in a foreign country, and so take her farewell of her father's house in this mournful manner. The Jews are divided about the sense of these words; some take them simply to signify her parents, others her idols, according to Jer. ii. 17. The Targum of Jonathan is, "and weep for the idols of the "house of her father and her mother;" meaning not for the loss of them, but for the idolatry of her father's house she was now convinced of, being become a proselytess, according to the paraphrast; but the last seems only to have respect to the loss of her father and mother, which she was to bewail a whole month, or *a moon of days*[q]; as many days as the moon is going its course, which it finishes in 27 days, 7 hours, and 43 minutes, and this is called the periodical month; but is longer in passing from one conjunction of it with the sun to another, called the synodical month, and its quantity is 29 days, 12 hours, and 44 minutes. Maimonides[r] says, she was to stay in his house three months, one month of mourning, and two after that, and then he was to marry her. The reason of this the Targum of Jonathan explains, by paraphrasing the words thus, "and shall stay three months, that it may "be known whether she is with-child;" that is, by his lying with her before when taken with her beauty, that so he might distinguish this child begotten on her in Heathenism, from what he might have by her after marriage, which is supposed to be the case of Tamar and Absalom; but as there is no foundation in the text for a permission to lie with her before marriage, so neither for these additional months; only one month was required, which was the usual time for mourning for deceased relations; see Numb. xx. 29. Deut. xxxiv. 8. *and after that thou shalt go in unto her*; and not before: *and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife*; he continuing to love her, and she having become a proselytess.

Ver. 14. *And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her*, &c.] Either some time after marriage: *then thou shalt let her go whither she will*; by a bill of divorce, as the Targum of Jonathan, who understands it in this sense, and as the connexion of the words seems to require; or else before marriage, at the month's end, or any time before, that if his affections cooled towards her, and all the above methods tended to abate his love of her, then he was obliged to dismiss her, or to grant her her freedom, and let her go wherever she pleased; she was no longer his captive, nor his servant: *but thou shalt not sell her at all for money*; as he might have done if he had not made such a proposal to her, and obliged her to the observance of such rites and ceremonies as he did, in order to make her his wife: *thou shalt not make merchandise of her*; which seems to express the same thing, and therefore something else is rather intended; as that he should neither make any gain of her by selling her to another, nor retain her in his own service, nor make use of her as a slave; so Jarchi says, that in the Persian language they call service by this word, and which also he says he learnt from an eminent writer of theirs, R. Moses Hadarsan; with which Maimonides[s] agrees, who explains it, shall make no use of her service, or serve himself by her; he should have no profit by her, either by sale, or servitude: *because thou hast humbled her*; which phrase it must be owned is often used of unlawful commerce with a woman, of defiling her, or violating her chastity; and so may seem to confirm the notion of those who think that he lay with her before he took her to his house, and therefore, upon a refusal to marry her afterwards, was obliged to this loss; though the word signifies any kind of affliction, as this was a very great

[n] R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor, fol. 146. 2.
[o] Ibid.
[p] Ut supra.
[q] ירח ימים luna dierum, Montanus, Piscator, Grotius.
[r] Ut supra, sect. 6.
[s] Ut supra.

one, a great mortification to her, to be taken into his house, to have her head shaved, and her nails pared, or suffered to grow, and her fine clothes changed for sordid ones; and all this with a profession of a design to marry her, and yet after all is deceived and disappointed by him; wherefore for such a conduct toward her he was obliged to give her her freedom.

Ver. 15. *If a man have two wives, &c.*] Which is supposed, but not approved of, though permitted because of the hardness of men's hearts; for it was not so from the beginning, when only one man and one woman were created, and joined together in marriage; but as it was connived at, and become customary, a law is made to prevent confusion, and preserve order in families: *one beloved and another hated;* or less loved, yet continued his wife, and not divorced. Aben Ezra observes, this follows upon the former, because it is there said, that though first he had a desire to her (the captive beautiful woman), yet afterwards had no delight in her: *and they have borne him children* both, *the beloved and the hated;* as Rachel and Leah did to Jacob, who were, the one very much beloved by him, and the other less: *and if the first-born son be hers that was hated;* or not so much beloved as the other, as was the case in the above instance.

Ver. 16. *Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, &c.*] By a will in writing, or by word of mouth, or by a deed of gift, actually bestowing his goods upon them, and dividing among them what he is for the present possessed of; see Luke xv. 12. *that he may not make the son of the beloved first-born before the son of the hated,* which is *indeed the first-born;* that is, when such is the case, that the son of his wife he has the least value for is really his first-born, he may not, through favour and affection to the wife he loves better, prefer her son, and declare him to be the first-born, by devising to him or bestowing on him the double portion of his goods; for so to do would not be right, or agreeably to the will and law of God; for though previous to this law the birth-right was given to Joseph, the eldest son of Rachel, the most beloved wife of Jacob, before Reuben who was the son of Leah, less beloved by him, and was in fact his first-born; yet this was owing to the sin of Reuben, and by the appointment of God; see Gen. xlix. 3, 4. 1 Chron. v. 2, 3.

Ver. 17. *But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the first-born, &c.*] Own him and declare him to be so, both by his will and the division of goods by him; or he shall *separate* him, as Onkelos; distinguish him from all his other sons, and make known to all, as the Targum of Jonathan, that he is his first-born: *by giving him a double portion of all that he hath;* or, *that is found with him*[t]; which he was in the possession of when he made his will, or divided his goods; and so refers not to what might come into his hands afterwards, or should be his in reversion afterwards; in this the first-born had not his double portion, only in what his father was for the present possessed of; so that if a man had two sons, his goods were divided into three parts, and the first-born took two parts, and the other the third; if three sons, they were divided into four parts, of which the first-born had two parts, and the others each of them one; if four sons, they were divided into five parts, and the first-born took two, and the other three one apiece, and so in proportion; the division was made according to their number: *for he is the beginning of his strength;* as Jacob said of Reuben, Gen. xlix. 3. see the note there: *the right of the first-born is his;* before this law was given, there was a birth-right, or a privilege belonging to the first-born, which gave him the pre-eminence in the family to his brethren; but whether he was entitled to a double portion of goods, previous to this law, is not certain; however, by this, it was his right, and might not be alienated from him; for, according to the Jewish canons[u], "if a man say, "such an one my son, the first-born, shall not take "the double portion, and my son such an one shall "not inherit with his brethren, he says nothing, be"cause he disposes contrary to what is written in the "law." This law of the first-born in the mystery of it may respect our Lord Jesus Christ, the first-born of God, and the first-born of Mary; and who had a double portion of the gifts and grace of the spirit, or rather the spirit without measure, the oil of gladness he was anointed with above his fellows, and is the first-born among many brethren, among whom in all things he has the pre-eminence; and also the elect of God, the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, who have a double portion, both temporal and spiritual things, the promise of this life and that to come, grace here and glory hereafter; and the ultimate glory is but one inheritance, they all share alike in, being equally children, and all first-born; and it may have regard also to the Jewish and Gentile churches, the former was the beloved wife, the latter some time not beloved, and yet the children of the Gentile church have a larger measure of the spirit than those of the Jewish church had; see Rom. ix. 25.

Ver. 18. *If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, &c.*] It is observed[w] that this law quickly follows, and is subjoined to that which relates to the marriage of a woman taken captive, because often from such marriages wicked and refractory children have sprung, and which they exemplify in the case of Absalom, whose mother they say David took in war and married: the character of such a son follows, and by which it may be known that he is stubborn and rebellious: stubborn in his nature, and rebellious in his actions; behaves contrary to the laws of God, and the instructions of his parents; what he should do, that he does not; and what he should not do, that he does; will not do what is commanded him, and will do what is forbidden him, notwithstanding all counsels, admonitions, and corrections given him: *which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother;* is disobedient to the commands of either of them; see Prov. xxx. 17. *and, when they have chastened him, will not hearken to them;* when they have reproved him by words, and corrected him with blows: the Jews understand this of scourging or beating by the order of the sanhedrim, after admonition given; it is said[x], "they

[t] אשר ימצא לו quod inventum fuerit ei, Paguinus, Montanus.
[u] Misn. Bava Bathra, c. 8. sect. 5.

[w] Moses Kotensis Mitzvot Torah, pr. affirm. 122. Kimchi in 2 Sam. 3. 3.
[x] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 8. sect. 4.

" admonish him before three (a court of judicature " consisting of three judges), and they beat him; but " it seems rather to respect private corrections of their " own by words and stripes, which having no effect, " they were to proceed as follows."

Ver. 19. *Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him*, &c.] With their own hands, or cause him to be apprehended by others, in which they were to agree, and which the Jews gather from hence: " if " (say they[y]) the father is willing (to bring him to " justice), and the mother not willing, if his father is " not willing and the mother is willing, he is not reck- " oned a stubborn or rebellious son, until they both " agree:" *and bring him out unto the elders of his city*: according to the Misnah[z], the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, consisting of twenty-three; for they say, that after he has been admonished and scourged by order of the bench of three, if he returns to his corrupt and wicked ways again, he is judged by the court of twenty-three: *and unto the gate of his place*; or city, where the court sat; so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, to the gate of the sanhedrim of his place.

Ver. 20. *And they shall say unto the elders of his city*, &c.] In open court, what follows, at the same time, according to the Targum of Jonathan, acknowledging their own sins, for which such a calamity had befallen them, saying, " we have transgressed the de- " cree of the word of the Lord, because is born unto " us a son that is stubborn, &c." see John ix. 2. *this our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice*; one of an obstinate disposition, will have his own will and way, is perverse and refractory; honours not, but despises his parents, and is disobedient to their commands, unruly and ungovernable: the Jews gather[a] many things from hence, for which there is little foundation, as that they must be neither dumb, nor blind, nor deaf; though what they further observe is not much amiss, concerning this rebellious child, that the law respects a son and not a daughter, because a daughter generally is more tractable, and less capable of doing mischief than a son; and a son and not a man, for if at man's estate, and for himself, he is not under the power of his parents; and yet not a child or a little one, for that is not comprehended in the commands; he must be according to them thirteen years of age and one day, and he must be a son and not a father[b]: he is *a glutton and a drunkard*: which, according to the Misnah[c], is one that eats half a pound of flesh, and drinks half a log of Italian wine; R. Jose says, a pound of flesh and a log of wine; but the decision was not according to him; the first rule stood: now half a pound of flesh, and half a log of wine, which was about three egg-shells, or a quarter of a pint, would be at this day reckoned very little by our grandsons of Bacchus, as Schickard observes[d]; but in an age of severer discipline, as he says, in the tender candidates of temperance, it was reckoned too much, and was a presage of a future glutton: and it must be further observed to denominate him a rebellious son, what he ate and drank was to be what he stole from his parents, and did not eat and drink it at home, but abroad, and in bad company; so Jarchi remarks on the text, he is not guilty until he steals, and eats half a pound of flesh, and drinks half a log of wine; in which he seems to have respect to the Jewish canon[e], " if he steals from his father and eats it in a " place in his father's power, or from others and eats " it in a place in their power, or from others and eats " it in a place in his father's power; he is not reckoned " a stubborn and rebellious son, unless he steals from " his father, and eats it in a place in the power of " others," see Prov. xxiii. 20. the Jews seem to refer to this when they charged Christ with being a glutton and a wine-bibber, Matt. xi. 19. being desirous of having him thought as such an one.

Ver. 21. *And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, that he die*, &c.] The populace; that is, after his trial is finished, and he is condemned to die; and he was not stoned until the three first judges were there (by whom he was admonished, and ordered to be beaten), as it it said, *this is our son*, this is he that was beaten before you[f]; and according to the Targum of Jonathan, " if he feared (God, and shewed any token of repent- " ance) and received instruction, and they (his parents) " desired to preserve him alive, they preserved him; " but if he refused and was rebellious, then they " stoned him;" but the Jews say this law, and that of retaliation, were never put into execution: *so shalt thou put away evil from among you*; put a stop to, and prevent such an evil for the future, and remove the guilt of it; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, him that doeth that evil: *and all Israel shall hear, and fear*; it being to be publicly notified throughout the land, that such an one suffered death for such a crime, which would be a means of deterring others from the same; so Jarchi remarks, " here (says he) a proclamation was necessary " to be made by the sanhedrim, as that such an one " was stoned because he was stubborn and rebel- " lious:" for the mystical sense of this see Eph. ii. 2. Col. iii. 6.

Ver. 22. *And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death*, &c.] This before mentioned, or any other that deserves death, any kind of death, as strangling, killing with the sword, burning and stoning, to which the Jews restrain it here: *and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree*; is condemned to stoning, and after that they hang him, as the Targum of Jonathan; and according to the Jewish Rabbins, as Jarchi observes, all that were stoned were to be hanged, and only men, not women[g]; for it is remarked that it is said *him* and not *her*[h]: about this there is a dispute in the Misnah[i]; " all that are stoned are hanged, they " are the words of R. Eliezer; but the wise men say " none are to be hanged but the blasphemer and ido- " later; a man is to be hanged with his face to the

[y] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 8. sect. 4.
[z] Ibid.
[a] Ibid.
[b] Ut supra, sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.
[c] Ib. sect. 2.
[d] Jus Regium Heb. c. 5. Theor. 17. p. 364.

[e] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 8. sect. 3.
[f] Ib. sect. 4.
[g] Misn. Sotah, c. 3. sect. 8.
[h] Maimon. & Bartenora in. ib.
[i] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

"people, a woman with her face to the tree, they are "the words of R. Eliezer; but the wise men say, "a man is to be hanged, but not a woman, to whom "R. Eliezer replied, did not Simeon Ben Shetach "hang women in Ashkelon? they answered him, he "hung eighty women (at once), but they don't judge "or condemn two in a day;" so that this was a particular case at a particular time, and not to be drawn into an example: in the same place it is asked, "how "they hang one? they fix a beam in the earth, and a "piece of wood goes out of it (near the top of it, as one "of the commentators[k] remarks), and join his two "hands together and hang him;" that is, by his hands, not by his neck, as with us, but rather in the manner of crucifixion; only in that the hands are spread, and one hand is fastened to one part of the cross-beam, and the other to the other end.

Ver. 23. *His body shall not remain all night upon the tree,* &c.] Which is to be understood of any and every one that was hanged, and not of the rebellious son only, of whom Josephus[l] says, that he was to be stoned by the multitude without the city, and having remained a whole day for a spectacle unto all, was to be buried at night; and indeed such a person was not to remain hanging on the tree any part of the night, but to be taken down at sun-setting; so the Targum of Jonathan, "ye shall bury him at sun-setting;" so says Maimonides[m], they hang a man near the setting of the sun and loose him immediately, and if he continues they transgress a negative precept, *his body shall not remain,* &c. yea, according to him and to the Misnah[n], and which agrees with the practice of the Jews to this day, not only those that were put to death by the sanhedrim, but whoever suffered his dead to remain unburied a night transgressed a negative command, unless he kept him for his honour, to get for him a coffin and shroud: *but thou shalt in any wise bury him in that day;* by all means, if possible; malefactors were not buried in the sepulchre of their fathers, but there were two burying-places provided by the sanhedrim, one for those that were stoned and burnt, and another for those that were killed with the sword and strangled[o]; and even the instruments of their death were to be buried also, as Maimonides[p] relates, the tree on which he is hanged is buried with him, that there may be no remembrance of the evil, and they say, this is the tree on which such an one was hanged; and so the stone with which he is stoned, and the sword with which he is killed, and the napkin with which he is strangled, all are buried in the place where he is put to death, but not in the grave itself: *for he that is hanged is accursed of God;* plainly appears to be so, having committed some foul sin which has brought the curse of God upon him, and which being hanged on a tree was a plain proof and declaration of; and therefore having hereby suffered the rigour of the law, the curse of it, his body was ordered to be taken down; for the words are not a reason of his being hanged, but a reason why being hanged, and so openly accursed, he should not remain hanging, but be taken down and buried: the meaning is not, as Onkelos gives it, that "because he sinned "before the Lord he is hanged," and particularly was guilty of blasphemy; which is given as the reason of his being hanged, and as the sense of this passage; on the mention of which 'tis said[q], "it is as if he should "say, wherefore is he hanged? because he cursed "God, and the name of God was found profaned:" but though this, or any other capital crime, may be allowed to be the reason of the man's being hanged, and so apparently accursed; yet this is not the reason of his being loosed from thence, but his having bore the curse and satisfied the law: and hence this is applied to Christ by the apostle, in Gal. iii. 13. shewing, that his hanging on the tree was an indication and proof of his being made sin and a curse for his people, or that he bore the curse of the law for their sins, and that the taking of him down from the tree, and burying him, signified the removing the curse from him and his people for whom he suffered; or that thereby he redeemed them from the curse of the law, as the apostle expresses it: *that thy land be not defiled, which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance;* which is another reason for taking down the body from the tree and burying it, lest the land of Canaan, which the Lord had given them for an inheritance, and which was typical of the undefiled inheritance, 1 Pet. i. 4. should be polluted, both in a natural sense, through the putrefaction and corruption, and the disagreeable smell of a dead body, and in a ceremonial sense, as every carcass was defiling, if a person but entered where it was; and therefore a dead body was not to be left hanging openly in the air, and rotting there.

CHAP. XXII.

IN this chapter are various laws, concerning care of a neighbour's cattle gone astray or in distress, and of any thing lost by him, ver. 1—4. forbidding one sex to wear the apparel of another, ver. 5. and the taking away of the dam with the young found in a bird's nest, ver. 6, 7. ordering battlements to be made in a new house, ver. 8. prohibiting mixtures in sowing, ploughing, and in garments, ver. 9, 10, 11. requiring fringes on the four quarters of a garment, ver. 12. fining a man that slanders his wife, upon producing the tokens of her virginity, ver. 13—19. but if these cannot be produced, then orders are given that she be put to death, ver. 20—21. then follow other laws, punishing with death the adulterer and adulteress, and one that hath ravished a betrothed damsel, ver. 22—27. amercing a person that lies with a virgin not betrothed and she

[k] Bartenora in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.
[l] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 24.
[m] Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 15. sect. 7.
[n] Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 5.
[o] Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 5.
[p] Ut supra, sect. 9.
[q] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 4.

consenting, and obliging him to marry her, and not suffering him to divorce her, ver. 28—29. and another against a man's lying with his father's wife, ver. 30.

Ver. 1. *Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray*, &c.] Or *driven away* [r]; frighted and strayed away from the herd or from the flock by a wolf or dog; and the ox and sheep are put for every other creature a man has, as camels, asses, &c. which last sort is after mentioned; and a brother means not one in the natural relation of kindred only, for it is supposed, in the next verse, that he might not only be at a distance, but unknown; nor by religion only, or one of the commonwealth or church of the Jews, for what is enjoined is a piece of humanity the law of nature requires and directs unto, and is even to be done to enemies, Exod. xxiii. 4. *and hide thyself from them*; make as if he did not see them, and so be entirely negligent of them, and take no care and shew no concern about them, but let them go on wandering from the herd and flock from whence they were driven, and to which they cannot find the way of themselves: *thou shalt in any case bring them again to thy brother*: to his herd or flock, or to his house, and deliver them into his own hands, or to the care of his servants.

Ver. 2. *And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee*, &c.] Does not live in the same neighbourhood, but at some considerable distance; so that he cannot soon and easily be informed of his cattle, or they be sent to him: *or if thou know him not*: the owner of them, what is his name, or where he lives: *then thou shalt bring it into thine house*; not into his dwelling-house, but some out-house, barn, or stable: *and it shall be with thee*; remain in his custody, and be taken care of by him; and, as the Targum of Jonathan says, "be fed "and nourished by him;" for, according to the Jewish canon [s], whatsoever could work and eat, that should work and eat, and whatsoever did not work and eat was to be sold; for which there was a set time, as the commentators say [t], for large cattle, as oxen, 12 months; for lesser cattle, as sheep, goats, &c. 3 months, here it is fixed, *until thy brother seek after it*: though in the mean while the finder was to make use of means, whereby the owner might be informed of it; for whatsoever was lost, in which were marks and signs by which inquiries might be made, were to be proclaimed [u]; (and it is asked) how long a man was obliged to proclaim? until it was known to his neighbours; some say (he must proclaim it) at three feasts, and seven days after the last feast, so that he may go home three days, and return three days, and proclaim one day; if (the owner) tells what is lost, but does not tell the marks or signs, he may not give it him; and a deceiver, though he tells the signs, he may not give it him, as it is said, *until thy brother seek after it*; until thou inquirest of thy brother whether he is a deceiver or not: and elsewhere it is said [w], formerly if a man lost any thing, and gave the signs or marks of it, he took it; but after deceivers increased, it was ordered to be said to him, bring witnesses that thou art not a deceiver, and take it; and in the same place it is observed, that there was at Jerusalem a stone, called Eben Toim, *the stone of strays*, and whoever had lost or found any thing repaired thither, and gave the signs and marks of it, and took it: *and thou shalt restore it to him again*; he having made it fully to appear to be his, and having defrayed all expenses in advertising and keeping it; but if no owner appear to claim it, or not to satisfaction, the finder was to keep it as his own; but otherwise he was by all means to restore it, or, as in ver. 1. *in restoring thou shalt restore them* [x], that is, certainly restore them; and continually wherever it so happens: the Jewish canon is [y], "if he restores it, "and afterwards it strays away, and he restores it again "and it strays away, even though four or five times, he "is bound to restore it; as it is said, *in restoring thou* "*shalt restore them*;" Maimonides says [z], that even an hundred times he is bound to restore them.

Ver. 3. *In like manner shalt thou do with his ass*, &c.] As with his ox or sheep when astray, and found, keep it until it is owned, and then restore it; this is expressly mentioned in Exod. xxiii. 4. *and so shalt thou do with his raiment*; if that is lost and found, it must be restored to the owner, he describing it; a garment is particularly mentioned, it is said [a], because in every garment there is a mark or sign by which the owners can inquire about it; for it is made by the hands of men, and does not come from any thing common: *and with all lost thing of thy brother's, which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise*: this comprehends every thing that is lost, that is properly so; it is asked [b]; "what is a lost thing? if "a man finds an ox or a cow feeding in the way, this "is not a lost thing; an ass whose instruments are in- "verted, and a cow running among the vineyards, "this is a lost thing:" *thou mayest not hide thyself*; from seeing it and taking care of it, in order to restore it to the right owner; or dissemble a sight of it, and pretend he never saw it, and so entirely neglect it. In some instances the Jews allow they were not obliged to take any notice or care of it, as, "if a man find a "cow in a cow-house (which is not shut), he is not "obliged (to take care of it); if in a public place, he "is obliged; if it is in a burying-ground he may not "defile himself for it [c]."

Ver. 4. *Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his ass fall down by the way*, &c.] And lie under his burden, not being able to rise with it of himself, nor with all the assistance about it, without further help: *and hide thyself from them*; cover thine eyes, or turn them another way, and make as if thou didst not see them in distress: *thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again*; that is, help the brother and owner of it, the ox and ass; assist him in getting them up again, and lay on their burden, and fasten them aright, which either were rolled off by the fall, or were obliged to be taken off in order to raise them up; and if this was to

[r] נדחים expulsos, Montanus; impulsos, Munster; depulsos, Piscator.
[s] Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 2. sect. 7.
[t] Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.
[u] Misn. ib. sect. 5, 6, 7.
[w] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 28. 2.

[x] השב תשיבם reducendo reduces eos, Pagninus, Montanus.
[y] Misn. ut supra, sect. 9.
[z] Hilchot Gazelah ve abadah, c. 11. sect. 14.
[a] Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 2. sect. 5.
[b] Misn. ib. sect. 9.
[c] Ib. sect. 10.

be done for an enemy, then much more for a brother, as is required, Exod. xxiii. 5. see the note there; or *lifting up, thou shalt lift them up with him*[d]; that is, most certainly do it, and lift with all his strength, and as often as there is occasion; if they fell down again after raised up, help is still to be continued, even, as Maimonides[e] says, though it was an hundred times.

Ver. 5. *The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man*, &c.] It being very unseemly and impudent, and contrary to the modesty of her sex; or there shall not be upon her any *instrument of a man*[f], any utensil of his which he makes use of in his trade and business; as if she was employed in it, when her business was not to do the work of men, but to take care of her house and family; and so this law may be opposed to the customs of the Egyptians, as is thought, from whom the Israelites were lately come; whose women, as Herodotus[g] relates, used to trade and merchandise abroad, whilst the men kept at home; and the word also signifies armour[h], as Onkelos renders it; and so here forbids women putting on a military habit and going with men to war, as was usual with the eastern women; and so Maimonides[i] illustrates it, by putting a mitre or an helmet on her head, and clothing herself with a coat of mail; and in like manner, Josephus[k] explains it, "take heed, especially in war, that a "woman do not make use of the habit of a man, or a "man that of a woman;" nor is he to be found fault with so much as he is by a learned writer[l], since he does not restrain it wholly to war, though he thinks it may have a special regard to that; for no doubt the law respects the times of peace as well as war, in neither of which such a practice should obtain: but the Targum of Jonathan very wrongly limits it to the wearing fringed garments, and to phylacteries, which belonged to men: *neither shall a man put on a woman's garment*; which would betray effeminacy and softness unbecoming men, and would lead the way to many impurities, by giving an opportunity of mixing with women, and so to commit fornication and adultery with them; to prevent which and to preserve chastity this law seems to be made; and since in nature a difference of sexes is made, it is proper and necessary that this should be known by difference of dress, or otherwise many evils might follow; and this precept is agreeably to the law and light of nature: it is observed by an Heathen writer[m], that there is a twofold distribution of the law, the one written, the other not written; what we use in civil things is written, what is from nature and use is unwritten, as to walk naked in the market, or to put on a woman's garment: and change of the clothes of sexes was used among the Heathens by way of punishment, as of the soldiers that deserted, and of adulteresses[n]; so abominable was it accounted: indeed it may be lawful in some cases, where life is in danger, to escape that, and provided chastity is preserved: *for all that do so are an abomination to the Lord thy God*: which is a reason sufficient why such a practice should not be used. Some from this clause have been led to conclude, that respect is had to some customs of this kind used in idolatrous worship, which are always abominable to the Lord. So Maimonides[o] observes, that in a book of the Zabians, called *Tomtom*, it is commanded, that a man should wear a woman's garment coloured when he stood before the star of Venus, and likewise that a woman should put on a coat of mail and warlike armour when she stood before the star of Mars; which he takes to be one reason of this law, though besides that he gives another, because hereby concupiscence would be excited, and an occasion for whoredom given: that there was some such customs among the Heathens may be confirmed from Macrobius[p], and Servius[q], as has been observed by Grotius; the former of which relates, that Philochorus affirmed that Venus is the moon, and that men sacrificed to her in women's garments, and women in men's; and for this reason, because she was thought to be both male and female; and the latter says, there was an image of Venus in Cyprus with a woman's body and garment, and with the sceptre and distinction of a man, to whom the men sacrificed in women's garments, and women in men's garments; and, as the above learned commentator observes, there were many colonies of the Phœnicians in Cyprus, from whom this custom might come; and to prevent it obtaining among the Israelites in any degree, who were now coming into their country, it is thought this law was made; for the priests of the Assyrian Venus made use of women's apparel[r], and in the feasts of Bacchus men disguised themselves like women[s].

Ver. 6. *If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in any tree, or on the ground*, &c.] Which are the usual places in which birds build their nests; and this, as Jarchi observes, excepts such nests that are prepared, that is, that are purposely made for fowls kept at home; and with which agrees the Jewish canon, which says[t], "the letting go (the dam out of) the nest is not used "but of a fowl, and it is not used but of what is not "prepared; what is that which is not prepared? such "as geese and hens, whose nest is in an orchard; but "if their nest is in the house, and so doves kept at "home, a man is free from letting (the dam) go;" that is, he is not obliged to let it go; and this is to be understood of clean birds only; so the Targum of Jonathan, "the nests of clean birds;" agreeably to the same canons and the explanation of them[u], "an "unclean bird is free from letting go; so an unclean "bird, that sits upon the eggs of a clean bird, also a "clean bird that sits upon the eggs of an unclean bird, "are free from letting go," or persons are not obliged to let such go: *whether they be young ones or eggs*; that are in the nest; and the Jewish canon is[w], "if there

[d] הקם תקים erigendo eriges, Pagninus, Montanus.
[e] Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 13. sect. 5.
[f] כלי גבר instrumentum virile, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius; instrumentum viri, Vatablus.
[g] Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 35.
[h] Arma viri, Munster.
[i] Hilchot Obede Cochabim, c. 12. sect. 10.
[k] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 43.
[l] Cunæus de Repub. Heb. l. 2. c. 22.
[m] Laert. Vit. Platonis, l. 3. p. 228.
[n] Cunæus ut supra.
[o] Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 37.
[p] Saturnal. l. 3. c. 8.
[q] In Virgil. Æneid. l. 2.
[r] Jul. Firmic. de Relig. Prophan. p. 6.
[s] Lucian.
[t] Misn. Cholin, c. 12. sect. 1.
[u] Ib. sect. 2.
[w] Ib. sect. 3.

"is but one young one, or one egg, a man is obliged "to let go the dam, as it is said a *nest*: a nest is a "word of a large sense:" *and the dam sitting upon the young or upon eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young*: according to the above canon, "if she is "flying at the time her wings reach the nest, a man "is bound to let her go; but if her wings touch not "the nest, he is free from letting her go—if the young "ones are capable of flying, or the eggs rotten, he "is free from letting her go, as it is said, *and the dam* "*sitting*, &c. as the young are alive, so the eggs must "be firm and sound, rotten ones are excepted; and as "eggs have need of their dam, so the young have "need of their dam; those (therefore) that can fly "are excepted:" the dam is not to be taken with her young upon any account; yea, it is said [x], not even to cleanse a leper; and whoever does take her is to be beaten: this law was made partly to preserve the species of birds, and prevent the decrease of them; for a dam let go might breed again, and to this purpose are the verses ascribed to Phocylides[y], which contain the substance of this law, and this reason of it: and partly, as Maimonides observes[z], that the dam might not be afflicted at the sight of the spoil of her young; for this law does not prohibit the taking of her in any other place but in her nest, nor after her young are taken, but not together; and, as the same writer remarks, if the law would have such care taken of beasts and birds, that they might be freed from sorrow and distress, how much more of man? Wherefore the intention of this law is to teach humanity, compassion, and pity in men to one another, and to forbid cruelty, covetousness, and such-like vices; as also to instruct in the doctrine of Providence, which has a respect to birds; and our Lord may be thought to have this law in view, Luke xii. 6.

Ver. 7. *But thou shalt in any wise let the dam go, and take the young to thee*, &c.] Or *in letting go, let go*, or *in sending, send away*[a]; that is, willingly, certainly, entirely, frequently, always; so the Jewish canons[b], "if "any one lets her go, and she returns, even four or five "times, he is obliged to let her go, as it is said, *In let-* "*ting go, let go*;" nay, Maimonides says[c], even a thousand times; the canon proceeds, "if any one says, "lo, I take the dam and let go the young, he is obliged "to let her go; if he takes the young, and returns "them again to the nest, and after that returns the dam "to them, he is free from letting her go;" *that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days*: the Targum of Jonathan is, "that it may be "well with thee in this world, and thou mayest pro- "long thy days in the world to come:" the same blessing that is promised to observers of the fifth command, which is one of the weightier matters of the law, is made to this; which the Jews say [w] is but as the value of a farthing, or of little account in comparison of others; wherefore, as Fagius rightly observes[x], God, in bestowing such rewards, has regard not to the works of men, but to his own grace and kindness; for what merit can there be in letting go or preserving the life of a little bird?

Ver. 8. *When thou buildest a new house*, &c.] Which is to be understood of a house to dwell in, not of a granary, barn, or stable, or such-like, and every house that is not four cubits square, as Maimonides observes[y]: *then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof*; in the Talmud[z] it is asked, what is the meaning of, or why is it said, *thy roof?* to except synagogues and schools; the gloss upon which is, synagogues, &c. don't belong to any single person, and besides are no dwelling-place. A battlement, as Jarchi describes it, was a fence round the roof; or, as more fully described by Kimchi[a], it was an edifice made for a roof round about it, ten hands high, or more, that a person might not fall from it; so Ben Melech from him. The reason of this law was, because the roofs of houses in those countries were flat, on which they used to walk for diversion and recreation, or retire for devotion, meditation, prayer, and social conversation; such they were in the times of the Canaanites, Josh. ii. 6. and in the times of Saul and David, 1 Sam. ix. 25. 2 Sam xi. 2. and xvi. 21. and in the times of the New Testament; see the notes on Matt. x. 27. and xxiv. 17. Mark ii. 4. Acts x. 9. and so in later times, and to this day. Rauwolff[b], a traveller in those parts, relates, that at Tripoli in Phœnicia, "they have low houses, ill built, "and flat at the top, as they are generally in the east; "for they cover their houses with a flat roof or floor, "so that you may walk about as far as the houses go, "and the neighbours walk over the tops of their "houses to visit one another; and sometimes in the "summer they sleep on the top of them." Now to prevent falling from thence, and mischief thereby, such a battlement as before described was ordered: *that thou bring not blood upon thy house*; be not the occasion of blood being shed, or contract guilt of blood through negligence of such a provision the law directs to, the guilt of manslaughter, or of shedding innocent blood in thy house, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; hence the Talmudists[c] extend this to other things, and by this law also they suppose men are bound to guard against all dangers in any other way; as if a man had a well or pit of water in his court-yard, he ought either to put a cover over it, or to make a fence round it as high as this battlement[d]: *if any man fall from thence*: that is, if a man walking on the roof of an house should make a slip or a false step, and stumble and reel, and so be falling, and fall from thence; which might have been prevented, even his falling from thence or to the ground, if such a battlement had been made.

Ver. 9. *Thou shalt not sow thy vineyards with divers seeds*, &c.] As wheat and barley between the rows of the vines; and this is to be understood only of divers sorts of corn, and of divers sorts of herbs, but not of trees; hence we read of a fig-tree in a vineyard, Luke xiii. 6.

[x] Misn. Cholin, c. 12. sect. 5.
[y] Meh τας νεοσσὰς, &c. Poem. admon. l. 80, 81.
[z] Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 48.
[a] שלח תשלח dimittendo dimittes, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Ainsworth.
[b] Misn. Cholin, c. 12. sect. 3.
[c] In Misn. ib.
[w] Misn. ib. sect. 5.

[x] In loc.
[y] Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 11. sect. 1.
[z] T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 136. 1. So Maimonides, ib. sect. 2.
[a] Sepher Shorash. rad. מעק.
[b] Travels, par. 1. c. 2. p. 17. Ed. Ray.
[c] T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 15. 2.
[d] Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 11. sect. 4.

see the note there: and this only respects what is sown with design, and not what is casual, as the Jews interpret it[e]; "if a man passes through a vineyard, and "seeds fall from him, or they are carried out along "with dung, or with water; or when a man is sow-"ing, and a storm of wind carries it behind him (*i. e.* "to a vineyard behind him), it is lawful;" that is, it may be let grow, and the fruit of it enjoyed; the same here is said of the vineyard as of the field in Lev. xix. 19. see the note there: *lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled*: that is, lest not only the increase of these divers seeds sown, but also the increase of the vines among which they are sown, become unlawful, and unfit for use, and so a loss of all be sustained: the Targum of Jonathan is, "lest it be condemned to burning;" or thou art obliged to burn it; for, according to the Jewish canons[f], the mixtures of a vineyard, or the divers seeds of it, and the increase thereof, were to be burnt; and the commentators of the Misnah[g] frequently explain this phrase by *lest it be burnt*.

Ver. 10. *Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together*, &c.] They might be used separately, but not together; nor was it uncommon in some countries for asses to be employed in ploughing as well as oxen. Pliny[h] makes mention of some fruitful land in Africa, which when it was dry weather could not be ploughed by oxen, but after showers of rain might be ploughed by a mean little ass; so Leo Africanus[i] says, the Africans only use horses and asses in ploughing. The reason why they were not to be put together was either (as some think) lest the law should be broken which forbids the gendering of cattle with a divers kind, Lev. xix. 19. but Aben Ezra thinks the reason is, because the strength of an ass is not equal to the strength of an ox; and therefore he supposes this law is made from the mercy and commiseration of God extended to all his creatures; though perhaps the better reason is, because the one was a clean creature, and the other an unclean, and this instance is put for all others; and with which agree the Jewish canons, which run thus, "cattle with cattle, wild beasts with "wild beasts, unclean with unclean, clean with clean "(*i. e.* these may be put together); but unclean with "clean, and clean with unclean, are forbidden to "plough with, to draw with, or to be led together[k]." The mystery of this is, that godly and ungodly persons are not to be yoked together in religious fellowship: see 2 Cor. vi. 14.

Ver. 11. *Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts*, &c.] The Jews say nothing is forbidden under the name of sorts but what is spun and wove, as it is said, *thou shalt not wear sheatnez*, a thing that is carded, spun, and wove[l]; which Ainsworth translates *linsie woolsie*, and is explained by what follows: as *of woollen and linen together*; of which see the note on Lev. xix. 19. whereas Josephus[m] observes, this was granted to the priests only to wear such garments. Bochart[n] affirms it to be false; but that great man is mistaken; the blue, purple, and scarlet, in the priests' garments, were no other than died wool; and it is a sentiment in general received by the Jews, that the priests wore no other but woollen and linen in their service; see the note on the above place; otherwise this law is so strictly observed, as not to sew a woollen garment with linen thread, and so on the contrary[o].

Ver. 12. *Thou shalt make thee fringes*, &c.] Though a different word is here used from that in Numb. xv. 38. yet the same things are intended, and Onkelos translates both by one and the same word, and which is no other than a corruption of the Greek word used in Matt. xxiii. 5. Though there have been some, whom Aben Ezra takes notice of, who supposed that this is a law by itself, and to be observed in the night, as that in Numb. xv. 38. was in the day; but these he warmly opposes, and calls them liars: *upon the four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself*: upon the four skirts of the uppermost vesture, called Talith; see the note on Numb. xv. 38.

Ver. 13. *If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her.*] That is, marries a wife, and cohabits with her as man and wife, and after some time dislikes her, and is desirous of parting with her, and therefore takes the following wicked method to obtain it: this is to be understood of a virgin taken to wife, as the Targum of Jonathan explains it; and what follows confirms it.

Ver. 14. *And give occasions of speech* against her, &c.] Among her neighbours, who by his behaviour towards her, and by what he says of her, will be led in all company and conversation to traduce her character, and speak of her as a very bad woman: *and bring up an evil name upon her*: take away her good name, and give her a bad one; defame her, and make her appear scandalous and reproachful to all that know her: though the Jews understand this not of private slander, but of bringing an action against her in a public court of judicature, the substance of which follows: *and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid*: the sense is, that he had married her, and when he came to cohabit with her as man and wife, it appeared to him that she was vitiated, and not a pure virgin. This is the charge in court against her, the action laid by him; so Jarchi observes, a man might not say this but before a magistrate, in a court of judicature, which is thus represented by Maimonides[p]; "a man comes to the sanhedrim, and says, "this young woman I married, and I did not find her "virginities; and when I inquired into the matter, it "appeared to me that she had played the whore under "me, after I had betrothed her; and these are my "witnesses that she played the whore before them."

Ver. 15. *Then shall the father and the mother of the damsel take*, &c.] Power from the court, according to the Targum of Jonathan; having leave and licence granted them to do what follows, these were to, and

[e] Misn. Celaim, c. 5. sect. 7.
[f] Misn. Temurah, c. 7. sect. 5.
[g] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Terumot, c. 10. sect. 6. Orla, c. 3. sect. 7. Kiddushin, c. 2. sect. 9.
[h] Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 5.
[i] Descriptio Africæ, l. 2. p. 104.
[k] Misn. Celaim, c. 8. sect. 2.
[l] Ib. c. 9. sect. 8.
[m] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 11.
[n] Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 45. col. 491.
[o] Leo Modena's History of Rites, &c. l. 1. c. 5.
[p] Hilchot Naarah Betulah, c. 3. sect. 6.

would, concern themselves in such an affair, partly for the credit and reputation of their child, and partly for their own honour, who were in danger, as Jarchi observes, of coming into contempt for their ill education of her: *and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity*; the sheet she lay in when she first bedded with her husband, in her parents' possession, and kept by them as a witness of her purity, should there ever be any occasion for it: and which were to be brought *unto the elders of the city in the gate*; which sat in the gate of the city to try causes: the Targum of Jonathan calls it the gate of the sanhedrim, or court of judicature; and, according to Maimonides [q], this court was the court of twenty-three judges; for this was a capital crime accused of, a cause relating to life and death, which could not be heard and tried in a lesser court.

Ver. 16. *And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders*, &c.] Not her mother; hence we learn, says Jarchi, that a woman has not power (or is not allowed) to speak before men; that is, in public; see 1 Cor. xiv. 34. and it was most proper for a father to appear in court for her, and defend her; and if she had no parents living then, those that brought her up, her guardians, that had the education of her, and placing her out in marriage, were to undertake her cause; or, as Josephus [r] says, those that were next akin to her; or, as Aben Ezra, one appointed by the court: *I gave my daughter unto this man to wife*; and, by the Jewish canons [s], a man might give his daughter in marriage, but a woman might not: *and he hateth her*; has taken a dislike to her, and wants to be rid of her, and therefore has brought this infamous action against her.

Ver. 17. *And, lo, he hath given occasion of speech against her*, &c.] In the neighbourhood where they dwell; has been the cause of persons speaking reproachfully of her, as one of ill fame: *saying, I found not thy daughter a maid*; so that it seems he said this not only to his neighbours, and before a court of judicature, but to the parents of the damsel: *and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity*; which were brought with him, and produced in open court: *and they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city*; that they might have ocular proof and evidence of the truth of what he said, by having spread before them the sheet stained with the blood of her virginity upon her husband's first congress with her. It seems that the mother, as well as the father, were present and concerned in this action: for it is said, *they shall spread*; and though the mother might not speak, she was the proper person to bring this cloth and spread it; and indeed it was particularly in her care and keeping; for we are told [t], that two persons, called שושבינים, *the friends* of the bride and bridegroom, went first into their bedchamber, and thoroughly examined the bed, whether there was any thing relating to the sign of virginity, by which one might impose upon another; and they stood all night keeping watch with great joy and cheerfulness, as if they had been the guards of a king and queen; (to which is thought the allusion is in John iii. 29.) their business was, when the bridegroom and bride came out, to rush in immediately, and examine all things again; and knowing and owning the former linen sheets in which they had lain, took them and delivered them to the mother. Nor need spreading such a cloth before the court be thought unlikely because of the indecency of it, when it is observed that persons and things much more filthy came under the cognizance and examination of the priests, as leprous, menstruous, and profluvious persons, and their respective disorders; nor is it at all improbable that there should be such evident tokens as are said to be given, when it is observed, especially of the Jewish women, at what a tender age they were marriageable, and were frequently married, namely, when twelve years and one day old. And the Africans, as we are told [u], have a custom with them similar to this at a wedding; "a feast is prepared, and a certain "woman waits without, until the bride is lain with; "and then a linen cloth, stained with blood, is reached "out to her, which she carries in her hands, and shews "to the guests, crying out with a loud voice that this "was a virgin hitherto uncorrupt; then she, with other "women, are splendidly received, first by the parents of "the bridegroom, and then of the bride; but if she "does not appear to be a virgin, she is returned to her "parents under the disgrace of all, and the marriage "made null and void." Indeed there are some Jewish writers, that interpret this cloth in a parabolical and allegorical sense, and understand by it witnesses that would make the case as clear and plain as the spreading out a cloth or garment. They suppose that before the damsel was lain with she was examined by several matrons, who declaring her to be a virgin, gave it under their hands in writing to her parents, which they were capable of producing in court when there was occasion for it; so Jarchi says, this is a parable; the meaning is, they made things as clear and as plain as a new cloth; with which agrees the Talmud [w] he seems to have taken it from, where on these words, *and they shall spread the cloth*, this remark is made; but the literal sense seems best.

Ver. 18. *And the elders of that city shall take the man, and chastise him*.] Not with words, but blows. Jarchi interprets it of beating, and so does the Talmud [x]; and both the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan render it, "shall beat him;" that is, with the beating or scourging of forty stripes, save one.

Ver. 19. *And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver*, &c.] Which was about twelve pounds of our money; this was double the dowry he would have been obliged to have given her, if he had put her away; which he might have done with less trouble, and with a greater certainty of being rid of her; but being willing to save that expense, took this wicked method to accuse her falsely; and therefore is mulcted double that sum: *and give them unto the father of the damsel*; as a sort of satisfaction or reparation for the scandal brought upon him and his family; if the damsel was fatherless, Maimonides [y] says, she

[q] Hilchot Naarah Betulah, c. 3. sect. 3.
[r] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 23.
[s] Misn. Sotah, c. 3. sect. 8.
[t] Nachman. apud Fagium in loc. Schindler. Lex. Pentaglott. col. 1860, 261.

[u] Joan. Leon. Descript. Africæ, l. 3. p. 225.
[w] T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 46. 1.
[x] Ibid.
[y] Hilchot Naarah Betulah, c. 3. sect. 1.

was to have them herself: *because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin in Israel:* defamed her among her neighbours and acquaintance, or brought a false accusation against her in court; alleging she was not a virgin when he married her, when she was one, which was a very great injury to her character: *and she shall be his wife, he may not put her away all his days:* and so he was disappointed in his view of getting rid of her, and obliged to retain her as his wife, though hated, and was not suffered to divorce her as long as he lived; which was permitted and connived at in other men, and which he might have done before, without bringing such a charge against her: all which must be very mortifying to him, as to be whipped, to pay a fine, keep his wife, and not allowed ever to divorce her.

Ver. 20. *But if this thing be true,* &c.] Which the husband of the damsel laid to her charge, that she was no virgin when married to him, and she had committed whoredom, of which there was plain proof: *and the tokens of virginity be not found for the damsel:* by her parents, or those who had the care of her; or no sufficient reason could be assigned for the want of them, through any family defect, or any disorder of her own; which, as Maimonides[a] says, the judges were to inquire into.

Ver. 21. *Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house,* &c.] For his greater disgrace, and as a sort of punishment for his neglect of her education, not taking care to instruct her, and bring her up in a better manner: *and the men of her city shall stone her with stones, that she die:* which was the death this sort of adulteresses were put to; others was by strangling, and the daughter of a priest was to be burnt; see Lev. xx. 10. and xxi. 9. which shews that this sin was committed by her after her espousals, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra note; or otherwise it would have been only simple fornication, which was not punishable with death: *because she hath wrought folly in Israel:* a sin, as all sin is folly, and especially any notorious one, as this was; and which is aggravated by its being done in Israel, among a people professing the true religion, and whom God had chosen and separated from all others to be a holy people to himself: *to play the whore in her father's house:* where she continued after her espousals, until she was taken to the house of her husband, to consummate the marriage; and between the one and the other was this sin committed, and which is another reason for her execution at the door of her father's house: *so shalt thou put evil away from among you:* deter others from it by such an example, and remove the guilt of it from them, which otherwise would lie upon them, if punishment was not inflicted; the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of the putting away of her that did the evil.

Ver. 22. *If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband,* &c.] This law respects adultery, and is the same with that in Lev. xx. 10. *then they shall both of them die:* with the strangling of a napkin, as the Targum of Jonathan, which is the death such persons were put to; and is always meant when death is simply spoken of, and it is not specified what death; see the note on the above place: both *the man that lay with the woman, and the woman:* they were both to die, and to die the same death: *so shalt thou put away evil from Israel:* such that do it, as the above Targum; see the note on the preceding verse.

Ver. 23. *If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband,* &c.] But not married, not as yet brought home to her husband's house, and the marriage consummated; for the Jews distinguish between being betrothed or espoused, and married; and generally there was some time between the one and the other. And a wife was obtained in this way by three things; by money, which was the most usual; and by writing, which was to be done before witnesses, and with her consent; and by copulation, which, though valid, was not so much approved of[a]. There is a whole treatise in the Misnah, called Kiddushin, or Espousals, which largely treats of this matter: *and a man find her in the city, and lie with her:* with her consent, as might be presumed by her not crying out, when, had she, she might have been heard, being in a city; and her being there also makes against her, since, being betrothed to a man, she ought to have abode in her father's house till her husband fetched her home, and not to have gadded abroad in the city, where she was exposed to temptation.

Ver. 24. *Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of the city,* &c.] Where the fact was committed; the Targum of Jonathan is, "to the gate of the court "of judicature, which is in that city:" *and ye shall stone them with stones, that they die:* a man that lay with a married woman, he and she were to be strangled; but this sort of adulterers and adulteresses were to be stoned, and 'tis thought that of this sort was the woman spoken of in John viii. 3, 4, 5. *the damsel because she cried not,* being *in the city, and the man because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife:* as she was by espousal, by contract, by promise, and so was guilty of adultery, which was punishable with death: *so thou shalt put away evil from among you:* see ver. 21, 22.

Ver. 25. *But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field,* &c.] Alone, and where she might cry out, and none hear, nor were any to help her: *and a man force her, and lie with her:* or take *fast and strong hold on her*[b]; so that she is not able to get out of his hands, and make her escape, he being stronger than she, and so commits a rape upon her: *then the man only that lay with her shall die;* he being guilty of adultery, in lying with a woman espoused to another man, but not she, because she consented not to it.

Ver. 26. *But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing,* &c.] Neither amerce her, nor beat her, and much less punish her with death: *there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death;* because what was done to her was done without her will and consent, and was what she was forced to submit unto; but the Targum of Jonathan adds, that the man to whom she was betrothed might dismiss her from himself by a bill of divorce: *for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter;* as when a man

[a] Hilchot Ishot, c. 11. sect. 10.
[a] Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 1.

[b] והחזיק בה & apprehenderit (in) eam, Pagninus, Montanus; & apprehendens eam, Piscator.

comes unawares upon another, and lays hold on him, and kills him, being stronger than he, and none to help; so is the case of a woman laid hold on by a man in a field, and ravished by him, where no help could be had; and depriving a woman of her chastity is like taking away a man's life; from this passage Maimonides[c] concludes, that impurities, incests, and adulteries, are equal to murder, to capital cases relating to life and death.

Ver. 27. *For he found her in the field,* &c.] Which is a circumstance in her favour, from which it might be presumed that she was forced, and did not consent; for had the sin been committed by agreement, they would doubtless have betook themselves to another place: *and the betrothed damsel cried;* as it might be concluded from the above circumstance she did, and as she herself declared, and which he could not gainsay, or however disprove: *and there was none to save her;* to help her against him, and deliver her out of his hands.

Ver. 28. *If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed,* &c.] That is, meets with one in a field, which is not espoused to a man; and the man is supposed to be an unmarried man, as appears by what follows: *and lay hold on her, and lie with her,* she yielding to it, and so is not expressive of a rape, as in ver. 25. where a different word from this is there used; which signifies taking strong hold of her, and ravishing her by force; yet this, though owing to his first violent seizure of her, and so different from what was obtained by enticing words, professions of love, and promises of marriage, and the like, as in Exod. xxii. 16, 17. but not without her consent: *and they be found;* in the field together, and in the fact; or however there are witnesses of it, or they themselves have confessed it, and perhaps betrayed by her pregnancy.

Ver. 29. *Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father* 50 shekels *of silver,* &c.] For the abuse of his daughter; and besides this was obliged to give her her dowry also, as Philo[d] says, which is commonly said to be 50 more: *and she shall be his wife;* if her father and she agreed to it; and in such a case the man was not at his liberty to refuse, be she what she would, agreeable or not, handsome or ugly; he must, as the Jews express it, drink out of his pot, or marry her, if she is lame, or blind, or full of ulcers[e]: *because he hath humbled her he may not put her away all his days;* to all the other parts of his punishment, paying a fine of fifty shekels to the damsel's father, a dowry of the same sum to her, obligation to marry her whether he likes her or no, this is added, that he is not allowed to divorce her as long as he lives; which was permitted to other men, and this was wisely ordered to preserve chastity.

Ver. 30. *A man shall not take his father's wife,* &c.] Not marry her, whether his own mother, or a stepmother; or even, as Aben Ezra thinks, any one that was deflowered by his father. Jarchi interprets it of his father's brother's wife, which he was obliged to marry by virtue of the law in Deut. xxv. 5. *nor discover his father's skirt;* or lie with her his father had thrown his skirt over, or married; and which being the first, is mentioned here as a sample to all the rest forbidden Lev. xviii. 7. or, as Bishop Patrick expresses it, is a *short memorandum,* to make them careful to observe all the other laws respecting incestuous marriages and copulations there delivered.

CHAP. XXIII.

ORDERS are here given to restrain certain persons from entering into the congregation of the Lord, ver. 1—8. and to take care that there be no unclean person in the camp, or any indecent thing done in it, ver. 9—14. to protect fugitive servants, and not deliver them up to their masters, ver. 15, 16. not to suffer a filthy person to be among them, or any filthy thing to be brought into the house of God for a vow, ver. 17, 18. then follow some laws against usury, and for the payment of vows, ver. 19—23. and the chapter is concluded with some directions how to behave in a neighbour's vineyard, or standing corn, ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *He that is wounded in the stones,* &c.] In any of them, not accidentally, but purposely; which are crushed and bruised by the hands of men, with a design to make him unfit for generation, or to make an eunuch of him: *or that hath his privy member cut off;* by himself or another, and is a thorough eunuch by the hands of men; for of such eunuchs that are made by men, and not born so, the law speaks; so Maimonides interprets it[f]; see the note on Matt. xix. 12. *shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord;* which is to be understood not of the sanctuary of the Lord, or of being refused admittance into the church of God, and to join in religious rites, and partake of sacred ordinances, which all Israelites, and strangers that were proselytes, had a right unto; such might bring their offerings, keep the passover, &c. Exod. xii. 48, 49. Lev. xxii. 18. Numb. ix. 14. and xv. 14, 15. nor of the commonwealth of Israel, as if unfit to be members of civil society; it cannot be thought that such defects should abridge them of their civil rights and privileges: but by the congregation is to be understood the elders, judges, and representatives of the people, that met together in some one place to execute judgment; see Numb. xxxv. 12, 24, 25. Psal. lxxxii. 1. into which such persons were not to be admitted; either because disgraceful and dishonourable, or because of the influence such defects have on their minds, they thereby becoming effeminate, irresolute, and wanting courage, as well as in opposition to the customs and usages of the Heathens, with whom it was common to admit such

[c] Hilchot Yesode Hattorah, c. 5. sect. 10.
[d] De Special. Leg. p. 787.
[e] Misn. Cetubot, c. 3. sect. 5.
[f] Hilchot Issure Biah, c. 16. sect. 2.

persons to civil offices; hence the word eunuch is sometimes used for an officer, Gen. xxxvii. 36. and elsewhere; the Jews[g] restrain this law to marriage, but unnecessarily.

Ver. 2. *A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord*, &c.] That is born of whoredom, as the Targum of Jonathan; and for the sake of avoiding whoredom and deterring from it was this law made, according to Maimonides[h], that adulterers might see, as he observes, that they affect their whole family with an irreparable stain, should they commit such an infamous action; though the Jews commonly interpret it of one that is born of any of those incestuous copulations forbidden in Lev. xviii. which they gather from this following upon, and being near unto one of those incests mentioned in the last verse of the preceding chapter[i]; and it is a rule with them[k], that persons born of such copulations were reckoned bastards; now such an one, according to Jarchi, might not marry an Israelitish woman, or rather might not be admitted into the assembly of elders, or bear any public office. Jephthah may seem to be an objection to this, who was the son of an harlot, Judg. xi. 1. which might be owing to the badness of the times, the laws of God being neglected, or to the providence of God so ordering it, who is not bound by his own laws, though men are; nor was he the son of a common harlot, nor of an incestuous person, but of his father's concubine; besides some think such only are intended who were born of strangers and not Israelites: *even unto his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the Lord:* which seems as if he might at the eleventh; but it is generally interpreted never, as is gathered from the following verse, and from the tenth number being an absolute and perfect one; yet according to the Jewish writers there were ways and means by which their posterity became legitimate; so they say, bastards may be purified (or legitimated), how? if one marries a servant maid, the child is a servant, who if he becomes free, (his) son is a free man[l].

Ver. 3. *An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord*, &c.] Or marry an Israelitish woman, as Jarchi, and so the Targum of Jonathan, " the male Ammonites and Moabites are not fit to take " a wife of the congregation of the Lord;" for the Jews restrain this to men, because it is, as Aben Ezra observes, an Ammonite, not an Ammonitess, a Moabite, not a Moabitess; they allow that females of those nations might be married to Israelites, that is, provided they were proselytesses, as Ruth was[m]: *even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever:* that is, not only to the tenth generation, but for ever; and this law was understood as in force in Nehemiah's time, which was more than ten generations from the making of it; though now, as these nations are no more a distinct people, they suppose it is no longer binding[n].

Ver. 4. *Because they met you not with bread and with water*, &c.] To supply them therewith, either as a gift, which was a piece of humanity to strangers and travellers, or rather to sell unto them, for on no other terms did the Israelites desire their bread and their water: *in the way when ye came forth out of Egypt:* not as soon as they came forth from thence, for it was near forty years after; but it was while they were in the way from thence, as they were journeying to the land of Canaan, and so were travellers, and should have had kindness shewn them as such; for though they needed not bread and water, God providing both for them, yet this does not excuse the inhumanity of these people: the words are to be understood by way of distribution; this charge here only belongs to the Ammonites, for it appears that the Moabites did give them bread and water for money, ch. ii. 28, 29. as what follows belongs peculiarly to the Moabites and not the Ammonites: *and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee:* this the Moabites did in conjunction with the Midianites, but the Ammonites had no concern in it; see Numb. xxii. 7. it was not therefore because the Moabites and Ammonites were born in incest that they were forbidden entrance into the congregation of the Lord; which might have been thought to have been the reason of it, these instances following upon the former, had not these reasons been assigned.

Ver. 5. *Nevertheless, the Lord thy God would not hearken unto Balaam*, &c.] To his solicitations, and the methods he took to prevail on the Lord to suffer him to curse Israel, which he gladly would have done for the sake of Balak's reward: *but the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee:* in the very mouth of Balaam, as the Targum of Jonathan; for when he opened his mouth and Balak expected he would have cursed Israel, and he intended it, could he have been permitted, the Lord overruled his tongue, and put such words into his mouth, that instead of cursing Israel, he blessed him; see Numb. xxiii. 11. *because the Lord thy God loved thee;* and therefore would not suffer them to be cursed; for whom the Lord loves they are blessed, and shall be so in time and to eternity.

Ver. 6. *Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.*] Not that they were to retain malice towards them, or indulge a spirit of revenge, or not do them any good offices in a private way, which is contrary to the law of love; nor does this contradict any offices of kindness and friendship that might be performed in a personal way: so we find that David had a kindness for Hanun the Ammonite, and shewed it, though ill rewarded for it, yet is not blamed for doing it; 2 Sam. x. 2. for these words respect not persons in a private capacity, but the people of Israel as a body politic, who, as such, were not to carry on trade and commerce with those people, nor intermarry with them, nor make leagues and enter into alliances with them; the reason of which was, because being very near neighbours to them, had there not been such a law, as a wall of partition between

[g] Targum Jon. in loc. Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 2, 4, 5, 6. Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 49.
[h] Ibid.
[i] Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 3. sect. 12.
[k] Misn. Kiddushin, c. 3. sect. 12. & Misn. Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 13. Jarchi & Aben Ezra in loc.
[l] Misn. Kiddushin, c. 3. sect. 13.
[m] Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 3.
[n] Misn. Yadaim, c. 4. sect. 4.

them, they might have become very familiar, and so have learnt their evil ways and customs, which this was designed to prevent: the Jews restrain[e] this to overtures and proclamations of peace, which they were not to make with these nations, as they were directed to do when they went out to war with others, ch. xx. 10.

Ver. 7. *Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite*, &c.] Or an Idumean, the descendants of Esau, whose name was Edom, Gen. xxv. 30. the Targum of Jonathan adds, "that comes to be made a proselyte;" he was not to be rejected with abhorrence, because of the old grudge between Jacob and Esau, and which was become national in their posterity: *for he is thy brother*: the Israelites and the Edomites were nearest akin to each other of all the nations; for Jacob and Esau were own brothers by father's and mother's side, yea, were twin-brothers; the relation was very near: *thou shalt not abhor an Egyptian*; that comes to be made a proselyte also, as the same Targum; though the Israelites were so ill-used by them, their lives made bitter with hard bondage, and their male infants slain by them, and they for a long time refused their liberty to depart: *because thou wast a stranger in his land*; and at first received many favours and kindnesses from them, being supported and supplied with provisions during a long famine; and had one of the richest and most fruitful parts of the country assigned them to dwell in; and old favours were not to be forgotten, though they had been followed with great unkindness and cruelty.

Ver. 8. *The children that are begotten of them*, &c.] Of such as became proselytes: *shall enter into the congregation of the Lord in their third generation*; not in the third generation from the time that this law was made, but from the time that any of them should embrace the true religion; their sons were the second generation, and their grandchildren the third; and such might be admitted into the congregation, and be reckoned as of them, both in their civil and church state, and be capable of serving even offices among them, and of marriage with them, as the Targum of Jonathan; which some of the Jews interpret of males only, for females, according to them, might be married immediately as soon as made proselytes, in which way they account for the lawfulness of Solomon's marriage of Pharaoh's daughter[f].

Ver. 9. *When the host goeth forth against thine enemies*, &c.] An army of soldiers march in order to meet the enemy and fight him: *then keep thee from every wicked thing*; the Targum of Jonathan adds, by way of explanation, "from strange worship, uncovering of "nakedness, and from shedding innocent blood;" that is, from idolatry, uncleanness of every sort, and murder; and all other wickednesses ought to be abstained from at all times by all persons, but especially by soldiers in such a circumstance, just going to battle; since sin committed weakens natural courage, as it loads the conscience with guilt; and since victory and success, which depend upon the blessing of God on arms, cannot be reasonably expected, where vices of all sorts are indulged and abound; and especially seeing such are about to expose their lives to the utmost danger, and know not but that in a few hours they must exchange this life for another, and appear before God, the Judge of all, against whom they sin; and yet how little are these things thought of by such in common! it was the wisdom of the Jewish legislature, which was of God, to inculcate such things into the minds of their soldiers.

Ver. 10. *If there be among you any man that is not clean*, &c.] Any unclean person in the army, that was even ceremonially unclean in any of the instances the law makes so, one of which put for the rest is mentioned: *by reason of uncleanness that chanceth him by night*; through pollution by a nocturnal flux, as the Septuagint version, or a gonorrhœa, an involuntary one, occasioned by impure thoughts and imaginations in dreams; the same case as in Lev. xv. 16. *then shall he go abroad out of the camp*; out of the army, lest others should be defiled by such; they not having houses to retire to, and chambers to keep themselves in separate from others, as when at home: *he shall not come within the camp*; that is, not till he has done what is prescribed him in the next verse. Jarchi says, he might not come into the camp of the Levites, and much less into the camp of God.

Ver. 11. *But it shall be, when evening cometh on*, &c.] When the day declines, and it is near sun-setting: *he shall wash himself with water*; dip himself all over in water, not only wash his garments but his flesh: *and when the sun is down he shall come into the camp again*; and take his place and rank in the army. Now if all this was necessary on account of ceremonial uncleanness, which as much as possible was to be avoided, how much more careful were they to be of moral uncleanness, as fornication, adultery, and all sorts of debauchery and lewdness? and yet nothing more frequent among those that are of the military order; it would be well if there was no occasion for the reproach Maimonides[g] casts upon the camps of the Heathens, among whom, no doubt, he means Christians, if not principally; when he observes that these orders were given, that this might be deeply fixed in the mind of every one, that their camp ought to be holy as the sanctuary of God, and not like the camps of the Gentiles, in which abound corruptions of all kinds, transgressions, rapines, thefts, and other sins.

Ver. 12. *Thou shalt have also a place without the camp*, &c.] A place prepared, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, provided on purpose for the use hereafter suggested; so Ben Melech: *whither thou shalt go forth abroad*; to do the necessities of nature, which they were to do without the camp, not in any place they thought fit and most convenient, but what was appointed for that purpose.

Ver. 13. *And thou shalt have a paddle upon thy weapon*, &c.] A nail or spike, some kind of instrument to make a hole in the ground with, which was fastened to the sword upon their loins; which was to be instead of a spade or mattock to dig with: *and it shall be, when thou shalt ease thyself abroad*; without the camp, in the place appointed for that use, whenever nature required such an action to be performed;

[e] Hilchot Melachim, c. 6. sect. 6.
[f] Vid. Kimchi in 1. Reg. iii. 1. & Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 3.
[g] Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41.

thou shalt dig therewith; with the paddle, an hole in the earth: the Essenes used, according to Josephus, to make it a foot deep with a spade or mattock, and to every one that was newly admitted among them, a little pick-axe was given for that purpose [r]: *and shalt turn back;* having eased nature: *and cover that which cometh from thee;* their dung, with the earth they dug out of the hole they made. This law was made to preserve modesty and decency becoming men, and not act like brute beasts, as well as cleanliness in the camp, and the health of themselves and their fellow-soldiers; and that they might not be offensive to the smell, as well as pernicious to the health of one another; and especially for a reason that follows in the next verse; so Maimonides [s] says, the intention of this law is especially cleanliness, and to avoid nastiness, filthiness, and impurities of every kind, that men might not be like the brute animals.

Ver. 14. *For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp, &c.*] In the tabernacle, which moved when the host marched after the camps of Judah and Reuben, and before those of Ephraim and Dan, in the midst of them: this was the position of it whilst in the wilderness, and afterwards when they came into the land of Canaan, and went to war with their enemies, the ark sometimes went with them, the symbol of the divine Presence; and here it is made a reason why they should avoid all uncleanness, since the holy God, or that token of his presence, was in the midst of them: *to deliver thee, and give up thine enemies before thee;* to save them from falling into the hands of their enemies, and to deliver their enemies into their hands, which depended not upon their numbers, strength, and skill, but on the Presence, providence, and power of God with them; wherefore, as the above writer [t] observes, by these actions (of purity and cleanliness) God meant to confirm the faith of those that engaged in war, that the divine Majesty dwelt among them; for which reason such orders were strictly to be observed by them: *therefore shall thy camp be holy;* both in a moral and ceremonial sense: *that he see no unclean thing in thee:* whether natural, moral, or ceremonial; the word here used signifies such nakedness as is forbidden to be uncovered, Lev. xviii. Hence Maimonides [u] applies it to whoredom; for he says, "by this phrase God meant "to deter and dehort from whoredom, which is too "usual and common among soldiers, as long as they "are absent from their own houses; that therefore we "may be delivered and abstain from those impure "works, God has commanded such things to be done, "which may bring to our remembrance that his "glory dwells in the midst of us:" *and turn away from thee;* and so they fall into the hands of their enemies, and become an easy prey to them, their God having forsaken them; and that this might not be their case, care should be taken not to offend him, and cause him to depart from them.

Ver. 15. *Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee.*] That is, one that has been used ill by a cruel and tyrannical master, and was in danger of his life with him, or of being lamed by him, and therefore obliged to make his escape from him on that account; such an one, when he fell into the hands of an Israelite, was not to be taken and bound, and sent back to his master again, but was to be retained till his master's anger subsided; or however until inquiry could be made into the cause of the difference between him and his master, and matters be made up between them to mutual satisfaction; or if it appeared that the flight of the servant was just, and it was not safe for him to return to his master, then he was to be used as hereafter directed; for it cannot be thought that this law was made to encourage and protect every idle, disobedient, and fugitive servant, which would be very sinful and unjust: the Jewish writers generally understand it of the servants of idolaters fleeing for the sake of religion; Onkelos renders it, "a servant of the people," of Heathen people; the Targum of Jonathan is, "thou shalt not deliver a "stranger (*i. e.* a proselyte of righteousness, as Maimonides [w] calls this servant) into the hands of those "that worship idols, but he shall be delivered by you, "that he may be under the shadow of my Shechinah, "because that he fled from the worship of his idol." Jarchi makes mention of another sense; that it may be understood of "a Canaanitish servant of an Israelite "that flees (from his master) without the land, where "he was not obliged to go with him, and serve him "against his will; but I suppose a proselyte is "meant;" and much more then will this hold good of an Hebrew servant in such circumstances. Aben Ezra interprets this of a servant not an Israelite, who, in time of war, flees from his master, not an Israelite also, unto the camp of Israel, and that for the glory of the divine name which is called upon Israel; such an one, though a servant, might not be delivered to his master.

Ver. 16. *He shall dwell in thee, even among you, &c.*] This seems to confirm the sense of it, being a stranger, a proselyte servant that is here spoken of, since the law provides for his dwelling among the Israelites: *in that place he shall choose, in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best;* he was not to be detained by the person that took him up in his own house, or be obliged to dwell in any certain place under a restraint, but he might take up his abode in any of the cities of Israel, which would be most for his good, profit, and advantage: *thou shalt not oppress him;* by words, as the Targum of Jonathan adds, "calling him a fugitive "servant, or by any opprobrious name."

Ver. 17. *There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, &c.*] The word for *whore* is *kedeshah*, which properly signifies an *holy* one; and here, by an antiphrasis, an unholy, an impure person, one that is defiled by man; see the note on Gen. xxxviii. 18. Jarchi interprets the word, one that makes herself common, that is sanctified, or set apart; that is, one that separates herself for such service, and prostitutes herself to every one that passes by: but some understand this not of common harlots in the streets, but of sacred whores,

[r] De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 8. sect. 9.
[s] Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41.
[t] Ibid.
[u] Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 41.
[w] Hilchot Abadim, c. 8. sect. 11.

or such as were consecrated to Heathen deities, as such there were to Venus. Strabo [x] tells us that the temple of Venus at Corinth was so rich, that more than a thousand of those sacred harlots were kept, whom men and women had devoted to that goddess; and so a multitude of the same sort were at Comana, which he calls little Corinth [y]; now these of all harlots being the most abominable are forbidden to be among the daughters of Israel: *nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel:* by the same rule that *kedeshah* is rendered a whore in the preceding clause, *kadesh* should be rendered an whoremonger here, as in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; though Aben Ezra interprets it passively, one that is lain with, and Jarchi one that is prepared to lie with a male, that prostitutes his body in this unnatural way; and it looks as if there were such sort of persons sacred to idols, since we read of the houses of the sodomites, which were by, or rather in the house of the Lord, 2 Kings xxiii. 7.

Ver. 18. *Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, &c.*] Which was given to her as a reward for the use of her body: *or the price of a dog;* not of the first-born of a dog, the price for the redemption of it, as some; nor for the loan of a hunting-dog, or a shepherd's dog for breed, as Josephus [z] interprets this law. Abarbinel understands it figuratively of a sodomite, comparable to a dog, for his uncleanness and impudence; see Rev. xxii. 15. and the price of such an one the gain he got by the prostitution of his body to unnatural lusts; and so as the hire of a whore answers to one in the preceding verse, the price of a dog to a sodomite here; and in this he is followed by some, nor is it a sense to be despised; though the Jews [a] understand it literally of a dog, and of the exchange of another creature with that; so Onkelos renders it, " the exchange of a dog:" now neither of these might a man bring *into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow;* that is, when a man vowed to offer any sacrifice to the Lord, it was not to be any thing that was given to a whore as her hire; as, for instance, as Jarchi, if he gave her for her hire a lamb, it was not fit to be offered; which agrees with the Jewish [b] canons, " what " is the hire of a whore? if one says to a whore, take " this lamb for thy hire, though 100, they are all forbidden; and so if one says to his neighbour, lo, this " lamb is thine, that thine handmaid may lie with my " servant, Rabbi says it is not the hire of a whore, but " the wise men say it is.—If he gives her money, lo, " this is free; wines, oils, and fine flour, and the like, " that are offered on the altar, are forbidden; (but the " commentators say [c], wheat, olives, and grapes, out of " which fine flour, oil, and wine are made, are free;) if " he gives her consecrated things, lo, these are free, " birds, they are forbidden." Now this law seems to be made in opposition to the customs and practices of the Phœnicians and Canaanites, whose land the Israelites were going to inhabit; whose women, as we are told [d], used to prostitute themselves in the temples of their idols, and dedicate there the hire of their bodies to their gods, thinking thereby to appease their deities and obtain good things for themselves; and the like did the Babylonians and Assyrians; see the note on Mic. i. 7. so it is asked [e], " what is the price of a " dog? if a man says to his neighbour, take this lamb " for that dog; so if two partners divide, one takes ten " (lambs), and the other nine and a dog; what is in lieu " of the dog is forbidden, but those that are taken with " him are free:" a whore and a dog are fitly put together, because both are libidinous, impure, and impudent; perhaps the vileness and baseness of the creature is chiefly regarded in this law, to keep up the credit and veneration of sacrifices as sacred things; and it may be in reference to the worship of this creature, as by the Egyptians, who are said to worship a dog, their god Anubis [f], the image of which had a dog's head on it; or to its being offered in sacrifice to idols, as it was by others; the Colophonians sacrificed the whelps of dogs to their goddess Enodius, as others did to Enyalius or Mars [g]: *for even both these are an abomination to the Lord thy God;* both the hire of the whore and the price of the dog, when brought as a sacrifice to him; the one being a breach of the moral law, and the other tending to bring into contempt the sacrifices of the ceremonial law, if not a favouring idolatry, than which nothing is more abominable to God, who cannot endure any thing evil, base, and impure.

Ver. 19. *Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother, &c.*] One of the same nation and religion, and who is in poor and necessitous circumstances, and wants either food for himself and family, or money to carry on his husbandry, till such times as the fruits of his ground will bring him in a sufficiency for his support, and the payment of what he borrows, and which is to be lent him without any interest: as the Jews were chiefly employed in husbandry, and not merchandise, they had but little occasion to borrow, and when they did could not afford to pay interest, as persons concerned in merchandise, whose gains are great, are able to do; and it is but reasonable that such persons should; but that the Israelites, when poor and in distress, might not be bowed down under their burdens, this law is made for their relief: *usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of any thing that is lent upon usury;* this takes in all sorts of usury, whether what is lent be money or food, or any thing else, no interest was to be taken for it; see the notes on Lev. xxv. 36, 37.

Ver. 20. *Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury, &c.*] To any Gentile, though some Jewish writers except the Edomites and Ishmaelites, as being brethren, and restrain it to the seven nations of Canaan; but it seems to design one that was not an Israelite, or a proselyte of righteousness, and especially to regard such that traded and merchandised, as the Gentiles very much did, and especially their neighbours the Phœnicians; and of such it was lawful to take interest, as it was but reasonable, when they gained much by the money they lent them, and as it is but reason-

[x] Geograph. l. 8. p. 261.
[y] Ib. l. 12. p. 385.
[z] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 9.
[a] In R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 28. 2.
[b] Misn. Temurah, c. 6. sect. 2, 4.
[c] Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.
[d] Athanasius contra Gentes, p. 21.
[e] Misn. ut supra, sect. 3.
[f] Oppida tota canem venerantur, Juvenal. Satyr. 15. l. 8. latrator Anubis.—Virgil Æneid. l. 8. prope finem.
[g] Pausanias in Laconic. sive, l. 3. p. 188.

able should be the case among Christians in such circumstances; this is to be regarded not as a precept, but as a permission: *but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury;* which is repeated, that it might be taken notice of, and carefully observed: *that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand unto, in the land whither thou goest to possess it;* for their charity, humanity, and the kind usage of their poor brethren in distress, would not pass unnoticed by the Lord; but he would make the land they tilled fruitful, and their vineyards and oliveyards to produce abundance, and their flocks and their herds to increase greatly, which would be a sufficient and over-recompense for all that they had freely lent unto their brethren, without taking any usury of them.

Ver. 21. *When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God,* &c.] Which must be of things in a man's power to perform, and of what are lawful to be done, and according to the mind and will of God revealed in his word, and agreeably to the manner of worship prescribed by him; as that he will offer such a sacrifice, a free-will offering to him, and the like, besides what he was bound to do, or give such and such things for the repair of the sanctuary, or for the relief of the poor; see the note on Numb. xxx. 2. This law is thought by Aben Ezra to be repeated on the mention of the hire of a whore, &c. being forbidden to be brought for a vow, ver. 18. *thou shalt not slack to pay it;* or delay the payment of it, but do it immediately; since zeal and affection might abate, and there might not be hereafter an ability to perform, or death might come and prevent it; the Targum of Jonathan adds, at the three feasts, that is, of the passover, pentecost, and tabernacles; and the Jewish writers [h] say, that no man transgresses this precept respecting the delay of paying a vow, until the three feasts have passed: *the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee;* exact the payment of it, and expect it, insist upon the performance of it, and punish for neglect: *and it would be sin in thee:* guilt of sin would be contracted, and punishment inflicted; Aben Ezra interprets it of the latter.

Ver. 22. *But if thou shalt forbear to vow,* &c.] That a man might do, though there was ability; it was expected indeed that men should vow and bring free-will offerings in proportion to their ability; whether they were of the greater sort, of the herd and flock, or of fowls, or even of fine flour, these were acceptable to the Lord: but if they were not vowed and brought, *it shall be no sin in thee:* no charge of guilt be brought or punishment laid; it should not be reckoned a crime, nor be punishable in any respect, and especially where there was a willing mind and no ability; otherwise negligence, niggardliness, and ingratitude, are not well-pleasing in the sight of God.

Ver. 23. *That which is gone out of thy lips thou shalt keep and perform,* &c.] Which were in their power to perform and lawful to do; and this is observed to make them watchful and cautious, and not be rash in making vows, since, when once they were made, an exact and rigid performance of them was expected; see Eccl. v. 4, 5. even *a free-will offering, according as thou hast vowed unto the Lord thy God, which thou hast promised with thy mouth;* be it what it will, as to the matter of it, it was to be paid, and in the manner as it was vowed and promised. Aben Ezra observes, that every vow is a free-will offering, but not every free-will offering a vow; the Targum of Jonathan enumerates the several things to be performed, sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, burnt-offerings, and oblations of holy things, and drink-offerings, and gifts of the house of the sanctuary, and alms to the poor.

Ver. 24. *When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard,* &c.] To take a walk in it for recreation, and to see how the vines flourish, and what sort of fruit and what quantity of it they bear; being invited thither by the owner, or occasionally passing that way stepped in, and even it may be on purpose to taste the fruits of the vine and quench thirst and satisfy appetite: *then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill, at thine own pleasure;* as many as they would, till nature was satisfied: *but thou shalt not put* any *in thy vessel;* to carry away, to be eaten by them or theirs at another time and place; they were to put none into their pockets or into their baskets, as the Targum of Jonathan, or whatsoever vessel they might have with them in the vineyard. Jarchi says, the Scripture speaks of a workman, and only at the time of gathering the grapes, when he was putting into his master's vessels, and might not put any into his own, and carry away; so the Jewish writers [i] generally interpret it of a workman only, and of his eating those things in which he works, and not of such as pass by the way; so the Targums: and there are many traditions in the Misnah [k] concerning this affair; as that by this law a workman might eat whilst in his work, as the ox may whilst it is treading out the corn, and when his work is perfect; and that he may eat of what he is employed about; only if he is at work upon figs, he may not eat of grapes, and if on grapes, he may not eat of figs; nor might he eat more than his hire came to; and that he might make a covenant for his son and daughter, servant and handmaid, adult (that they shall take money and not eat), and for his wife, because they are endowed with knowledge; but not for his son and daughter, servant and maid-servant, minors, because they are not: but Josephus [l], their countryman, better interprets this law, who says, that travellers, or those that passed by the way, were not forbidden tasting ripe fruits, and even were permitted to fill themselves with them as if their own, whether they were of the country or strangers.

Ver. 25. *When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour,* &c.] Passest through it to go to some other place, the road lying through it, as it often does through standing corn; so Christ and his disciples are said to go through the corn, Matt. xii. 1. but Jarchi says this Scripture speaks of a workman also, and so the Targum of Jonathan, "when thou goest in to take "thine hire according to work in thy neighbour's stand-

[h] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1. & in Ediot, c. 7. sect. 4.
[i] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Maaserot, c. 2. sect. 7.

[k] Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 7. sect. 2, 4, 5, 6.
[l] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 21.

" ing corn ;" but the other sense is best, and is confirmed and illustrated by the instance given, as well as best agrees with what follows: *then thou mayest pluck the ears with thine hand;* the ears of wheat, and rub them, to separate the grain from the husk or beard, and eat it, as did the disciples of Christ; Luke vi. 1. to satisfy hunger: *but thou shalt not move a sickle unto thy neighbour's standing corn;* to cut it down and carry any of it off, which would have been an unjust thing.

CHAP. XXIV.

THIS chapter contains various laws concerning divorces, ver. 1—4. the discharge of a new-married man from war and business, ver. 5. about taking pledges, ver. 6, 10—13. man-stealing, ver. 7. the plague of leprosy, ver. 8, 9. and giving servants their hire in due time, ver. 14, 15. concerning doing justice in capital cases, and towards the stranger, fatherless, and widow, ver. 16, 17, 18. and of charity to the poor, in allowing them the forgotten sheaf, and the gleanings of their oliveyards and vineyards, ver. 19—22.

Ver. 1. *When a man hath taken a wife and married her,* &c.] That is, when a man has made choice of a woman for his wife, and has obtained her consent, and the consent of her parents; and has not only betrothed her, but taken her home, and consummated the marriage: *and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes;* is not agreeable to him, he takes no delight in her person, nor pleasure in her company and conversation; but, on the contrary, his affections are alienated from her, and he can't bear the sight of her; *because he hath found some uncleanness in her;* something that he disliked, and was disagreeable to him, and which made their continuance together in the marriage-state very uncomfortable; which led him on to be very ill-natured, severe, and cruel to her; so that her life was exposed to danger, or at least become very uneasy; in which case a divorce was permitted, both for the badness of the man's heart, and in favour of the woman, that she might be freed from such rigorous usage. This word *uncleanness* does not signify adultery, or any of the uncleannesses forbidden in Lev. xviii. because that was punishable with death, when it could be proved; and where there was only a suspicion of it, the husband might make use of the bitter water; though the house of Shammai seem to take it in this sense; for they say a man might not divorce his wife unless he found her in some unclean thing, something dishonest and wicked, and which they ground upon these words; but the house of Hillell say, if she burnt his food, or spoiled it by over-salting, or over-roasting it; and Akiba says, even if he found another woman more beautiful than her, or more agreeable to him. But neither his sense, nor that of the house of Shammai, are approved of by the Jews in general, but that of the house of Hillell[m]; and they suppose a man might divorce his wife for any ill qualities of mind in her, or for any ill or impudent behaviour of hers; as if her husband saw her go abroad with her head uncovered, and spinning in the streets, and so shewing her naked arms to men; or having her garments slit on both sides; or washing in a bath with men, or where men use to wash, and talking with every man, and joking with young men; or her voice is sonorous and noisy; or any disease of body, as the leprosy, and the like; or any blemishes, as warts, are upon her; or any disagreeable smell that might arise from any parts of the body, from sweat, or a stinking breath[n]: *then let him write her a bill of divorcement;* Jarchi says, this is a command upon him to divorce her, because she finds not favour in his eyes; and so the Jews[o] generally understand it, and so they did in the time of Christ, Matt. xix. 7. whereas it was no more than a permission, for reasons before given. A man might not dismiss his wife by word of mouth, which might be done hastily, in a passion, of which he might soon repent; but by writing, which was to be drawn up in form; and, as the Targum of Jonathan, before the sanhedrim, in a court of judicature, which required time, during which he might think more of it, and either recede from his purpose before the case was finished, or do it upon mature deliberation, and a firm resolution. The Jews say[p] many things of the witnesses before whom it was to be written and sealed, and at what time, and upon what, and with what it was to be written, and who were proper persons to write it or not, in a treatise of theirs, called Gittin, or divorces. In the Hebrew text this bill is called *a bill of cutting off*[q]; because the marriage was rescinded, and man and wife were cut off and separated from one another for ever; of the form of such a bill, see the note on Matt. v. 31. *and give it in her hand;* which was to be done before witnesses, and which is one of the ten things requisite to a divorce[r]; though it made no difference whether it was delivered by himself, or by a messenger; or whether to her, or to her deputy, appointed by her before witnesses; or whether it was put into her hand, or in her bosom, so be it that she was but possessed of it; with which agrees the Jewish canon, " if he casts a bill to his wife, and she is within " the house, or within the court, she is divorced;—if " he casts it into her bosom, or into her work-basket, " she is divorced[s]:" *and send her out of his house;* which was a visible token and public declaration of her divorce; besides, were she to be continued in his house afterwards, it would give suspicion of cohabitation, which after a divorce was not lawful.

Ver. 2. *And when she is departed out of his house,* &c.] With her bill of divorce, by which departure out of his house it is notified to all: *she may go and be an-*

[m] Misn. Gittin, c. 9. sect. 10. & Maimon. & Bartenora in. ib.
[n] T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 90. 1. 2. Misn. Cetubot, c. 7. sect. 6, 7. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.
[o] T. Bab. Gittin, ut supra.
[p] Misn. Gittin, c. 2. sect. 2, 3, 4, 5.
[q] ספר כריתת libellum excidii, Montanus, Fagius; succisionis, Munster; abscissionis, Tigurine version.
[r] See Ainsworth in loc.
[s] Misn. Gittin, c. 8. sect. 1.

other man's wife; it was permitted her to marry another man, she being by her divorce freed from the law of her former husband; and who indeed, in express words contained in the divorce, gave her leave so to do; which ran thus, "thou art in thine own hand, and "hast power over thyself to go and marry any other man "whom thou pleasest; and let no man hinder thee in my "name, from this day forward and for ever; and, lo, thou "art free to any man;" see the note on Matt. v. 31.

Ver. 3. *And if the latter husband hate her*, &c.] Or less loves her than another woman, and she is disliked by him as she was by her former husband; *and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it into her hand, and sendeth her out of his house*: as he had by this law a permission, in like manner as her former husband had; see the note on ver. 1. *or if her latter husband die, which took her to be his wife*; and she survives him; as she is then by death loosed from the law of an husband, she may lawfully marry another man, but not her former husband, as follows.

Ver. 4. *Her former husband which sent her away may not take her again to be his wife*, &c.] Though ever so desirous of it, and having heartily repented that he had put her away: this is the punishment of his fickleness and inconstancy, and was ordered to make men cautious how they put away their wives; since when they had so done, and they had been married to another, they could not enjoy them again even on the death of the second husband; yea, though she was only espoused to him, and he had never lain with her, as Ben Melech observes, it was forbidden the former husband to marry her; though if she had only played the whore, according to the same writer, and others [a], she might return to him: *after that she is defiled*; not by whoredom, for in that case she was not forbidden, as it is interpreted, but by her being married to another man; when she was defiled, not by him, or with respect to him, nor with regard to any other man, whom she might lawfully marry after the decease of her latter husband; but with respect to her first husband, being by her divorce from him, and by her marriage to another, entirely alienated and separated from him, and so prohibited to him; and thus R. Joseph Kimchi interprets this defilement of prohibition, things prohibited being reckoned unclean, or not lawful to be used: *for that* is *abomination before the Lord*: for a man to take his wife again, after she had been divorced by him, and married to another man; and yet, such is the grace and goodness of God to his backsliding people, that he receives them when they return unto him their first husband, and forsake other lovers, Jer. iii. 1. Hos. ii. 7, 19. *and thou shalt not cause the land to sin which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance*: since if this was allowed, that men might put away their wives, and take them again at pleasure, and change them as often as they thought fit, no order could be observed, and the utmost confusion in families introduced, and lewdness encouraged, and which would subject the land and the inhabitants of it to many evils and calamities, as the just punishment thereof.

Ver. 5. *When a man hath taken a new wife*, &c.] A wife he has lately married, new to him, though a widow, as Jarchi observes; but the Targum of Jonathan says a virgin; however this is opposed to his old wife, and divorced; for this, as Jarchi and Ben Melech say, excepts the return of a divorced wife, who can't be said to be a new one: *he shall not go out to war*; this is to be understood of a man that had not only betrothed, but married a wife; a man that had betrothed a wife, and not married her, who went out to war, might return if he would, ch. xx. 7. but one that had married a wife was not to go out to war: *neither shall be charged with any business*, as betrothed ones were; they, though they had a liberty of returning, yet they were to provide food and drink for the army, and to prepare or mend the highways, as Jarchi observes; but these were not obliged to such things, nor even to keep watch on the walls of the city, or to pay taxes, as Maimonides [b] writes: *but he shall be free at home one year*; not only from all tributes and taxes, and every thing relative to the affairs of war, but from public offices and employments, which might occasion absence from home. Jarchi remarks, that his house or home comprehends his vineyard; and so he thinks that this respects his house and his vineyard, that if he had built a house and dedicated it, or planted a vineyard and made it common, yet was not to remove from his house because of the necessities of war: *and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken*; or rejoice with his wife which he hath taken, and solace themselves with love; and thereby not only endear himself to her, but settle his affections on her, and be so confirmed in conjugal love, that hereafter no jealousies may arise, or any cause of divorce, which this law seems to be made to guard against. So it is said [c], that Alexander after the battle of Granicus sent home to Macedonia his new-married soldiers, to winter with their wives, and return at spring; which his master Aristotle had taught him, and as he was taught by a Jew.

Ver. 6. *No man shall take the nether or the upper millstone to pledge*, &c.] The first word being of the dual number takes in both stones, wherefore Vatablus renders the words, "ye shall not take for a pledge "both the millstones, nor indeed the uppermost;" which is the least; so far should they be from taking both, that they were not allowed to take the uppermost, which was the shortest, meanest, and lightest; and indeed if any one of them was taken, the other became useless, so that neither was to be taken: *for he taketh* a man's *life to pledge*; or with which his life is supported, and the life of his family; for if he has corn to supply them with, yet if his mill or millstones are pawned, he can't grind his corn, and so he and his family must starve: and in those times and countries they did, as the Arabs do to this day, as Dr. Shaw [d] relates, "most families grind their wheat "and barley at home, having two portable millstones for that purpose; the uppermost whereof is "turned round by a small handle of wood or iron, that "is placed in the rim;" and these millstones being portable, might be the more easily taken for pledges,

[a] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Sotah, c. 2. sect. 6.
[b] Hilchot Melachim, c. 7. sect. 10, 11.

[c] Arrian. Expedit Alex. l. 1.
[d] Travels, p. 231. Edit. 2.

which is here forbidden, for the above reason; and this takes in any other thing whatever, on which a man's living depends, or by which he gets his bread[e].

Ver. 7. *If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel,* &c.] Whether grown up or little, male or female, an Israelite or a proselyte, or a freed servant; all, as Maimonides[f] says, are included in this general word *brethren;* though Aben Ezra observes, that it is added, *of the children of Israel,* for explanation, since an Edomite is called a *brother*. Now, a man must be *found* committing this fact; that is, it must plainly appear, there must be full proof of it by witnesses, as Jarchi explains this word: *and maketh merchandise of him;* or rather uses him as a servant, and employs him in any service to the least profit and advantage by him, even to the value of a farthing; yea, if he does but lean upon him, and he supports him, though he is an old man that is stolen; this is serving a man's self by him, as Maimonides[g], which is what is forbidden as distinct from selling him, as follows: or *selleth him;* to others; and both these, according to the above writer[h], using him for service, and selling him, are necessary to make him guilty of death; not the one without the other; but reading them disjunctively, as we do, gives the better sense of the words: *then that thief shall die;* by strangling with a napkin, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so Maimonides[i] says, his death is by strangling: *and thou shalt put evil away from among you;* both him that does evil, as the Targum of Jonathan, and the guilt of it by inflicting due punishment for it; and so deter from such practices, and prevent evil coming upon the body of the people, should such a sin be connived at; see Exod. xxi. 16.

Ver. 8. *Take heed, in the plague of leprosy,* &c.] Whether in the bodies of men, or in houses, or in garments, not to hide and conceal it; or, as Jarchi, weaken the signs of it, or cut out the bright spot; so the Targum of Jonathan: *that thou observe diligently, and do according to all the priests the Levites shall teach you:* according to the laws and rules given in such cases, whether they order to shut up persons, houses, or clothes, or pronounce unclean or clean; in all things they were to do as they directed, which appeared to be agreeably to the said rules; for the judgment, management, and ordering of these things, belonged to the priests: of which see Lev. xiii. and xiv. *as I commanded them, so shall ye observe to do:* which shews that they were not to comply with their orders, and conform to them, any further than they agreed with the commands of God, and the instructions he had given them in the places referred to.

Ver. 9. *Remember what the Lord thy God did unto Miriam,* &c.] Who was striken with leprosy for speaking against Moses, and was shut up seven days; and they are reminded of this instance, partly to warn them against entertaining evil suspicions, and surmises of persons in power and authority, and speaking evil of them; and partly to expect that punishment would certainly be inflicted on them, should they be guilty of the same crime; nor should they think it hard, either to be smitten with leprosy, or to be shut up for it; since Miriam, a prophetess, and the sister of Moses, was so used; and that when *by the way, after that ye were come out of Egypt;* when upon their journey, and were retarded in it, and obliged to stay at least seven days before they could proceed on in it; see Numb. xii. 14, 15, 16.

Ver. 10. *When thou dost lend thy brother any thing,* &c.] Any sum of money he stands in need of, or demandest a debt of him, as Jarchi; money he is indebted to thee, which is the sense of the Septuagint version; and he is not able to pay it, but offers something in pawn till he can pay it: *thou shalt not go into his house to fetch his pledge;* which would be an exercise of too much power and authority, to go into a neighbour's house, and take what was liked; and besides, as no doubt he would take the best, so he might take that which the poor man could not spare; and indeed, according to the Jewish canons[k], he could not take any pledge at all, but with the knowledge, and by the leave, of the sanhedrim, or court of judicature.

Ver. 11. *Thou shalt stand abroad,* &c.] Without doors, in the street, as the Targum of Jonathan, whilst the borrower or debtor looks out, and brings forth what he can best spare as a pledge: *and the man to whom thou dost lend shall bring out the pledge abroad unto thee;* now as, on the one hand, if the lender or creditor had been allowed to go in and take what he pleased for a pledge, he would choose the best; so, on the other hand, the borrower or debtor would be apt to bring the worst, what was of the least value and use; wherefore the Jews made it a rule that it should be of a middling sort, between both, lest it should be a discouragement and hinderance to lend upon pledges[l].

Ver. 12. *And if the man* be *poor,* &c.] Which may be thought to be the case of every one that gives pledges for a debt he owes, or a sum of money he borrows; yet there might be a difference: some might be so very destitute of goods and raiment in their houses, that whatever they parted with was distressing to them, and they could not well do without it: *thou shalt not sleep with his pledge;* nor keep it a night; but deliver it to him, before he went to bed, and laid himself down to sleep.

Ver. 13. *In any case thou shalt deliver him the pledge again, when the sun goeth down,* &c.] If it was a night-covering, as Jarchi remarks; but if it was his day-clothes, he was to return it in the morning, when the sun arose; and this was to be done every day, which must occasion a great deal of trouble, and the pledge of little use; so that it seems as though they might as well be without it as have it, and lend freely; but the Jews say, that there was an advantage by it; for it is said in answer to such a question, "of what "profit is the pledge? by this means the debt is not "released on the seventh year, (when all other debts "were released, ch. xv. 1, 2.) nor could the borrower "dispose of his goods to his children, but pay-

[e] Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 13.
[f] Hilchot Genibah, c. 9. sect. 6.
[g] Ib. sect. 2.
[h] Ib. sect. 3.
[i] Hilchot Genibah, c. 9. sect. 1. So R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 67. 1. interprets it of service.
[k] Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 13.
[l] Misn. Gittin, c. 5. sect. 1. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

"ment was made from the pledge after his death[m]:" now this delivery of the pledge at sun-setting was ordered, *that he may sleep in his own raiment;* have his night-covering to sleep in, his pillow, and bolster, and bedding to lie on, and bed-clothes to cover him; and indeed the clothes they wore were made in such form, as would serve for covering to sleep in at night, as well as to wear in the day; and such is the clothing of the Arabs now, which they call *hykes*. "The usual "size of them (Dr. Shaw says[n]), is six yards long, and "five or six feet broad, serving the Arab for a com- "plete dress in the day; and as they *sleep in their* "*raiment*, it serves likewise for his bed and covering "by night:" *and bless thee;* for using him so mercifully and kindly, as to return him his pledge, which is so necessary to his comfortable repose in the night; and not only will he praise him, and speak well of him for it, and give him thanks; but will pray to God to bless him in soul, body, and estate, for such kindness shewn him: *and it shall be righteousness unto thee before the Lord thy God;* not his justifying righteousness before God, for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified in his sight; but it shall be owned and approved of as a good and righteous action, and answerable to the intention of this law, which is, that mercy should be shewn to persons in distress; in which sense the word *righteousness* is sometimes used, even for a merciful action, Psal. cxii. 9. Dan. iv. 27. so alms is called δικαιοσυνη, righteousness, Matt. vi. 1. in some copies.

Ver. 14. *Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant,* &c.] That is hired by the day, as appears by the following verse; though the law may include such as are hired by the week, or month, or year; neither of whom are to be oppressed by any means, and chiefly by detaining their wages; so the Jerusalem Targum explains the phrase, "ye shall not detain by force the hire of "the hired servant;" nor by fraud, as in James v. 4. that is *poor and needy:* and so can't bear the lest oppression of this kind, nor to have his wages detained from him any time, and much less wholly to be defrauded of them: whether he be *of thy brethren;* an Israelite, and so a brother both by nation and religion: *or of thy strangers that* are *in thy land, within thy gates:* Jarchi interprets this both of proselytes of righteousness, and of proselytes of the gate; which latter are plainly described by this clause, and the former must be included; for, if proselytes of the gate are not to be oppressed, much less proselytes of righteousness, who were in all respects as Israelites, the same law was to them both. Jarchi says, the phrase *in thy land* is intended to comprehend the hire of beasts, and of vessels; and these in the Misnah[o] are said to be comprehended in this precept, as well as the hire of man.

Ver. 15. *At his day thou shalt give him his hire,* &c.] At the close of the day, when his work is done, the hire agreed for must be paid him; and, by the same rule, all such that were hired by the week, month, or year, were to have their wages paid them at the day their time was up: *neither shall the sun go down upon it;* it was to be paid before sun-setting, or at it; see Lev. xix. 13. *for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it;* being poor, he can't wait any longer for the payment of it; his personal and family wants are such as require immediate payment; and besides, he has been eagerly expecting it, and earnestly desiring it, that he may satisfy the craving necessities of himself and family; and therefore it would be a great baulk and disappointment to him to have his wages detained: *lest he cry againt thee to the Lord;* having none to apply unto but him, who is the patron of the poor and needy, not being able to help himself, nor having interest in any to interpose on his behalf; and his cry, and the cry of his hire too, enter into the ears of the Lord of hosts, and is regarded by him, James v. 4. *and it be sin unto thee:* be imputed to him, the guilt charged on him, and punishment inflicted for it.

Ver. 16. *The fathers shall not be put to death for the children,* &c.] By the civil magistrates, for sins committed by them of a capital nature, and which are worthy of death: *neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers;* for sins committed by them that deserve it: *every man shall be put to death for his own sin:* which is but just and reasonable; see Ezek. xviii. 4. which is no contradiction to Exod. xx. 5. that respects what God himself would do, this what Israel, or the civil magistrates in it, should do; this is a command on Israel, as Aben Ezra observes; that the declaration of the sovereign Being, who is not bound by any law. Jarchi interprets these words differently, as that the one should not be put to death by the testimony of the other; and it is a rule with the Jews, "that an oath of witness is taken of men, and "not of women; of those that are not akin, and not "of those that are nearly related[p]:" on which one of the commentators observes[q], that such that are near akin are not fit to bear testimony, because it is written, *the father shall not be put to death for the children;* that is, for the testimony of the children. Jarchi indeed mentions the other sense, for the inquity of the children, which has been given, and is undoubtedly the true sense of the text. The Targum of Jonathan gives both; "fathers should not be put to death, "neither by the testimony, nor for the sins of the "children; and children shall not be put to death, "neither by the testimony, nor for the sins of fathers; "but every man shall be put to death for his own sin "by proper witnesses."

Ver. 17. *Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless,* &c.] Who are unable to defend themselves, and have but few, if any, to take their part; and therefore particular care should be taken by judges and civil magistrates to do them justice, or God will require it of them: *nor take a widow's raiment to pledge;* nor any thing else, as her ox or cow, Job xxiv. 3. according to the Jewish canons[r], of a widow, whether she is poor or rich, a pledge is not taken; the reason given for which is,

[m] Maimon Hilchot Milvah Velovah, c. 3. sect. 5.
[n] Travels, p. 224. Ed. 2.
[o] Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 12.
[p] Misn. Shebuo.t, c. 4. sect. 1.
[q] Bartenora in ib.
[r] Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 13.

that it would raise an ill suspicion, and cause an evil report of her among her neighbours[s]; and which is suggested by the Targum of Jonathan, "neither shall "any of you take for a pledge the raiment of a widow, "lest wicked neighbours should arise, and bring an "evil report upon her, when ye return the pledge "unto her." But no doubt a poor widow is meant, and the design of the law is mercy to her, and that she might not be distressed by taking that from her she needed.

Ver. 18. *But thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in Egypt*, &c.] The remembrance of which may cause sympathy with persons in distress; particularly the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow: *and the Lord thy God redeemed thee thence*; the Targum of Jonathan, "the Word of the Lord thy God;" which, as it was an act of great kindness and mercy in God to them, taught them, and laid them under obligation to shew favour to their fellow-creatures in distress: *therefore I command thee to do this thing*; not to pervert the judgment of the stranger and fatherless, nor take a widow's raiment for a pledge; and it may be carried further into the context, and respect the laws about the pledge of the poor man, and giving the hired servant his wages in due time.

Ver. 19. *When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field*, &c.] Whether barley-harvest or wheat-harvest, when either of them are ripe for cutting, mowing, or reaping, and are cutting down: *and hast forgot a sheaf in the field*; Jarchi says the phrase *in the field* is used to include standing corn, some of which is forgotten in cutting down, and so is subject to this law as well as a sheaf; and a sheaf claimed by this name is one that is forgotten both by the workman and the owner; if by the one and not by the other, it could not be so called. The canon runs thus[t], "a sheaf which "the workmen forget, and not the owner, or the "owner forgets, and not the workman, before which "the poor stand, or is covered with straw or stubble, "is not a forgotten sheaf." And about this they have various other rules; "a sheaf that is near the "gate (of a field), or to an heap (of sheaves), or "to oxen, or to instruments, and left, the house of "Shammai say it is not to be reckoned a forgotten "sheaf; but the house of Hillell say it is;—two sheaves "are reckoned forgotten, three are not; a sheaf in "which there are two seahs (about a peck and a half), "and they leave it, it is not reckoned forgotten[u]:" *thou shalt not go again to fetch it*; which supposes a remembrance of it, or some intelligence about it when at home, and after the field has been cleared, and all carried in but this sheaf; then the owner might not go nor send to fetch it: the beginnings of the rows, they say, shew when a sheaf is forgotten, or not; particularly the adverse sheaf, or that over-against it, shews it[w]; so Jarchi: *it shall be for the stranger*; or proselyte; the proselyte of righteousness; of this there is no doubt, but it seems to be for the proselyte of the gate also: *for the fatherless and for the widow*; which of them soever should first find it: *that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands*; in the culture of their ground the next year, and give them large and fruitful crops; they either purposely leaving the sheaf for the poor, or however suffer them to take it unmolested when found by them. The Targum of Jonathan is, *that the word of the Lord thy God may bless thee*, &c.

Ver. 20. *When thou beatest thine olive-tree*, &c.] With sticks and staves, to get off the olives when ripe: *thou shalt not go over the boughs again*; to beat off some few that may remain; they were not nicely to examine the boughs over again, whether there were any left or no: *it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and the widow*; who might come into their olive-yards after the trees had been beaten, and gather what were left.

Ver. 21. *When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard*, &c.] Which was done much about the same time that the olives were gathered, and both after wheat-harvest, about the latter end of June, or beginning of July; for they were more forward in those hot countries: *thou shalt not glean it afterwards*; go over the vines a second time, to pick off every berry or bunch that escaped them at first gathering: *it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and the widow*; as the forgotten sheaf, and the olive-berries left; these are all supposed to be poor persons, otherwise no doubt there were strangers, and fatherless persons, and widows, in good circumstances; who, as they needed not, so neither would give themselves the trouble, but think it beneath them to go into fields, oliveyards, and vineyards, to gather what was left by the owners. These laws were made in favour of the poor, that mercy and kindness might be shewed to them, and that they might have a taste of all the fruits of the earth.

Ver. 22. *And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt*, &c.] When they would have been glad to have enjoyed the like favours, as small as they might seem to be, even to glean in their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards: *therefore I command thee to do this thing*; to suffer the poor to take the forgotten sheaf, and to come into their oliveyards and vineyards, and gather what olives and grapes remained after the first beating of the one, and the in-gathering of the other.

CHAP. XXV.

SEVERAL laws are contained in this chapter, as concerning beating such whose crimes required it, ver. 1, 2, 3. of not muzzling the ox in treading out the corn, ver. 4. of marrying a deceased brother's wife, when there was no issue, and of the disgrace of such that refued it, ver. 5—10. of the punishment of an

[s] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Bava Metzia, c. 9. sect. 13.
[t] Misn. Peah, c. 5. sect. 7.
[u] Misn. Peah, c. 6. sect. 2, 5, 6.
[w] Ib. sect. 3, 4.

immodest woman, ver. 11, 12. and against bad weights and measures, ver. 13—16. and for the utter destruction of Amalek, ver. 17, 18, 19.

Ver. 1. *If there be a controversy between men,* &c.] Between two or more: *and they come unto judgment*, into a court of judicature, bring their cause thither: *that* the judges *may judge them;* who were never less than three; the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem consisted of 71, the lesser court was of 23, and the least of all three only: *then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked;* acquit the one, whose cause is good, and adjudge the other to punishment, who is guilty of a crime, and as that deserves; which is to do righteous judgment; the contrary to this is an abomination to the Lord, Prov. xvii. 15.

Ver. 2. *And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten,* &c.] There were four kinds of death criminals were put to by the Jews, stoning, strangling, burning, and slaying with the sword; and such crimes as did not subject to these were punished with beating or scourging; and who they were that were worthy to be beaten is at large set forth in the Misnic treatise called Maccoth[x], or *stripes*, which are too many to be transcribed. Maimonides says[y], that all negative precepts in the law, for the breach of which men are guilty of cutting off, but not of death by the sanhedrim, are to be beaten. They are in all 21, and so all deserving of death by the hand of heaven; and they are 18, and all negative precepts of the law broken, for which there is neither cutting off, nor death by a court of judicature, for these men are to be beaten, and they are 168; and all that are to be beaten are found to be 207: *that the judge shall cause him to lie down;* which seems to be on the floor of the court, since it was to be done immediately, and in the presence of the judge; and the Jews gather[z] from hence, that he was to be beaten neither standing, nor sitting, but bowed; that is, ye shall command or order him to lie down, or to fall upon the ground with his face towards it: *and to be beaten before his face;* in the presence of the judge, that the sentence might be properly executed, neither exceeded nor diminished; and indeed all the judges were to be present, especially the bench of three; for whilst he was beating, the chief of the judges read the passage in Deut. xxviii. 58. and he that was next to him counted the strokes, and the third at every blow said Smite[a]: of the manner of beating or scourging, see the note on Matt. x. 17. *according to his fault, by a certain number;* as his crime and wickedness was more or less heinous, more or fewer stripes were to be laid on him; as ten or twenty, fewer or more, according to the nature of his offence, as Aben Ezra observes, only he might not add above forty; though he says there are some who say that according to his fault the stripes are larger or lesser, but all of them in number forty.

Ver. 3. *Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed,* &c.] And that this number might not be exceeded, it is ordered by the Jewish canons that only 39 should be given; for it is asked[b], "with how many stripes "do they beat him? with forty, save one, as it is said, "in number *forty;* that is, in the number which is "next to forty;" this they make out by joining the last word of the preceding verse with the first of this; and that this was an ancient sense of the law, and custom upon it, appears by the execution of it on the Apostle Paul; who was not indulged, but suffered the extremity of it as it was then understood, 2 Cor. xi. 24. see the note there; moreover, that they might not exceed this number, they used to make a scourge of three lashes, so that every stroke they fetched with it was reckoned for three stripes, and 13 of them made 39; wherefore if they added another stroke, it would have exceeded the number of stripes by two: *lest if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes;* they might diminish them, if a man was weak, and not able to bear them; but they might not exceed them, if a man was as strong as Samson, as Maimonides[c] says: *then thy brother should seem vile unto thee;* as if he was a beast, and not a man, and much less a brother. The Targum of Jonathan is, "lest he be in danger, and thy brother be vile;" lest he be in danger of his life, and become vile, as a dead carcass; so the apostle calls dead bodies *vile bodies,* Phil. iii. 21. or in danger of being maimed, and becoming lame or deformed, and so be contemptible: and this punishment of beating with the Jews was not reckoned, according to their writers, reproachful, and as fixing a brand of infamy upon a person; but they were still reckoned brethren, and restored to their former dignities, whatsoever they possessed; so Maimonides[d] says, "whoever commits a crime, and is beaten, he returns to "his dignity, as it is said, *lest thy brother be vile in thine eyes;* when he is beaten, lo, he is thy brother; "an high-priest, that commits a crime, is beaten by "three (*i. e.* a bench of three judges, by their order), "as the rest of all the people, and he returns to his "grandeur; but the head of the session (or court of "judicature), that commits a crime, they beat him, "but he does not return to his principality, nor even "return to be as one of the rest of the sanhedrim; for "they ascend in holiness, but do not descend." And yet Josephus represents it as a most infamous and scandalous punishment, as one would think indeed it should be; his words are[e], speaking of the laws concerning travellers being allowed to gather grapes, and pluck ears of corn as they passed; "he that does contrary to "these laws receives forty stripes, save one, with a "public scourge; a free man undergoes this most "filthy (or disgraceful) punishment, because for the "sake of gain he reproaches his dignity."

Ver. 4. *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn,* &c.] As oxen are used in ploughing, so likewise in treading or beating out the corn; of the manner of which, see the note on 1 Cor. ix. 9. now whilst it was thus employed, it might not be restrained by any means from eating the corn as it had an opportunity, either by a muzzle put over its mouth, or other ways. The Gentiles had several ways of restraining

[x] Ib. c. 3. sect. 1, 2, 3, &c.
[y] Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 19. sect. 1.
[z] Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 13.
[a] Maimon & Bartenora in ib. sect. 14.

[b] Misn. Maccot, c. 3. sect. 10. Vid. Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 23. p. 522, 523.
[c] Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 17. sect. 1.
[d] Ibid. sect. 7, 8, 9.
[e] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 21.

their cattle from eating, whilst they thus made use of them, to which this law is opposed. Maimonides[f] has collected several of them together, as prohibited by it; as putting a thorn into its mouth, causing a lion to lie down by it, or causing its calf to lie down without, or spreading a skin on the top of the corn, that so it may not eat. Ælianus[g] relates a very particular way of hindering oxen from eating at such times, used in some countries, which was this; that oxen might not eat of the ears of corn, in a floor where they were trod out, they used to besmear their nostrils with cows' dung, which was so disagreeable to the creature, that it would not taste any thing though pressed with famine. This law is not to be limited to the ox only, or to this peculiar work assigned it; but, as Jarchi says, respects any sort of cattle, and whatsoever work that has food in it, none of them being to be restrained from eating whilst at work: and this law was not made for the creatures only, but for men also; and especially for the sake of ministers of the word; who for their strength, labour, and industry, are compared to oxen, and ought to be comfortably supported and maintained on account of their work; for the illustration and confirmation of which this passage is twice produced, 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18. see the notes there.

Ver. 5. *If brethren dwell together*, &c.] Not only in the same country, province, town, or city, but in the same house; such who had been from their youth brought up together in their father's house, and now one of them being married, as the case put supposes, they that were unmarried might live with him, and especially if the father was dead; and so may except such as were abroad, and in foreign countries, or at such a distance that this law could not well be observed by them; though the Targum of Jonathan, and so Jarchi, interpret it of their being united in an inheritance, all by virtue of relation having a claim to their father's inheritance; so that it mattered not where they dwelt, it is the relation that is regarded, and their right of inheritance; and the above Targum describes them as brethren on the father's side, and so Jarchi says it excepts his brother on the mother's side; for brethren by the mother's side, in case of inheritance, and the marrying of a brother's wife, were not reckoned brethren, as Maimonides[h] observes; who adds, that there is no brotherhood but on the father's side. Some think that when there were no brethren in a strict and proper sense, the near kinsmen, sometimes called brethren, were to do the office here enjoined, and which they conclude from the case of Boaz and Ruth; but Aben Ezra contradicts this, and says that instance is no proof of it, it respecting another affair, not marriage, but redemption; and says that brethren, absolutely and strictly speaking, are here meant; which is agreeably to their tradition[i]: *and one of them die, and have no child* son, or daughter, son's son, or daughter's son, or daughter's daughter, as Jarchi notes: if there were either of these, children or grandchildren, of either sex, there was no obligation to marry a brother's wife; so, in the case put to Christ, there was no issue, the person was childless, Matt. xxii. 24, 25. Luke xx. 28. *the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger*; by whom is meant not a Gentile, or a proselyte of the gate, or of righteousness, but any Israelite whatever, that was not of her husband's family; she might not marry out of the family; that is, unless she was refused by all, the design of the law being to secure inheritances, and continue them in families to which they belonged: *her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife*; that is, supposing him to be unmarried, and this is indeed supposed in the first clause of the text, by dwelling with his brother; for had he been married, he would have dwelt with his wife and family apart; besides, if this law obliged a married man to marry his brother's wife, polygamy would be required and established by a law of God, which was never otherwise than permitted. This is to be understood of the eldest brother, as Jarchi, who is in an unmarried state; so it is said in the Misnah[i], "the command is upon the eldest to marry his "brother's wife; if he will not, they go to all the "brethren; if they will not, they return to the eldest; "and say to him, upon thee is the commandment, "either allow the shoe to be plucked off, or marry;" and such a course we find was taken among the Jews in our Lord's time, Matt. xxii. 25, 26. *and perform the duty of an husband's brother to her*; cohabit together as man and wife, in order to raise up seed to his brother, and perform all the offices and duties of an husband to a wife; but the marriage-solemnity was not to take place when it was agreed to, until three months or ninety days had passed from the death of the brother, that it might be known whether she was with-child or no by her husband, and in such a case this law had no force; so runs the Jewish canon[k], "a "brother's wife may not pluck off the shoe, nor be "married, until three months;" that is, after her husband's death.

Ver. 6. *And it shall be that the first-born that she beareth*, &c.] To her husband's brother, now married to her: *shall succeed in the name of his brother*; the meaning is, as the Targum of Jonathan, "he "shall rise up in the inheritance in the name of his "brother;" or, as Jarchi expresses it, "he shall "take the inheritance of the deceased in the goods of "his father;" that is, he shall have his part and share in the inheritance that the deceased brother would have had if he had lived, which would come to him by his father: *that his name be not put out of Israel*: that the family be not lost in Israel, and the inheritance belonging to it pass to another. This law was designed to keep families distinct, and inheritances in them, until the Messiah came, and that it might appear from what family he came; as he did from one in whom, as it is generally thought, this law took place: and it might have still a more special respect to him, as Ainsworth suggests; for Christ in the mystical sense may be signified by the deceased brother; he stands in the relation of a brother to his

[f] Hilchot Shecirut, c. 13. sect. 2, 3.
[g] Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 25.
[h] Hilchot Yebum Vechalitzah, c. 1. sect. 7.

[i] Misn. Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 5.
[i] Yebamot, c. 4. sect. 5.
[k] Ib. sect. 10.

people, and has all the love, friendship, compassion, and condescension of one; he and they are of one and the same father, of the same family, and of the same nature, and have the same inheritance, they being co-heirs with him; nor is he ashamed to own the relation. This brother of theirs is deceased; his death was according to the will of God, what he himself agreed to, and was foretold by the prophets; for which purpose he came into the world, and did die as to the flesh, and that for the sins of his people. Now the Jewish church was his wife, by whom he had no children through the law; that church was espoused to him, he stood in the relation of an husband to her, and she in the relation of a wife to him. Very few children were brought forth by her to him, see Isa. liv. 1, 5. Jer. ii. 2. and iii. 1. and xxxi. 32. and none by the law, by which there is no regeneration, but by the Gospel; it is through that, and not the law, the spirit and his graces come; or souls are born again to Christ, renewed and sanctified. The apostles that survived Christ, and the ministers of the Gospel, are his brethren, John xx. 17. and who are instruments in begetting souls to Christ; and these are a seed raised up unto him, and are called not after the name of the apostles and ministers of the word, through whose ministry they are begotten, 1 Cor. i. 12, 13. and iii. 4, 5. and iv. 15. but after Christ; and have the name of Christians, or anointed ones, from him, and by which means his name is, and will be continued as long as the sun endures, Acts xi. 26. Psal. lxxii. 17.

Ver. 7. *And the man like not to take his brother's wife*, &c.] The provision here made by this law, when this was the case, is such as did not take place before it became a law; for then Onan would have taken the advantage of it, and refused marrying his brother's wife, which 'tis plain was not agreeable to him, Gen. xxxviii. 9. as many do now on one account or another. Leo of Modena [l] says, " it was anciently " accounted the more laudable thing to *take* her, than " to *release* her; but now the corruption of the times, " and the hardness of men's hearts, are such, as that " they only look after worldly ends, either of riches, or " of the beauty of the woman; so that there are very " few that in this case will marry a brother's widow, " especially among the Dutch and Italian Jews, but " they always release her:" *then let his brother's wife go up to the gate*; to the gate of the city, where the judges sit for public affairs; to the gate of the sanhedrim, or court of judicature, as the Targum of Jonathan; and this affair was cognizable by the bench of three judges, and might be dispatched by them; for so it is said [m], " the plucking off the shoe, and the " refusal of marriage, are by three:" *i. e.* three judges, which was the lowest court of judicature with the Jews: *unto the elders, and say;* which according to the above Targum were to be five wise men, of which three were to be judges, and two witnesses; and she was to say in the Hebrew language, in which, according to the Misnah [n], she was to pronounce what follows: *my husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother;* that is, in a few words, he will not marry her.

Ver. 8. *Then the elders of his city shall call him*, &c.] Require him to come before them, and declare his resolution, and the reasons for it; recite this law to him, and explain the nature of it, and exhort him to comply with it, or shew reason why he does not, at least to have his final resolution upon it: *and speak unto him;* talk with him upon this subject, and give him their best advice; and what that was Maimonides [o] more particularly informs us; if it is good and advisable to marry, they advise him to marry; but if it is better advice to pluck off the shoe, they give it; as when she is young and he is old, or she is old and he young, they advise him to allow the shoe to be plucked off: *and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her;* if, after all the conversation, debate, and counsel between them, he is resolute, and abides by his first determination, that he will not marry her, then the following method was to be taken.

Ver. 9. *Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders*, &c.] The time and place being appointed the evening before by three Rabbins, and two witnesses, as Leo of Modena says [p]; of which she was apprized, and ordered to come fasting: *and loose his shoe from off his foot;* his right foot, which was thus done; " they bring him a lea- " ther shoe, which has a heel, but not sewed with linen " (linen thread), and he puts it on the right foot, and " binds the latchet on his foot, and stands, he and she, " in the court; he fixes his foot on the ground, and " she sits and stretches out her hand in the court, and " looses the latchet of his shoe from off his foot, and " pulls off his shoe, and casts it to the ground [q];" this he suffered to be done to shew that he gave up his right to her; and he was so used by way of reproach, to signify that he deserved not to be reckoned among freemen, but among servants and slaves, that went barefooted, having no shoes on: and in the mystical sense of it, as Ainsworth observes, it spiritually signified, that such as would not beget children unto Christ (or preach his Gospel for that purpose), it should be declared of them that their feet are not shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Christ, Eph. vi. 15. *and spit in his face;* in a way of contempt, as a token of shame and disgrace; but the Jewish writers generally interpret this in a softer manner, as if it was not in his face, but in his presence, upon the floor, and seen by the judges [r]: *and shall answer and say, so shall it be done unto the man that will not build up his brother's house;* that is, in this contemptuous and shameful manner shall he be used.

Ver. 10. *And his name shall be called in Israel*, &c.] Not his particular and personal name, but his family; for it seems that not only a mark of infamy was set upon him for refusing to marry his brother's widow, but upon his family also; *the house of him that hath his*

[l] Ut supra, sect. 3.
[m] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 1. sect. 3.
[n] Sotah, c. 7. sect. 2.
[o] Yebum Vechalitzah, c. 4. sect. 1.
[p] Ut supra, sect. 4.
[q] Maimon. ut supra, sect. 6.
[r] Ibid. sect. 7. Targum & Jarchi in loc.

shoe loosed; which, as Leo of Modena says [s], was repeated by her three times; and at every time the people with a loud voice answer and call him, one that had his shoe loosed; and then the Rabbin tells the man that he is at liberty now to marry whom he pleases; and if he desires a certificate from them of this setting free his kinswoman, they presently give him one; and she also had a writing given to her by the judges, certifying the same, that she was free also to marry another; of which the following is a short form or copy [t]. "In such or such a session (or court), " such an one, the daughter of such an one, plucked off " the shoe of such an one, the son of such an one, be- " fore us; she brought him before us, and she loosed " the shoe of his right foot, and spit before him spit- " tle, which was seen by us upon the ground; and " said, so shall it be done to the man that would not " build up his brother's house." A larger form may be seen in Maimonides [u], as well as a type and copy of the matrimonial contract. From this law an high-priest was free, Lev. xxi. 14. and so a king, according to the Jewish canon [w].

Ver. 11. *When men strive together, one with another,* &c.] Quarrel with one another, and come to blows, and strive for mastery, which shall beat, and be the best man: *and the wife of the one draweth near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him;* perceiving that his antagonist has more skill or strength, or both, for fighting, and is an overmatch for her husband, who is like to be much bruised and hurt; wherefore, to save him out of the hands of the smiter, she makes up to them to part them, or take her husband's side: *and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets;* or privy parts; in Hebrew his *shameful* parts [x], which through shame are hidden, and modesty forbids to express in proper terms; and such is the purity of the Hebrew language, that no obscene words are used in it; for which reason, among others, it is called the holy tongue. This immodest action was done partly out of affection to her husband, to oblige his antagonist to let go his hold of him; and partly out of malice and revenge to him, to spoil him, and make him unfit for generation, and therefore was to be severely punished, as follows.

Ver. 12. *Then thou shalt cut off her hand,* &c.] Which was to be done not by the man that strove with her husband, or by any by-stander, but by the civil magistrate or his order. This severity was used to deter women from such an immodest as well as injurious action, who on such an occasion are very passionate and inconsiderate. Our Lord is thought to refer to this law, Matt. v. 30. though the Jewish writers interpret this not of actual cutting off the hand, but of paying a valuable consideration, a price put upon it; so Jarchi; and Aben Ezra compares it with the law of retaliation, *eye for eye;* which they commonly understand of paying a price for the eye, tooth, *&c.* lost; and who adds, if she don't redeem her hand (*i. e.* by a price) it must be cut off: *thine eye shall not pity her;* on account of the tenderness of her sex, or because of the plausible excuse that might be made for her action, being done hastily and in a passion, and out of affection to her husband; but these considerations were to have no place with the magistrate, who was to order the punishment inflicted, either in the strict literal sense, or by paying a sum of money.

Ver. 13. *Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights,* &c.] Or, a *stone and a stone* [y]; it being usual, in those times and countries, to have their weights of stone, as it was formerly with us here; we still say, that such a commodity is worth so much *per stone*, a stone being of such a weight; now these were not to be different: *a great and a small;* great weights, to buy with them, and small weights, to sell with them, as the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it.

Ver. 14. *Thou shalt not have in thine house divers measures,* &c.] Or, *an ephah and an ephah;* which was one sort of measure in use with the Jews, and held above a bushel; and is put for all others, which should be alike, and not *a great and a small;* one to buy with, and another to sell by, as before observed; which would be to cheat both seller and buyer in their turns; see Amos viii. 5.

Ver. 15. But *thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have,* &c.] That is, full weights, and full measures; and such as are alike, and everywhere used, according to the standard of the country; see the note on Lev. xix. 36. *that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;* long life was always reckoned a blessing, and is frequently promised to obedience, and particularly long life in the land of Canaan; which was a most delightful and fruitful land, and which a man might wish to live long in; deceitful men are threatened with not living half their days, and such may they be said to be that use false weights and measures, Psal. lv. 23.

Ver. 16. *For all that do such things,* &c.] Keep different weights and measures, and make use of them to defraud their neighbours in buying and selling: *and all that do unrighteously;* what is not just and right between man and man, in any other instance whatever: are *an abomination unto the Lord thy God:* both they and their actions; he is a righteous God, and loves righteousness, and hates injustice of every kind.

Ver. 17. *Remember what Amalek did unto thee,* &c.] The Amalekites, how they came out against them, and fought with them at Rephidim, Exod. xvii. 8. *by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt;* which was an aggravation of their cruel and inhuman action, that they not only came out against them unprovoked, were the aggressors, and fell upon them as they were travelling on the road, but when they were just come out of Egypt, where they had been in hard bondage, and their spirits broken, and they not used to war; and so took them at all these disadvantages, a people that had not in the least injured them.

Ver. 18. *How he met thee by the way,* &c.] Not

[s] History, ut supra, sect. 5.
[t] T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 1.
[u] Hilchot Yebum Vechalitzah, c. 4. sect. 29.
[w] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 2.
[x] במבשיו verenda ejus, V. L. Paguinus, Montanus, Tigurine version; pudenda ejus, Piscator.
[y] אבן ואבן lapis & lapis, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator.

with necessary provisions, food and drink, which would have been but a piece of kindness and humanity to travellers; but met them sword in hand, in order to stop their journey, and make them captives, at least to harass and distress them: *and smote the hindmost of them;* came upon them in a sly cowardly manner, and attacked their rear: even *all that were feeble behind thee;* women and children, and such men as were weak, sickly, labouring under some disorder, and so lagged behind, and could not keep up with the rest; on these Amalek first fell, and began his attack here: *when thou wast faint and weary;* with travelling, and the more so for want of water, which was their case at Rephidim, when Amalek came out against them; which is another aggravation of their unkind usage of them they were not to forget: *and he feared not God;* who was then in the pillar of cloud and fire with Israel, which phenomenon Amalek might see, and yet did not fear; and who had done such wonders for Israel in Egypt, and had brought them from thence, and had drowned Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, of which doubtless Amalek had heard, and yet feared not the Lord, who had done such great things.

Ver. 19. *Therefore it shall be, when the Lord thy God hath given thee rest from all thine enemies round about,* &c.] Not only when they had subdued the Canaanites, and got possession of their land, but when they were clear and free from all their neighbouring nations, Moabites, Midianites, Edomites, Ammonites, and Philistines; wherefore it may be observed, that this did not take place, as not immediately after the conquest of Canaan, so neither in the times of the judges, when they were harassed frequently by their neighbours, and not until the times of Saul, the first king of Israel: *in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it;* the sense is, when they were in the full possession of the land given them by the Lord, as an inheritance to be enjoyed by them and theirs; and were at an entire rest from all enemies, and so had their hands at liberty to employ against Amalek: that *thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven:* that is, utterly destroy them, so that there should be none left of them any where, to put in mind that there ever were such a people on earth; men, women, children, cattle of all sorts, were to be destroyed, and nothing left that belonged unto them; that it might not be said this beast was Amalek's, as Jarchi, and to the same purpose Aben Ezra; see the order for this renewed, and the accomplishment of it, at least in part, 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3, &c. *thou shalt not forget it;* neither the unkindness of Amalek, nor this order to destroy him. The Targum of Jonathan adds, "and even in the days of the "King Messiah it shall not be forgotten."

CHAP. XXVI.

THIS chapter treats of the basket of first-fruits to be brought and presented to the Lord, and the confession to be made along with it, ver. 1—11. and of the declaration to be made on the third year, the year of tithing, and the prayer annexed to it, ver. 12—15. and of the covenant made in a solemn manner between God and the people of Israel, ver. 16—19.

Ver. 1. *And it shall be, when thou* art *come in unto the land,* &c.] The land of Canaan, which they were now on the borders of, and just entering into: *which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance;* which is often mentioned, to observe that it was not through their merits, but his gift, that they should enjoy the land; and the rather here to enforce the following law concerning the basket of first-fruits: *and possessest it, and dwellest therein;* not only had entered into it, but got the possession of it, and settled there. This shews, as Jarchi observes, that they were not bound to the first-fruits till they had subdued the land and divided it; not as soon as they were in it.

Ver. 2. *That thou shalt take of the first of all the fruit of the earth,* &c.] This oblation of first-fruits was different from the sheaf of the first-fruits brought at barley-harvest in the time of the passover, and from the two wave-loaves of wheaten flour, at wheat-harvest, at Pentecost; and from the cake of the first of their dough; see Lev. xxiii. 10, 17. Numb. xv. 20, 21. They were of one sort only, these of various kinds; though, as Jarchi observes, not all first-fruits, or the first of all sorts of fruits, were to be brought; for all were not bound to first-fruits, but the seven kinds only, called here the fruit of the earth, and are particularly mentioned in ch. viii. 8. and their manner of observing, selecting, and gathering their first-fruits, as the same writer notes, was this; "a man goes into "his field, and sees a fig forward, he binds a rush "about it for a sign, and says, lo, this is first-fruits: "and so, if he sees a bunch of grapes, or a pomegra-"nate, forwarder than the rest, he does the same," as is observed in the Misnah [z]: *which thou shalt bring of thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee;* and the land being given them, and such a fruitful one as it was, they needed not to grudge bringing the first-fruits of it to the Lord. The quantity they were to bring is not fixed; this was left to their generosity; but, according to tradition, they were to bring the 60th part; so says Maimonides [a], "the first-fruits have no "measure (no fixed measure) from the law; but from "the words of the wise men, a man ought to separate "one out of sixty:" *and shalt put it in a basket;* for the more convenient carriage of them, and for the more decent oblation and waving of them together. The rich brought their first-fruits in baskets of silver and of gold, the poor in wicker baskets of willows barked [b]. The first-fruits of the seven several kinds were all put together in one basket, not into separate ones, or into as many as there were kinds; but then, as the last-mentioned writer observes [c], "they did not

[z] Misn. Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 1.
[a] Maimon. Hilchot Biccurim, c. 2. sect. 17.
[b] Misn. Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 8.
[c] Hilchot Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 7.

"bring them mixed, but the barley (was put) beneath, "or lowermost, and the wheat over that; and the "olives above that, and the dates over them, and "the pomegranates over them, and the figs uppermost in the vessel; and there was some one thing "which separated between every kind, as leaves, "and the like; and they put about the figs clusters "of grapes without:" *and thou shalt go unto the place which the Lord thy God shall choose to place his name there:* which, as the event shewed, was the city of Jerusalem; hither from all parts of the country were the first-fruits to be brought. All which may teach us, that we are to honour God with the first-fruits of our increase; that we are to be thankful in every thing, and for every thing we have; and that our mercies should be acknowledged publicly in the place of public worship; and that all our sacrifices of praise should be offered in faith, which may be signified by the basket in which the first-fruits were brought, without which we cannot please God; and this being bore on the shoulder all the while, may denote reverence of God, and a sense of former state and condition, as this might put the Israelites in mind of their carrying loads in Egypt.

Ver. 3. *And thou shalt go unto the priest that shall be in those days*, &c.] Whose course and turn it would be to minister before the Lord; though, according to the Targum of Jonathan, it was the high-priest they were to apply to on this occasion; and so Aben Ezra observes, that this law is obligatory all the time there is an high-priest, as if it was not binding when there was none, and all depended on him; who in this case was typical of Christ our high-priest, to whom we must bring, and by him offer up, the sacrifice of praise, even the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to God for all his mercies: *and say unto him;* what follows, and the basket of first-fruits all the while on his shoulder[d], even if a king: *I profess this day;* it being done once in a year, and not twice, as Jarchi notes: *unto the Lord thy God;* directing his speech to the priest: *that I am come into the country which the Lord sware unto our fathers for to give us;* and not only come into it, but was in the possession of it, and in the enjoyment of the fruits of it; of which the basket of first-fruits he had brought on his shoulder was a token. The natural and moral use of these first-fruits to the Israelites, and the bringing of them, was hereby to own and acknowledge that God was the proprietor of the land of Canaan; that they had it by gift from him, and that they held it of him, the first-fruits being a sort of quit-rent they brought him; and that he was faithful to his oath and promise he had made to their fathers, and which they professed with great humility and thankfulness. The typical use of them was to direct to Christ himself, the first-fruits of them that sleep in him, the first-begotten from the dead, the pledge and earnest of the resurrection of his people; to the spirit of God and his grace, which are the earnest of glory; and to the first converts among Jews and Gentiles, in the first times of the Gospel; to Christians in general, who are the first-fruits of God and of the Lamb, and to their sacrifices of praise and thankfulness they are to offer up to God through Christ, which are acceptable to him through him; and whereby they glorify him as the author of all their mercies, to whom they are to bring their best, and in the first place; see 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. Rom. viii. 23. and xi. 16. and xvi. 5. Rev. xiv. 4. Heb. xiii. 15.

Ver. 4. *And the priest shall take the basket out of thine hand*, &c.] To wave it, as Jarchi says, putting his hand under the hand of the owner, and so waving it; and this being waved to and fro towards the several corners of the earth, was an acknowledgment of the Lord being the proprietor of it: *and set it down before the altar of the Lord thy God;* that it might have some appearance of a sacrifice, and be a fit emblem of the spiritual sacrifice of praise, which is accepted upon the altar Christ, which sanctifies every gift.

Ver. 5. *And thou shalt speak and say before the Lord thy God*, &c.] Speak with a loud voice, lifting up the voice, as Jarchi interprets it; or *answer*[e], to the question the priest will ask, saying, what is this thou hast brought? as Aben Ezra remarks; and this being said in the tabernacle, and before the priest of the Lord, and as in the presence of the Lord, is represented as said before him, which is as follows: *a Syrian ready to perish was my father;* meaning Jacob, who though born in Canaan, his mother was a Syrian, and his grandfather Abraham was of Chaldea, a part of Syria; and Jacob married two wives in Syria, and all his children were born there but Benjamin, and where he lived twenty years; and sometimes persons are denominated, as from the place of their birth, so from the place of their dwelling, as Christ was called a Nazarene from Nazareth, where he dwelt, though he was born at Bethlehem, Matt. ii. 23. and Jether, though an Israelite, as Aben Ezra observes, is called an Ishmaelite, perhaps because he dwelt some time among that people, 1 Chron. ii. 17. Now Jacob might be said to be ready to perish when he fled for his life from his brother Esau, and was poor and pennyless when he came to Laban; so the last-mentioned writer interprets this phrase; to which may be added, that when in his service he was exposed to cold and heat, and had his wages frequently changed, and afterwards, when obliged to flee from Laban, was pursued by him with an intention to do him mischief, had not the Lord prevented him. The reason of this part of the confession was to shew that it was not owing to the greatness of their ancestors from whence they sprung, whose condition was mean, but to the gift of God, and his goodness, that they enjoyed the land of Canaan. So every sensible soul, when he brings his sacrifice of praise to God for his mercies, especially spiritual ones, frankly acknowledges his lost perishing condition by nature, of which he is sensible; and that in order to magnify the riches of the grace of God in his salvation, to endear Christ as a Saviour the more, and to keep humble, and make thankful: *and he went down into Egypt;* not directly, but some years after his former afflicted circumstances; so the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, "after these things he went

[d] Misn. Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 4, 6. Maimon. Biccurim, c. 3. sect. 12.

[e] וענית & respondebis, Montanus, Vatablus; & respondens dices, Munster.

"down into Egypt;" after he had been in perishing circumstances in Syria, and when he was sore pressed with famine in Canaan: *and sojourned there with a few*: with 70 souls, as Jarchi: *and became there a great nation, mighty and populous*; insomuch that the king of Egypt was jealous of them, lest through their strength and numbers they should get away from them, when any favourable incident happened; they being when they came out from thence 600,000 men able to bear arms, besides women and children.

Ver. 6. *And the Egyptians evil-entreated us*, &c.] Ordered their male children to be killed by the midwives, and by another edict to be drowned by the people: *and afflicted us*; by setting task-masters over them, who put heavy burdens upon them: *and laid upon us hard bondage*; in mortar and brick, and all manner of field-service, in which they made them serve with rigour, and whereby their lives were made bitter; see Exod. i. 9—22.

Ver. 7. *And when we cried unto the Lord our God*, &c.] As they did by reason of their hard bondage, Exod. ii. 23. *and the Lord heard our voice, and looked upon our affliction, and our labour, and our oppression*: with a look of pity and compassion, heard their cries, answered their petitions, and sent them a deliverer, Exod. ii. 25. and iii. 7, 8.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt*, &c.] After some time: *with a mighty hand and with an out-stretched arm*: by his almighty power, of which full proof was given by what he then did, Deut. v. 15. *and with great terribleness*: to Pharaoh and his people, through the plagues that were inflicted on them, especially the last, the slaying of their first-born; see Deut. iv. 34. *and with signs and with wonders*; wrought by the hands of Moses and Aaron, meaning the ten plagues, often so called.

Ver. 9. *And he hath brought us unto this place*, &c.] After forty years travel through the wilderness: *and hath given us this land, a land that floweth with milk and honey*; an usual description of the land of Canaan, because of the great fertility of it, and the abundance of good things in it; see Exod. iii. 8.

Ver. 10. *And now, behold, I have brought the first-fruits of the land, which thou, O Lord, hast given me*, &c.] Directing his speech not to the priest, but to the Lord himself; owning that the part of the land he had, and the fruits he enjoyed, were the gifts of God to him, and therefore, as in gratitude bound, brought him the first-fruits: *and thou shalt set it before the Lord thy God*; these are the words of Moses, or of the law, directing the man what further he had to do; and this, as Jarchi thinks, shews that he took it after the priest waved it, and laid hold on it with his hand whilst he was reading (his confession), turning and waving: *and worship before the Lord thy God*; bow before him in a reverend and humble manner, sensible of his obligations to him, and dependence on him.

Ver. 11. *And thou shalt rejoice in every good thing*, &c.] In all the blessings of goodness and mercies of life, which God in his kind providence had favoured them with: *which the Lord thy God hath given unto thee, and unto thine house*; to them and their families, by which they were comfortably provided for: *thou and the Levite, and the stranger that is among you*: by which it seems that not only a basket of first-fruits was brought and presented to the Lord, which is the perquisite of the priest, but there were others also brought, or bought with their money at Jerusalem, and a sort of a feast kept, which the Levite, and stranger or proselyte, partook of along with the owner; see ch. xii. 11, 12. and xvi. 10, 11. though Jarchi understands it of the Levite and stranger being obliged to bring the first-fruits: the Levite, he says, is bound to the first-fruits of the plants in the midst of his cities, though he had no part in the division of the land; and the same writer says, the stranger brings the first-fruits, but does not proclaim, because he can't say, *which he sware to our fathers*, ver. 3. but it is said[f], if his mother was an Israelitess he might proclaim; yea, Maimonides[g] says, on account of what is said of Abraham, Gen. xvii. 5. who is the father of the whole world; see Rom. iv. 12, 13. because mention is made of rejoicing; hence it is concluded, as Jarchi says, that the proclamation of the first-fruits was only made in the time of joy, from Pentecost unto the feast that a man gathers in his increase, and his fruits, and his wine, and his oil; though from that feast and onward he may bring, but not proclaim; to the same purpose, says the Misnah[h], from Pentecost to the feast of tabernacles a man may bring the first-fruits, and proclaim; and even from the feast of tabernacles to the dedication of the temple, he may bring, but not proclaim; the reason given in Siphri[i] is, because proclamation is only to be performed in time of joy—and the joy of the year is finished at the end of the feast of tabernacles, as in Lev. xxv. 40.

Ver. 12. *When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase*, &c.] Which, according to Maimonides[k], is to be understood of the feast, in which all tithes are finished, which is the feast of the passover: *the third year*, which is *the year of tithing*; that is, the third from every seventh, when the land lay untilled. Every year a tithe was paid to the Levites; and besides that a second tithe, which was carried to Jerusalem and eaten there; and every third year it was eaten at home, in their towns and cities in the country instead of it, with the Levite, poor and stranger, and was called the poor's tithe; and hence the Targum of Jonathan here calls this year the year of the poor's tithe, as was also the sixth year, and was reckoned not complete till the passover in the following year, as the Jewish writers[l] say: *and hath given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow*; that is, the poor's tithe of the third year, which these were to eat of with the owner, ch. xiv. 28, 29. though the Jews commonly distinguish the Levite from the rest, and suppose that both first and second tithes are meant, the one to be given to the former, and the other to the latter; so the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi: *that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled*; for this was a considerable entertainment, a sort of a feast, a

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[f] Misn. Biccurim, c. 1. sect. 4.
[g] Maimon. Hilchot Biccurim, c. 4. sect. 3.
[h] Ut supra, sect. 6.
[i] Apud Maimon. Hilchot Biccurim, c. 4. sect. 6.
[k] In Misn. Maaser Sheni, c. 5. sect. 6.
[l] Misn. ib. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

full meal, however; hence it is concluded, as Jarchi says, that they did not give less of corn to a poor man than half a kab of wheat, which was above three pints.

Ver. 13. *Then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, &c.*] Make the following declaration as in his presence; for this was not made in the tabernacle or temple at Jerusalem, since the tithe was to be eaten with the poor in the gates of the owner, as in the preceding verse: *I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house;* which Aben Ezra and Onkelos interpret of the tithe; but it seems, besides that, to take in every thing devoted to all holy uses, be they what they will, which were at this time to be separated from a man's own common goods, and applied to the purposes for which they were designed and devoted, and particularly what was to be given to the poor: *and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me;* giving to each according as the law directs; which the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi interpret as before, giving the first tithe to the Levites, and the second tithe to the rest: *I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten* them: neither broken them wilfully, nor omitted them through carelessness, negligence, and forgetfulness, but was mindful to observe them punctually and exactly.

Ver. 14. *I have not eaten thereof in my mourning, &c.*] When in grief and sorrow on account of any afflictive circumstance, for these were to be eaten with joy, ver. 11. and ch. xvi. 11. and especially of the loss of relations by death, when holy things were not to be eaten by such persons; see Lev. x. 19. and particularly tithes, though it is said [x], "what is doubtful of tithing "(whether it has been tithed or no) might be eaten "by a mourner;" and a man was reckoned such an one until his dead was buried. So Maimonides [y] observes, "a mourner may not eat holy things, as it is "written Deut. xxvi. 14. he is one whose relation is "dead, when he is obliged to mourn; for he is called "by the law a mourner as long as the dead lies upon "the face of the earth (aboveground), or as long as he "is not yet buried he is called a mourner; and so "likewise on the day of burial:" *neither have I taken away* ought *thereof for any unclean* use; or common use, or any other use than it was designed for, and devoted to; or for any unclean person, who by the law might not eat thereof; or, as Jarchi interprets it, that he had not removed it, or taken it away from being eaten, on account of any unclean person, because I am unclean and he pure, or he pure and I unclean: *nor given ought thereof for the dead:* for the necessities of the dead, as Aben Ezra; more particularly Jarchi, to make for him a coffin and grave-clothes; and so the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of grave-clothes for the dead; though that of Jerusalem of clothes for those that are polluted by the dead. It may have respect also to the parentalia, or funeral-feasts made at the interment of the dead; though Aben Ezra says, there are some that say it was for idolatry, and so the person here speaking denies that he had made use of any of the holy things in honour of idols, of dead men deified; and some are of opinion that all the above things may have some respect to idolatrous practices [z]: but *I have hearkened to the voice of the Lord my God, and have done according to all that thou hast commanded me:* observed his word, and kept close to it, and not swerved from it, but acted according to it in all things before referred to.

Ver. 15. *Look down from thy holy habitation, from heaven, &c.*] This is a prayer of the person that makes the above declaration annexed to it, desiring that God would vouchsafe to look with an eye of love, complacency, and delight, upon him and upon all his people, from heaven his holy habitation, though they were on earth, and unholy persons in themselves, and especially if compared with him; see Isa. lvii. 15. and lxiii. 15. *and bless thy people Israel:* with blessings temporal and spiritual: *and the land which thou hast given us;* with fertility and plenty of all good things, that it might be *as thou swarest to our fathers, a land flowing with milk and honey;* see ver. 9.

Ver. 16. *This day the Lord thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments, &c.*] These are the words of Moses, as Aben Ezra rightly observes, and refer not only to the laws last mentioned, but to all others which he had repeated, or the Lord by him had ordered to be observed, recorded in this book: and though it is very probable Moses had been several days repeating former laws, and acquainting them with new ones; yet this being the last day, in which the whole account was finished, they are said to be commanded that day, and though commanded that day were to be observed and done every day; for, as Jarchi says, every day was to be considered and reckoned as new, as if on that day they were commanded them: *thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thy heart, and with all thy soul;* cordially, readily, willingly, sincerely, constantly, and to the utmost of their abilities.

Ver. 17. *Thou hast avouched the Lord this day to be thy God, &c.*] Said, affirmed, protested, and in the most solemn manner declared, that the Lord was their God, and him only; and that they would have no other God, nor worship, serve, or obey any other. The Lord is the God of all mankind, as he is the Creator and Preserver of them, and was of the people of Israel in a peculiar manner, they being chosen, redeemed, and privileged by him above all others; and especially is of his elect in Christ among all nations, whom he has loved and set apart for himself, and determined to save; whom he has adopted and regenerated; he provides for them, protects and preserves them, gives them grace here and glory hereafter: he is their God in Christ, and by virtue of the covenant of his grace made with them in him; and is known by them to be so in effectual vocation by the application of covenant-blessings to them; and which is certified to them by the spirit of God, upon which they claim their interest in him, and make profession of him as their God: *and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice;* that is, this was then their resolution and deter-

[x] Misn. Demai, c. 1. sect. 2.
[y] Maimon. in Misn. Pesachim, c. 8. sect. 6.

[z] Vid. Patrick in loc.

mination, their protestation and declaration, to walk in all the ways of God, both in private and in public, he directed unto; and to observe all his laws, ceremonial, moral, and judicial, which he had given them as the rule of their walk and behaviour; and to regard whatsoever he should reveal by his prophets and ministers as his will; and a view of covenant-interest in God lays all good men under the strongest obligation in the strength of divine grace to attend to his will; nor can there be a greater motive to them than covenant-love, grace, and mercy.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people*, &c.] Affirmed and declared them to be his special people, above all people on the face of the earth, and that they were looked upon and considered by him as his jewels, his peculiar treasure: *as he hath promised thee:* on condition of their obedience to him, as he did in Exod. xix. 5. *and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments;* at the same time declared this as his will, that they should observe all his precepts, to which they were laid under obligation by the special favour and peculiar privileges he bestowed upon them, Deut. vii. 6, 7. The Targums interpret both these verses of the people of Israel choosing and making the Lord their King, and of his being made King over them; and so it respects their peculiar form of civil government, being a theocracy. The Lord's people in Christ are a peculiar people; they are distinct from all people, and are peculiarly regarded by him; they are the objects of his peculiar love, and receive peculiar favours from him; and whom having chosen and redeemed, he calls by his special grace, and witnesses their special relation to him by his spirit; which grace obliges and excites them to a cheerful obedience to his commands.

Ver. 19. *To make thee high above all nations*, &c.] None of them having the Lord to be their God and King in such sense as Israel, nor they his people in such a peculiar sense as they were; nor having such laws and statutes as he had given to them; these things gave them a superiority over all other nations: *which he hath made, in praise, and in name, and in honour;* that is, which nations he made praiseworthy, famous, and honourable, for their extent, wealth, riches, and number; and yet on the above accounts Israel was advanced higher than they: *and that thou mayest be an holy people unto the Lord thy God, as he hath spoken;* the end of the Lord in being their God, and making them his people, was not only to make them high above all others, but to make them more holy than others; to set them apart for himself, as a people sacred to his worship and service, as he had both determined and declared, ch. vii. 6, 7.

CHAP. XXVII.

IN this chapter the people of Israel are ordered to write the law on plastered stones, and set them on Mount Ebal, ver. 1—4. where they are bid to erect an altar, and offer sacrifices on it, ver. 5—8. and are charged by Moses and the priests to obey the Lord, and keep his commandments, ver. 9, 10. and a direction is given to the several tribes which should stand and bless, and which curse, and where, ver. 11, 12, 13. and the curses which the Levites should pronounce with a loud voice, and the people should say *Amen* to, are recited, ver. 14—25. and the whole is concluded with a curse on all who in general do not perform the whole law, ver. 26.

Ver. 1. *And Moses, with the elders of Israel, commanded the people, saying*, &c.] The seventy elders, at the head of whom was Moses, which made the great sanhedrim, or council of the nation; Moses having recited all the laws of God to the people, these joined with him in an exhortation to them to observe and obey them; *keep all the commandments which I command you this day;* not in his own name, as being the supreme legislator, but in the name of the Lord, whom they had avouched to be their God and King, from whom he had received them.

Ver. 2. *And it shall be, on the day when you shall pass over Jordan*, &c.] Not the precise day exactly, but about that time, a little after they passed that river, as soon as they conveniently could; for it was not till after Ai was destroyed that the following order was put in execution; indeed as soon as they passed over Jordan, they were ordered to take twelve stones, and did; but then they were set up in a different place, and for a different purpose; see Josh. iv. 3, 8, 9. and viii. 31. *unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, that thou shalt set thee up great stones;* not in Jordan, as Jarchi, but on Mount Ebal, ver. 4. nor had the stones set up in Jordan any such inscription as what is here ordered to be set on these: *and plaster them with plaster:* that so words might be written upon them, and be more conspicuous, and more easily read.

Ver. 3. *And thou shalt write upon them all the words of this law*, &c.] Not the whole book of Deuteronomy, as some think, at least not the historical part of it, only what concerns the laws of God; and it may be only a summary or abstract of them, and perhaps only the ten commandments. Josephus [q] is of opinion that the blessings and the curses after recited were what were written on them: *when thou art passed over;* that is, the river Jordan: *that thou mayest go in unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, a land flowing with milk and honey;* this account of the land of Canaan is so frequently observed, to imprint upon their minds a sense of the great goodness of God in giving them such a fruitful country, and to point out to them the obligation they lay under to observe the laws of God ordered to be written on plastered stones, as soon as they came into it: *as the Lord God of thy fathers hath promised thee;* Exod. iii. 8.

[q] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 44.

Ver. 4. *And therefore it shall be, when ye be gone over Jordan,* &c.] Some time after they had passed that river: *that ye shall set up these stones, which I command you this day, in Mount Ebal;* a mountain near Shechem in Samaria, and was, as Benjamin of Tudela says[r], dry as stones and rocks itself, and perhaps had its name, as some think[s], from the root in the Arabic language which signifies to strip a tree of its leaves, and a derivative from it, white stones and a mountain in which such are found. Hither the stones commanded to be set up were to be brought, and fixed here; from whence it is not certain; it may be from some part of the mountain. Here the Samaritan version has Gerizzim instead of Ebal, which is generally thought to be a wilful corruption of the Samaritans, in favour of their temple built at Gerizzim: *and thou shalt plaster them with plaster;* as before directed, ver. 2.

Ver. 5. *And there shalt thou build an altar to the Lord thy God,* &c.] On the same mountian, though not of the same stones. Jarchi's note is, "after that "(the setting up of the plastered stones) thou shalt "bring from thence (from Jordan) others, and build "of them an altar on Mount Ebal;" but Josephus[t] places this altar not on Mount Ebal, but between that and Gerizzim. This altar, he says, was ordered to be built towards the rising sun, not far from the city of Shechem, between two mountains, Gerizzim and Ebal; but the text is express, that it was to be built where the stones were set up, which was on Mount Ebal, and there it was built, Josh. viii. 30. *an altar of stones;* of whole stones, as in the next verse, not broken, nor hewed, but rough as they were when taken out of the quarry: *thou shalt not lift up* any *iron* tool *upon them;* to hew them, and make them smooth; see the note on Exod. xx. 25.

Ver. 6. *Thou shalt build the altar of the Lord thy God of whole stones,* &c.] And of such Joshua did build it, Josh. viii. 31. *and thou shalt offer burnt-offerings thereon unto the Lord thy God;* and very likely sin-offerings too; for these frequently went together, the one to make atonement for sin, and the other as a gift, and by way of thankfulness for the acceptance of the former; and both typical of Christ, the true sacrifice, and the antitype of all the legal sacrifices.

Ver. 7. *And thou shalt offer peace-offerings,* &c.] Part of which belonged to God, which was burnt on the altar, and another part to the priest that offered them; and the rest to the owner that brought them, which he eat of with his friends; so it follows: *and shalt eat there, and rejoice before the Lord thy God;* now this altar, where these sacrifices were offered, was on the very spot where the stones were on which the law was written; and may point at the gracious provision God has made for the redemption of his people from the curse of it by Christ, who became a substitute for them in their law-place and stead. The altar being of rough unhewn stones was a type of him in his human nature, who is the stone in the vision cut out of the mountain without hands; and being unpolished may denote the meanness of his outward appearance, on account of which he was rejected by the Jewish builders; and no iron tool being to be lifted up on them, may signify that nothing of man's is to be added to the sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ, and salvation by him; and this being in Ebal, where the curses were pronounced, shews that Christ, by the offering up of himself for the sins of his people, has made atonement for them, and thereby has delivered them from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them; all which is matter of joy and gladness to them.

Ver. 8. *And thou shalt write upon the stones all the words of this law,* &c.] Not upon the stones of the altar, but upon the first stones brought to Mount Ebal, and set up there before, and on which the words were inscribed before the altar was erected; though according to the Misnah[u] the altar was built of these stones, and on that the law written; for it is said, "they shall bring the stones (ver. 2, 4.) and build the "altar, and plaster it with plaster, and write upon it "all the words of the law:" with which Josephus agrees, who says[w], "that when Moses was about to "die, he ordered the blessings and the curses to be "written on the altar, on both sides of it:" could this be made clearly to appear, it would be easy to observe the accomplishment of it in Christ, who was made under the law, became subject to it, had it written on his heart, obeyed the precepts and bore the penalty of it, and had all the curses of it laid on him, and thereby redeemed his people from them. However, be it on which it may that the words of the law were written, they were written *very plainly;* so that they might be easily read; in 70 languages, according to the Jewish writers; which they say was done, that whoever would learn the law might learn it, and so the Gentiles had no excuse[x]; for it is a prevailing notion with them, that there were so many nations and languages. The law being written on stones denotes the duration of it, which continued not only during the times of the Old-Testament dispensation, and to the times of John, and had its fulfilment in Christ, but still continues; for though Christ has redeemed his people from the curse and condemnation of it, yet it is in his hands as a rule of direction to them as to their walk and conversation: nor is it made void by any doctrine of the Gospel, and nothing more strongly enforces obedience to it than the Gospel. The moral law is immutable, invariable, and eternal in its nature, and in the matter of it. This may also point at the hardness of men's hearts, their non-subjection to the law, and disobedience of it; and these stones being covered with plaster may be an emblem of formalists and hypocrites, who are like whited walls and sepulchres, have a form of the law in their heads, but not in their hearts; are Jews outwardly, but not inwardly; externally righteous before men, as if they were strict observers of the law, but internally very wicked; and have hard, blind, and impenitent hearts, under the cover of the law, and a profession of strict regard to it; and this being done on the same mount where the

[r] Itinerar. p. 40.
[s] Reland. Dissert. 3. de Monte Gerizzim, p. 128. See Castel. Lexic. Heptaglott. col. 2642.
[t] Ut supra.

[u] Sotah, c. 7. sect. 5.
[w] Ut supra.
[x] Sotah, ib. & Bartenora in ib. Targum Jon. & Jerus. & Jarchi in loc.

curses were pronounced, shews that they were on account of the breach of this law.

Ver. 9. *And Moses and the priests the Levites spake unto all Israel*, &c.] The priests who were Levites, as all the priests that were lawful ones were; and there were none but such at this time, who were Eleazar and Ithamar, and their sons; these joined with Moses in the following exhortations to the people of Israel, as being particularly concerned in instructing them in the knowledge of the laws, and in seeing them put in execution: *saying, take heed, and hearken, O Israel;* to what was about to be said unto them, as well as to what had been said: *this day thou art become the people of the Lord thy God;* they were his people before; he had chosen them to be his special people above all others; he had redeemed them out of Egypt; he had led them through the wilderness, and provided for them and protected them there, and had given them laws and statutes to observe to walk in; all which shewed them to be his peculiar people: but now in a very formal and solemn manner they were avouched and declared by him to be his people, and they had solemnly avouched and declared that he was their God and King; and every day, according to Jarchi, was to be considered as this day, as if it was the day of entering into covenant with him.

Ver. 10. *Thou shalt therefore obey the voice of the Lord thy God*, &c.] In whatsoever he directs in his word, and by his prophets, and especially by his Son, eminently called the Word of the Lord: *and do his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day:* see the note on ver. 1.

Ver. 11. *And Moses charged the people the same day*, &c.] That he gave the above orders to set up stones, and plaster them, and write the law on them, and build an altar in the same place, and offer sacrifices when come into the land of Canaan: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 12. *These shall stand upon Mount Gerizzim to bless the people, when ye are come over Jordan*, &c.] Which was a mountain in Samaria opposite to Mount Ebal, a valley of a furlong broad lay between them[y]; and, according to Hillerus[z], had its name from being broken off from that, they being, as it should seem, originally one mountain, and now two tops of the same; so Burchard; but others think it signifies the mountain of the mowers or cutters down[a]; that is, of grass or corn, being a very fruitful one; and Benjamin of Tudela says[b], that in his time, on Mount Gerizzim were fountains and orchards; and being such a fertile mountain, it was very proper to bless upon. Mr. Maundrel[c], a late traveller in those parts, says, "though "neither of the mountains have much to boast of as to "their pleasantness, yet as one passes between them, "Gerizzim seems to discover a somewhat more verdant "fruitful aspect than Ebal; the reason of which may "be, because fronting towards the north it is sheltered "from the heat of the sun by its own shade; whereas "Ebal looking southward, and receiving the sun that "comes directly upon it, must by consequence be rendered more scorched and unfruitful." Josephus[d] says, that Gerizzim was on the right hand, and Ebal on the left; which may serve to strengthen the observation of Ainsworth, in allusion hereunto, that in the last judgment those on the right hand will be pronounced blessed, and those on the left hand cursed: *Simeon, and Levi, and Judah, and Issachar, and Joseph, and Benjamin;* these appointed for blessing were children of the mistress, or free woman, as Aben Ezra and many others have observed; the four first were the sons of Leah, and the two last the sons of Rachel, and therefore employed in the most honourable and desirable service: and who so proper to pronounce or receive the blessing as the children of the free woman, of Jerusalem above, which is free, the mother of us all that are born again, and are made free by the son of God, and are free indeed, and are entitled to all the blessings of grace and glory?

Ver. 13. *And these shall stand upon Mount Ebal to curse*, &c.] Which was dry and rocky, barren and unfruitful, and like the earth, that bears briers and thorns, is rejected and nigh unto cursing, and so a proper place to curse, and a fit emblem of those to be cursed; see Heb. vi. 8. *Reuben, Gad, and Asher, and Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali:* four of these appointed for cursing were the children of the handmaids, Gad, Asher, Dan, and Naphtali; and since two were wanting, as Aben Ezra observes, and the sons of Leah were many, the oldest and the youngest were taken; Reuben, who had defiled his father's bed, and exposed himself to the curse of the law, and Zebulun, the last and youngest of Leah's sons; see Gal. iii. 10. and iv. 24, 30.

Ver. 14. *And the Levites shall speak, and say unto all the men of Israel*, &c.] Rather, *answer*[e] *and say;* not the whole tribe of Levi, for that stood on Mount Gerizzim to bless, ver. 12. but the priests of that tribe who were placed in the valley, between the two mountains, and pronounced both the blessings and the curses in the hearing of all the tribes of Israel, to which they were to answer *Amen:* and that they might plainly hear, they expressed their words *with a loud voice*, clearly and distinctly, as follow.

Ver. 15. *Cursed be the man that maketh any graven or molten image*, &c.] The blessings and the form of them are not recorded, because they were not to be had from the law, and through obedience to it; and therefore there is a profound silence about them, to put men upon seeking for them elsewhere, and which are only to be had in Christ, especially spiritual ones; but we may suppose they were delivered in the same form, and respecting the same things as the curses, only just the reverse of them; as, *blessed is the man that maketh not any graven image*, &c. The order of both is given in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, as in ch. xi. 29. see the note there. This curse respects the breach of the first table of the law, and every thing included in it relating to the nature and being of God, the worship of him, and the honour of his name; to do any thing contrary to which, particularly to make an image, whether graven or molten, to

[y] Vid. Maundrel's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 59, 62.
[z] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 168.
[a] Reland. Dissert. de Monte Gerizzim, p. 128.
[b] Itinerar. p. 40.
[c] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 61. Edit. 7.
[d] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 44.
[e] ענו respondebunt, Montanus

worship, is *an abomination to the Lord*; and therefore subjects a man to the curse of his law, it being *the work of the hands of the craftsman*; and therefore it must be a most stupid thing to ascribe deity to it, and worship it as such: *and putteth it in a secret place*: though it is not set in a place of public worship, or in the house, so as to be seen by every one; but in some retired place, in a secret chamber, and there worshipped, or kept to look at with pleasure; which would be a temptation, and lead on to idolatry, and therefore is forbidden, and to be guarded against; now one that committed idolatry, or any thing like it, in the most secret manner, was liable to this curse; for the omniscient God, the legislator, knows what is done in the most private manner, and will resent and revenge every affront and injury to his honour and glory. And Aben Ezra observes, that all that follow respect things done in a secret way, and which were not cognizable by the civil magistrate, and therefore to deter persons from them these curses were pronounced: *and all the people shall answer and say Amen*; even those on the one mountain as on the other, thereby approving of, and assenting to, the justice of the sentence pronounced.

Ver. 16. *Cursed be he that setteth light by his father, or his mother, &c.*] That secretly despises them in his heart, and by looks and gestures mocks at them in a private manner, unseen by others, Prov. xxx. 17. for if he publicly cursed them, that was cognizable by the civil magistrate, and he was to be put to death, Lev. xx. 9. This follows next, as in the order of the ten commands, to that which respects the fear and worship of God; honouring parents being next to the glorifying of God, the father of all: *and all the people shall say Amen*; applaud the righteous sentence, saying, so let it be.

Ver. 17. *Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's land-mark, &c.*] Removes it backward, and steals ground, as Jarchi explains it; this is commonly done secretly; see ch. xix. 14. *and all the people shall say Amen*: see the notes on the two preceding verses.

Ver. 18. *Cursed be he that maketh the blind to wander out of the way, &c.*] By directing him wrong knowingly, or laying a stumbling-block in his way, Lev. xix. 14. The Targum of Jonathan is, "that "maketh a traveller wander out of the way, who is "like a blind man;" who knows his way no more than a blind man does. Jarchi interprets it, "that blinds "in any thing, and gives evil counsel;" which leads men to take wrong steps, whether in things civil, or moral, or religious; all which are usually done privately: *and all the people shall say Amen*; see the notes on ver. 15, 16.

Ver. 19. *Cursed be he that perverteth the judgment of the stranger, fatherless, and widow, &c.*] Who have none to assist them, and take their part, and therefore judges may be tempted to do an unjust thing; but God is the patron of them, and takes notice of every injury done them, and is the avenger of all such: *and all the people shall say Amen*; see as before.

Ver. 20. *Cursed be he that lieth with his father's wife, &c.*] As Reuben did, and which is forbidden Lev. xviii. 8. *because he uncovereth his father's skirt*; see ch. xxii. 30. *and all the people shall say Amen*; the tribe of Reuben said this as well as the rest.

Ver. 21. *Cursed be he that lieth with any manner of beast, &c.*] See Lev. xviii. 23. *and all the people shall say Amen*; as being shocking and abhorrent to human nature.

Ver. 22. *Cursed be he that lieth with his sister, &c.*] Which is forbid, Lev. xviii. 9. *the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother*; whether his sister by father or mother's side: *and all the people shall say Amen*; detesting such uncleanness.

Ver. 23. *Cursed be he that lieth with his mother-in-law, &c.*] See Lev. xviii. 7, 8. All these incestuous or brutal copulations may well be supposed to be done in secret: *and all the people shall say Amen*; as abhorring such incest.

Ver. 24. *Cursed be he that smiteth his neighbour secretly, &c.*] And kills him, and the murder is not known; the curse of God follows such, and overtakes them sooner or later. Some interpret this of smiting with the tongue, of secret backbiting and slander; so the Targum of Jonathan, "that smiteth with the third "tongue;" or false accusation: *and all the people shall say Amen*: as disapproving of and condemning such a practice, even slander, and especially murder.

Ver. 25. *Cursed be he that taketh reward to slay an innocent person, &c.*] As an assassin, to murder him privately; or as a judge, that takes a bribe to condemn to death an innocent person: so Aben Ezra observes, that according to the sense of some a judge is meant; but, says he, in my opinion a false witness; one that swears a man's life away for the sake of a reward given him: *and all the people shall say Amen*; at so detestable a crime.

Ver. 26. *Cursed* be he *that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them, &c.*] That is, who does not perfectly perform all that the law requires, and continues to do so; for the law requires obedience, and that perfect and constant, and in failure thereof curses, in proof of which the apostle produces this passage, Gal. iii. 10. see the note there, for the reconciliation of these Scriptures, as to what seeming difference there is between them.

CHAP. XXVIII.

In this chapter Moses enlarges on the blessings and the curses which belong, the one to the doers, the other to the transgressors of the law; the blessings, ver. 1—14. the curses, some of which concern individual persons, others the whole nation and body of people, and that both under the former and present dispensations, and which had their fulfilment in their former captivities, and more especially in their present dispersion, v. 15—68.

Ver. 1. *And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, &c.*] In his law, and by his prophets: *to observe and to do all*

his commandments, which I command thee this day; for without observing them to do them, hearing them would be to little purpose, and they were all of them to be observed and done, the lesser and weightier matters of the law as they were commanded by Moses in the name of the Lord, and as they would be taught, explained, and enforced by the prophets: *that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth*: as they were in the times of David and Solomon; see the note on ch. xxvi. 19.

Ver. 2. *And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee*, &c.] After mentioned, which should come upon them from God from heaven, by the direction of his providence, and that freely and plentifully, and beyond their expectations and deserts, and continue with them: *if thou shalt hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God*: obedience to the law being the condition of their coming and continuance; for only temporal blessings in the land of Canaan are here intended, as follow.

Ver. 3. *Blessed* shalt *thou* be *in the city*, &c.] Not only in the city of Jerusalem, where the temple would be built, and there be blessed with the service, worship, and ordinances of God, but in all other cities of the land; where they should dwell in fine, large, and spacious houses, and their cities should be walled and fenced, and be very populous; yet should enjoy health, and have plenty of all sorts of provisions brought unto them, as well as prosper in all kinds of merchandise there, as Aben Ezra notes: *and blessed* shalt *thou be in the field*: in the country-villages, and in all rural employments, in sowing and planting, as the same writer observes; in all kinds of husbandry, in the culture of the fields for corn, and of vineyards and oliveyards; all should prosper and succeed, and bring forth fruit abundantly.

Ver. 4. *Blessed shall be the fruit of thy body*, &c.] Their children, of which they should have many, and these live; be healthful, thrive, and arrive to manhood, and increase and perpetuate their families. Grotius thinks this was eminently fulfilled in Mary, the mother of our Lord; see Luke i. 42. *and the fruit of thy ground*: of their gardens, orchards, and fields; the grass for the cattle, and the wheat, barley, vines, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates for the use of men: *and the fruit of thy cattle*: which being distinguished from oxen and sheep in the following clause, must be understood of camels and asses, which were used for the carriage both of persons and burdens, and were very serviceable, and were a considerable part of their substance in those countries; see Job i. 3. *the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep*: of their cows and oxen, and of their sheep and goats, which were very increasing creatures, and in the increase of which much of their outward happiness lay; see Psal. cxliv. 13, 14.

Ver. 5. *Blessed* shall be *thy basket*, &c.] Which the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem restrain to the basket of first-fruits, and the cake of the first of their dough; but it intends any and every vessel in which they put their provisions for present use, and that that should never be empty of them, and that they should always have a sufficiency: *and thy store*: what remained, and was laid up in their barns, cellars, and storehouses, for future use, or in proper places for seed.

Ver. 6. *Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out.*] In all their business and employments of life, whether within doors or without; in the administration of every office, whether more public or private; and in all their journeys going out and coming home; and particularly when they went out to war, and returned, all should be attended with success.

Ver. 7. *The Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee to be smitten before thy face*, &c.] As the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, Edomites, and Ammonites were, especially in the times of David: *they shall come out against thee one way*: in a body, all together, in large numbers, marching in great order, to give them battle: *and flee before thee seven ways*; be entirely routed, and flee some one way, and some another, even every way they could take to make their escape. The phrase is expressive of an entire victory, and of a complete rout and dispersion of an enemy.

Ver. 8. *The Lord shall command the blessing upon thee in thy storehouses*, &c.] Barns, granaries, and cellars, where their corn, wine, and oil, were laid up; by preserving the corn from being devoured by vermin, and the casks of wine and oil from bursting and running out: *and in all thou settest thine hand unto*: in all their manufactures, occupations, and trades, in which they were employed, and in the culture of their vines, olives, and other fruit-trees: *and he shall bless thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee*; with health and long life in it, and with an abundance of all good things, it being a land flowing with milk and honey.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord shall establish thee an holy people unto himself*, &c.] Having separated them from all others, for his service, honour, and glory, should continue them as such, and settle them in the land, and confirm all their privileges, natural, civil, and religious. The Targum of Jonathan is, "the Word of "the Lord shall establish thee, *&c.*" he that brought them out of Egypt, through the Red sea and wilderness, to the land of Canaan: *as he hath sworn unto thee*; and to their fathers; see Deut. vii. 12, 13. *if thou shalt keep the commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his ways*; by which tenure they held the land of Canaan, and had their settlement and continuance in it, and enjoyment of all the good things thereof; see Isa. i. 19, 20.

Ver. 10. *And all the people of the earth shall see that thou art called by the name of the Lord*, &c.] Called his children, his people, his portion, and his inheritance; and that they are his, and he is theirs, by the care he takes of them, the provision he makes for them, and the protection they have from him: *and they shall be afraid of thee*; as not only the Canaanites were, but all other nations; see. ch. xi. 25.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord shall make thee plenteous in goods*, &c.] In all temporal good things, give them an affluence of them, even all things richly to enjoy; the Targum of Jonathan is, "the Word of the Lord shall, *&c.*" *in the fruit of thy body, and in the fruit of thy cattle, and in the fruit of thy ground*: increase their children, cattle, and substance, as before, ver. 4. *in the land*

which the Lord sware unto thy fathers to give thee: the land of Canaan, often thus described.

Ver. 12. *The Lord shall open unto thee his good treasure,* &c.] The Lord has his treasures of snow and of hail, and of wind, Job xxxviii. 22. Psal. cxxxv. 7. but here his good treasure, as appears by what follows, is his treasure of rain. In the Targum of Jonathan it is said, "there are four keys in the hand of the Lord of "the whole world, which he does not deliver into the "hands of any prince; the keys of life, and of the "grave, and of food, and of rain:" *the heaven, to give the rain unto thy land in its season:* that is, he will open the heaven, where his good treasure of rain is laid up, and bring it forth on the land of Canaan for the enriching of it; or will open the windows thereof, and pour down the blessing; see Mal. iii. 10. and that at the proper time, both in autumn and spring, the one is called the former, and the other the latter rain; the one was in Marchesvan, or October, and the other in Nisan, or March, as the Targum of Jonathan; the former rain for the fitting the earth for seed, or for watering it when sown, and the latter for the plumping of it before harvest: *and to bless all the work of thine hand:* in agriculture, for without the blessing of rain, all the labour of the husbandman would be to little purpose: *and thou shalt lend unto many nations, and thou shalt not borrow;* see the note on ch. xv. 16. The connexion of these words with what goes before may lead to observe this sense of them, that they should furnish other countries with corn, and not need any of theirs; see Ezek. xxvii. 17.

Ver. 13. *And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail,* &c.] Give them dominion over others, and not make them subject to them; the head signifies rulers and governors, and the tail the common people that are subjects; or the one such that are honourable and in high esteem, and the other such that are mean and base; see Isa. ix. 14, 15. the Targum of Jonathan is, "the Word of the Lord shall make thee, "&c." *and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath;* which explains what is meant by head and tail, being uppermost and lowermost, as the head is the upper part, and the tail the lower part of a creature; the one is more honourable, the other vile: the sense is, that they should be superior to other people in honour and dignity, and not below them, or vassals to them: *and that thou hearken to the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day to observe and to do them;* which is the condition on which all this happiness depended.

Ver. 14. *And thou shalt not go aside from any of the words which I command thee this day,* &c.] Depart from them as a rule to walk by, turn out from them as a path to walk in, neglect and disobey them, and go into practices contrary to them: turning *to the right hand or to the left, to go after other gods to serve them;* which to do was to break the first and principal table of the law, than which nothing was more abominable and provoking to God.

Ver. 15. *But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God,* &c.] As directed, exhorted, and encouraged to, ver. 1, &c. *to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day;* both moral and ceremonial: *that all these curses shall come upon thee:* from the hand of God, certainly, suddenly, and unawares: *and overtake thee;* pursuing after thee, will come up to thee, and seize upon thee, though they may seem to move slowly; see Zech. v. 3, 4. namely, the curses which follow. Manasseh Ben Israel[f] divides them into two parts, the first from hence to ver. 45. which respects the destruction of the first temple, and the things that went before or related to that; and the second from thence to the end of the chapter, which he thinks refers to the destruction of the second temple, and their present case and circumstances; and it must be owned that for the most part the distinction may seem to hold good; what is prophesied of that should befall the Jews for their disobedience being more remarkably and distinctly fulfilled in the one than in the other; yet there are things in the whole which respect both, or that were fulfilled, some under one dispensation, and some under another, and some that were fulfilled in both; but chiefly and more manifestly at and since their dispersion by the Romans.

Ver. 16. *Cursed* shalt *thou* be *in the city,* &c.] From hence to the end of ver. 19. the curses are delivered out in form, as the reverse of the blessings in ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. and by observing what the blessings mean, the sense of the curses may easily be understood, the one being directly opposite to the other.

Ver. 20. *The Lord shall send cursing,* &c.] Which is either a general word for all that follows, or rather, since that had been expressed before in various instances, this may denote some particular judgment. Jarchi interprets it of penury, of want of all good things, extreme poverty, so as to be reduced to the utmost necessity, and as to stand in need of the common comforts and supports of life, and even to have their blessings and mercies turned into curses; the consequence of which must needs be *vexation:* trouble, distress, and anguish of spirit: *and rebuke;* this may well be considered as a rebuke and correction in Providence for sins committed, to awaken to a sense and acknowledgment of them, and to repentance for them: *in all that thou settest thine hand to do;* nothing done should prosper, to relieve them under their pressing wants, a curse attending all their efforts, and so sad disappointment follows; and all as a just rebuke for their many sins: and this would be their case more or less, *until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly:* through famine, and want of the common necessaries of life; as at the sieges of Samaria and Jerusalem, by the kings of Syria, Assyria, and Babylon: *because of the wickedness of thy doings, because thou hast forsaken me;* their several immoralities and impieties, and particularly their idolatry, which was a forsaking the worship of the true God, and following idols; an iniquity to be punished by the judge, and of all things the most provoking to the Lord.

Ver. 21. *The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee,* &c.] Not only to come upon them, but to continue with them: *until he have consumed thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it;* which

[f] De Termino Vitæ, l. 3. sect. 3. p. 125.

shews that this respects not some particular seasons, when the pestilence came and continued awhile, and then ceased, as in the times of David; but when it became more general, and issued with other judgments in the utter consumption of them, as at the destruction of Jerusalem, both by the Babylonians and the Romans; at what times the pestilence raged and remained, until by that and other sore judgments the land was wholly depopulated.

Ver. 22. *The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption*, &c.] An emaciation of their bodies, either through famine or wasting diseases, whereby the fluids are washed off, and men are reduced to skin and bones: *and with a fever*: a hot burning disease, which dries up the radical moisture, consumes it, and so threatens with death; of which there are various sorts, and some very pestilential and mortal. Jarchi and Aben Ezra interpret it of a fire in the face, by which they seem to mean what is called St. Anthony's fire: *and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning*: either in the inward parts, as an inflammation of the lungs; or in the outward parts, as carbuncles, burning ulcers, and the like: *and with the sword*; in the margin it is, *with drought*; so Aben Ezra interprets the word, which seems better to suit with what it is in company with; and designs either drought in human bodies, occasioned by fevers, inflammations, and extreme burnings; or in the earth, through the force of the sun, and want of rain, which render the earth barren and unfruitful, and so cause a famine: *and with blasting and with mildew*; whereby the corn that is sown, and springs up, comes to nothing, being blasted by east winds, or turns pale and yellow by the mildew, and so withers away; the consequence of which is want of food, and so destruction and ruin; see Amos iv. 9. *and they shall pursue thee until thou perish*; follow hard after them, and come so close one after another upon them, until they are utterly destroyed.

Ver. 23. *And the heaven that is over thy head shall be brass*, &c.] Or like brass, not for its clearness, brightness, and splendour, or for its being spread out like a molten looking-glass which was of brass, Job xxxvii. 18. but for its dryness and hardness, no moisture being in it, or passing through it; no showers of rain nor dew being let down from it: *and the earth that is under thee shall be iron*; or like iron, hard and impenetrable, into which the plough and spade will not enter; nor any thing spring out of it, for want of rain and dew to moisten and soften it. The same is said in Lev. xxvi. 19. only there is an inversion of the figures; there the heaven is said to be as iron, and the earth like brass, but signify the same thing.

Ver. 24. *The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust*, &c.] That is, instead of showers of rain in their season, to water, refresh, and enrich the earth, and make it fruitful; and for want of them, and through the heat of the sun, being dried and parched, and its clods crumbled into dust, this should be raised up into the air by the force of winds, and let down again in showers of dust; whereby the few herbs, plants, or green trees on it, would be utterly destroyed: and so the Targum of Jonathan interprets it of the Lord's sending a wind that should raise the dust and earth upon the herbs of their fields. Such ploughing winds, that cast up the earth and sand, and dust, into the air, whereby men and cattle are sometimes covered, are frequent in the eastern countries; of which see the note on Jon. iv. 8. *from heaven shall it come down upon thee until thou be destroyed*; that is, from the air, up to which the dust is carried by the wind, and then let fall in vast quantities, like showers, which are very destructive.

Ver. 25. *The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies*, &c.] And by them, as they sometimes were by the Philistines and others, before their utter destruction, when they sinned against the Lord; and by the Assyrians, Babylonians, and Romans: *thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them*; march out against them in a body, promising themselves victory, but be utterly routed; so that they shall flee every way they can for their safety; see ver. 7. *and shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth*; this shews that Manasseh's distinction, observed ver. 15. will not strictly and entirely hold good, nor is there any necessity to adhere closely to it; it is enough that the things threatened and prophesied of were at one time or another fulfilled in these people; for neither the ten tribes, when taken captive by Salmaneser, were carried into all the kingdoms of the earth, only to some particular places mentioned in 2 Kings xvii. 6. nor the two tribes by Nebuchadnezzar, who were carried by him to Babylon, and returned from thence again at the end of seventy years; but this was exactly fulfilled at their last destruction by the Romans, when they were sent by them into divers countries, and have been ever since scattered about in the several nations of the world. And yet it must be owned that Strabo[g], who wrote before the last destruction of them, affirms, that it was not easy to find any place in the world which had not received them, and was not occupied by them.

Ver. 26. *And thy carcass shall be meat unto all fowls of the air, and unto the beasts of the earth*, &c.] Which was always reckoned a very grievous calamity, to have no other burial than in the bowels of beasts and birds; and was the case of many of the Jews in the Antiochian persecution, Psal. lxxix. 2. and in a treatise of theirs[h], which relates their many afflictions and sufferings in their present captivity, speaking of a persecution of them in Spain, in the year 5172, it is reported, how that those that fled to avoid punishment were killed in the fields, where their carcasses lying unburied became a prey to beasts: *and no man shall fray them away*: the fowls and the beasts; none of their friends being left to do it, and their enemies would not shew so much respect to them, and care of them.

Ver. 27. *The Lord will smite thee with the botch of Egypt*, &c.] Which some understand of the leprosy, of that sort of it called *elephantiasis*, frequent among the Egyptians; see the note on Lev. xiii. 2. Thevenot[i] relates, that when the time of the increase of the Nile expires, the Egyptians are attended with sharp prick-

[g] Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 14. c. 7. sect. 2.
[h] Shebet Judah, sive Hist. Jud. a Gentio, sect. 46. p. 212.
[i] Apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 426, 427.

ings in their skin like needles. So Vansleb says*, "the "waters of the Nile cause an itch in the skin, which "troubles such as drink of them when the river in-"creases. This itch is very small, and appears first "about the arms, next upon the stomach, and spreads "all about the body, which causes a grievous pain; "and not only the river-water, but that out of the "cisterns drank of, brings it, and it lasts about six "weeks." Though some take this botch to be the botch and blain which the Egyptians were plagued with for refusing to let Israel go, Exod. ix. 9, 10. *and with the emerods;* or hæmorrhoides, the piles, a disease of the fundament, attended sometimes with ulcers there; see 1 Sam. v. 9. *and with the scab and with the itch:* the one moist, the other dry, and both very distressing: *whereof thou canst not be healed;* by any art of men; which shews these to be uncommon ones, and from the immediate hand of God.

Ver. 28. *The Lord shall smite thee with madness,* &c.] At the calamities befallen them, and through the force of diseases on them: *and blindness;* not of body, but of mind; with judicial blindness and hardness of heart: *and astonishment of heart;* at the miserable condition they and their families should be in.

Ver. 29. *And thou shalt grope at noon-day as the blind gropeth in darkness,* &c.] That is, being in darkness through the loss of their sight; otherwise the darkness and the light are alike to them, and they grope in the one as well as in the other. This comparison shews that the darkness and blindness of the Jews, threatened them, is to be understood not of the darkness of their bodily eyes, but of their minds; not being able to understand, or form a judgment of things that are as clear as noon-day; and being at the utmost loss what methods to take and pursue, when they are plain and manifest before them; but being infatuated and besotted, follow the lusts and counsels of their own hearts, which lead them wrong: *and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways;* in any steps they may take to extricate themselves out of their difficulties, distresses, and calamities, or to bring themselves into easy and comfortable circumstances; to get wealth and riches, and honour and esteem with men; but, on the contrary, become forlorn and miserable, poor and wretched, mean and despicable: *and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore;* continually, every day, all the days of their lives, oppressed with taxes and tributes, with mulcts and fines, and spoiled of their goods and substance under one pretence or another; which has been generally their case in Popish countries; for this seems not to refer to the Babylonish captivity, where they built houses, and dwelt in them, and planted gardens, and ate the fruit of them; and in the peace of cities had peace themselves, Jer. xxix. 5, 6, 7. *and no man shall save thee;* from the oppressions, exactions, and spoils of their enemies, nor deliver them out of their hands; whereas in process of time they had deliverance and salvation from the Babylonish captivity, by the means of Cyrus king of Persia.

Ver. 30. *Thou shalt betroth a wife, and another man shall lie with her,* &c.] Espouse a woman in order to make her his wife, and before he can take her home, and consummate the marriage, through some calamity or another coming upon them, they should be set at a distance from each other, and she should fall into the hands of another man, who either should ravish her, or gain her consent to lie with her, or become his wife; which, when the marriage was so near being consummated, must be a grievous disappointment, and a great vexation: *thou shalt build an house, and thou shalt not dwell therein;* being, before it is quite finished, or however before he is got into it, carried captive, or obliged to flee to a distant place: *thou shalt plant a vineyard, and shalt not gather the grapes thereof;* or *make it common,* on the fourth year to eat the fruits of it, as Jarchi; which might not be done until sanctified and redeemed according to the law in Lev. xix. 23, 24, 25. see the note on ch. xx. 6.

Ver. 31. *Thine ox* shall be *slain before thine eyes, and thou shalt not eat thereof,* &c.] Shall be taken from the herd, and out of the field or stall, by the enemy, and killed for the soldiers to feed on, and not the least part of it given to them: *thine ass shall be violently taken away from before thy face, and shall not be restored unto thee;* no leave shall be asked to take it, but without their consent, and against their will, it should be taken away by the soldiers to carry them and their burdens, and it may be the booty and spoil of them, and never returned more: *thy sheep* shall be *given unto thine enemies, and thou shalt have none to rescue them;* not given them by themselves, but they should be suffered to fall into their hands, and they should never be able to get them out again, nor any for them. These, strictly and literally taken, suppose them to be in their own land, when those things would be done, where they were possessed of farms, and fields, and cattle, being much employed in husbandry; but they may be put for any kind of substance they would be possessed of, which they should be stripped of under one pretence or another; which has been frequently their case in their present dispersion in several countries, and in ours; when Popish princes have wanted money, they have made very exorbitant demands on the Jews in their countries, and sadly squeezed and oppressed them, and who were not able to resist them, and never had any restoration made to them.

Ver. 32. *Thy sons and thy daughters* shall be *given unto another people,* &c.] This also was not true in the Babylonish captivity; for then their sons and daughters went with them, and continued with them, and returned again; but has been oftentimes verified since their captivity by the Romans; frequently their sons and daughters have been taken from them by force, to be brought up in another religion, by the edicts of kings and popes, and by the canons of councils, and particularly of the fourth council of Toledo: *and thine eyes shall look and fail;* with longing: *for them all the day long;* expecting every day their children would be returned to them, at least wishing and hoping they would; their hearts yearning after them, but all in vain: *and* there shall be *no might in thy hand;* to recover them out of the hands of those who had the possession of them, or fetch them back from distant countries, whither they were carried. By an edict of the

* Relation of a Voyage to Egypt, p. 35, 36.

Portuguese, the children of the Jews were ordered to be carried to the uninhabited islands; and when, by the king's command, they were had to the ships in which they were to be transported, it is incredible, the Jewish historian says[l], what howlings and lamentations were made by the women; and there were none pitied them and comforted them, or could help them.

Ver. 33. *The fruit of thy land, and all thy labour, shall a nation which thou knowest not eat up, &c.*] The same was prophesied of by Jeremy, concerning the Babylonish captivity, and was fulfilled in it, Jer. v. 17. and has been also verified in the frequent pillage and spoil of this people, in their present state; for though they have no land to till, from whence to gather fruit, yet they are employed in manufactures and merchandise, the fruit and benefit of which they have been frequently stripped of: *and thou shalt be only oppressed and crushed always*: this seems best to agree with their present case; for in their former captivities they were not always oppressed and crushed, but had respite and deliverance; see the note on ver. 29.

Ver. 34. *So that thou shalt be mad, for the sight of thine eyes that thou shalt see.*] On account of the shocking things seen by them, their dreadful calamities, oppressions, and persecutions, such as before related; not only violent diseases on their bodies, which were grievous to behold, as well as their pains were intolerable, and made them mad; but to be deprived of a betrothed wife, a new-built house, and a new-planted vineyard; to have an ox slain, and an ass taken away by their enemies, and their sheep given to them before their eyes; to have their sons and daughters taken from them, and brought up in another religion, and to be stripped of their substance; these have made them stark mad, insomuch that they have sometimes destroyed themselves and their families. In Germany, in their rage and madness, they burnt a city and themselves in it; and, in the same country, being summoned by an edict to change their religion, or to be burnt, they agreed to meet together in a certain house, and destroy one another; and first parents killed their children, and husbands their wives, and then killed themselves; leaving only one person to be their doorkeeper, who finished the tragedy by destroying himself, as their own historian relates[m]. Other stories of the like kind are reported of them, and some such facts as done in our own nation[n].

Ver. 35. *The Lord shall smite thee in the knees, and in the legs, with a sore botch, that cannot be healed, &c.*] Which in those parts as it is very painful, so is not easily cured; and this which is threatened was incurable by the art of man, as others in ver. 27. and which should not stop there in the lower parts of the body, but proceed and spread: *from the sole of thy foot unto the top of thy head*: and so be filled with them, as Job was with his boils and ulcers.

Ver. 36. *And the Lord shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, &c.*] This was fulfilled both in Jehoiachin and in Zedekiah, kings of Judah, who were carried captive to Babylon, by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings xxiv. 15. and xxv. 6, 7. *unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known*: the land of Babylon, which was at a distance from them, and is represented in Scripture as afar off, Jer. v. 15. and which the Jews, not being a trading people, or dealing in merchandise in foreign parts, were unacquainted with: *and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone*: which they were obliged to do in Babylon, of which it seems best to understand it; for though it may be interpreted of their compliance with the image-worship of the Papists in their present condition, as the former clause may be of their rulers and governors, included in the name of king, carried captive by the Romans; who were a nation as little, if not less known than the Babylonians: but the former sense seems to suit best here, as this does with ver. 64. where the language is somewhat different, and very apposite. The Targum of Jonathan is, "shall pay tribute to those "that worship idols of wood and stone."

Ver. 37. *And thou shalt become an astonishment, &c.*] To neighbouring nations, that shall hear of their overthrow and captivity, and that shall see the miserable condition they are brought into: *a proverb and a byeword among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee*; both for the wickedness committed by them, and for the ill usage of them by the nations among whom they should be, as they were in the Babylonish captivity; see Jer. xxiv. 9. and now are, it being common to say, "do you think I am a Jew?" or, "none but a Jew "would have done such a thing."

Ver. 38. *Thou shalt carry much seed into the field, &c.*] And sow it plentifully; this and what is said in some following verses plainly refer to them whilst in their own land, before carried captive, and not to their present case and circumstances: *and shalt gather but little in at harvest*; little springing up, or not coming to perfection, being blighted and blasted, and so yielded but a small crop; see Hagg. i. 9. and chiefly for the following reason: *for the locust shall consume it*: which is a great destroyer of the fruits of the earth; see Joel i. 4.

Ver. 39. *Thou shalt plant vineyards, and dress them, &c.*] Plant them and prune them, in expectation of much fruit from them: *but shalt neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes*: so far from drinking of the wine of them, that they should not be able to gather any grapes from them: *for the worms shall eat them*; a sort of worms pernicious to vines, which the Greeks call *ipes*, or *ikes*[o]; and the Latins *convolvuli* and *volvoces*, as Pliny[p].

Ver. 40. *Thou shalt have olive-trees throughout thy coasts, &c.*] In the several parts of the land of Canaan, which is therefore called a land of oil-olive, ch. viii. 8. *but thou shalt not anoint thyself with the oil*: nor any other relations, friends, guests, as was usual at entertainments; see Psal. xxiii. 5. Luke vii. 38, 46. for the phrase *thyself* is not in the text. The reason why they should not anoint is, because they would have no oil to anoint with: *for thine olive shall cast his fruit*; before it is ripe, by one means or another;

[l] Shebet Judah, sive Hist. Jud. sect. 59. p. 332.
[m] Ib. sect. 34, 26. p. 214, 215, 216, 217.
[n] See Bishop Patrick in loc. and Dr. Newton (Bishop of Bristol) on Prophecies, vol. 1. Dissert. 7. sect. 14. p. 195, 196.

[o] See Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 4. c. 27. col. 622, 623.
[p] Nat. Hist. l. 17. c. 28.

as by winds, or blasting and mildew; see Amos iv. 9. Hab. iii. 17.

Ver. 41. *Thou shalt beget sons and daughters, but thou shalt not enjoy them*, &c.] Or, *they shall not be thine*[q]; being taken from them, and given to others, see ver. 32. and for the following reason: *for they shall go into captivity*, as when the ten tribes were carried captive by Salmaneser, and the two tribes by Nebuchadnezzar, and all the people of the Jews by the Romans.

Ver. 42. *All thy trees and fruit of thy land shall the locust consume.*] Which is a creature that not only consumes grass, and herbs, and the corn of the field, but all green trees; see Exod. x. 15. This sort here has its name from the shade they make, hiding the light of the sun, and darkening the face of the earth at noon-day; or from the noise they make with their wings in flying; see Joel ii. 5.

Ver. 43. *The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high*, &c.] In wealth and riches, in power and authority, in honour and dignity. This Manasseh Ben Israel[r] interprets of the Samaritans, whom the king of Assyria drove out of Samaria, and the neighbouring places; but the design of the expression is to shew how mean and abject they should be in another country; that even one who had been a stranger or proselyte of the gate, when in their own country, should now be vastly above them: *and thou shalt come down very low*: into a very mean condition, to be in great subjection, a vassal and a slave; see Psal. cvi. 41, 42. and much more when reduced by the Romans, and sent to the mines in Egypt.

Ver. 44. *He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him*, &c.] The stranger, or one of another nation, shall be in a capacity of lending to the Jew, when the Jew would not be able to lend to the Gentile, his circumstances being so low and mean; to shew which is the design of the expression, and not the kindness or unkindness of either; see ver. 12. *he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail*; he shall be ruler and governor, and thou shalt be subject to him; see ver. 13.

Ver. 45. *Moreover, all these curses shall come upon thee*, &c.] Before related, as well as what follow: *and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee*: which though they would endeavour to flee from and escape, should not be able, since they would follow them so closely and swiftly, and overtake them, and seize upon them; see ver. 15. *because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee*: to which disobedience all the curses are to be imputed that go before or follow after.

Ver. 46. *And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder*, &c.] That is, those curses before pronounced, and what follow, should rest and remain upon them, continue with them, and be very visible on them; so as to be observed by others, as a sign of the wrath and displeasure of God, and of the fulfilment of prophecy, and of the truth of divine revelation: and so *for a wonder*: as it is most astonishing to observe how exactly all the curses threatened them have fallen upon them, and have abode with them, as they did in their former captivities, and more especially do in the present one: and, what is the greater wonder, that notwithstanding these dreadful calamities, and so long continued, enough to have crushed any people from being a people, yet they have continued, and still do continue, a distinct people; which is a standing miracle, and one would think sufficient to convince the most hardened and obstinate deist of the truth and authority of the sacred Scriptures; in which stand so many glaring prophecies that have been fulfilled, and are continually fulfilling in this people: *and upon thy seed for ever*, this shews that these curses, said to be upon them, not only refer to those that came upon them at and in the Babylonish captivity, but to those that came upon them at their destruction by the Romans, and which have continued on them seventeen hundred years; and how much longer they will continue none can say: it will be their case, until new heavens and a new earth are created, or there will be a new state of things, at least with them; when they shall be converted to the Lord, and all Israel saved; see Isa. lxv. 17, 18. Rom. xi. 25, 26. and it may be observed, that the ten tribes carried captive never returned.

Ver. 47. *Because thou servedst not the Lord thy God*, &c.] By attending his worship, and keeping his commandments: *with joyfulness and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things*; which they enjoyed in the land of Canaan, a land that abounded with all good things; which laid them under great obligations to serve the Lord: and yet, as they were wanting in a ready attendance on his worship, and in a cheerful obedience to his laws, so in their sacrifices of praise and thanksgivings for their manifold mercies; and, because of all this, the curses written in this book came upon them.

Ver. 48. *Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies, which the Lord shall send against thee*, &c.] Since they would not serve the Lord their God, who was so good a master to them, and supplied them with all good things, and with plenty of them, they should serve other lords, their enemies, whom God would raise up and send against them; not only the Assyrians, Chaldeans, and Babylonians, but the Romans, after described, whom they should find hard masters, and from whom they should have very severe usage, and should be *in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all good things*: being destitute of food, and drink, and raiment, and the common necessaries of life, and so in famishing and starving circumstances: *and he shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck*: bring them into a state of subjection to their enemies, which would be intolerable to them, and from which they would not be able to free themselves, any more than to break an iron yoke; which, as it agrees with the Babylonish captivity, and their subjection in that state, see Jer. xxviii. 13, 14. so more especially with their bondage under the Romans, who are the legs of iron in Nebuchadnezzar's image, and the fourth beast with great iron teeth in Daniel's vision, Dan. ii. 33, 40. and vii. 7. and this yoke was to continue *until he have*

[q] ולא יהיו לך & non erunt tibi, Pagninus, Montanus.

[r] De Termino Vitæ, l. 3. sect. 3. p. 128.

destroyed thee; the Jews were under the Roman yoke, Roman governors being set over them, and Judea made a Roman province many years before the destruction of their nation, city, and temple, by them.

Ver. 49. *The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth,* &c.] Now though Babylon is represented as a country distant from Judea, and said to be a nation *from far,* Jer. v. 15. yet not *from the end of the earth;* as here; and though the Roman nation, strictly speaking, was not at so great a distance from Jerusalem, yet the Roman emperors, and great part of their armies brought against it, were fetched from our island of Great Britain, which in former times was reckoned the end of the earth, and the uttermost parts of the world[s]; and so Manasseh Ben Israel[t] interprets this nation of Rome, and observes, that Vespasian brought for his assistance many nations (or soldiers) out of England, France, Spain, and other parts of the world: and not only Vespasian was sent for from Britain to make war with the Jews, but when they rebelled, in the times of Adrian, Julius Severus, a very eminent general, was sent for from thence to quell them. And it appears to be a very ancient opinion of the Jews, that this passage is to be understood of the Romans, from what is related in one of their Talmuds[u]: they say, that "Trajan, being sent for by "his wife to subdue the Jews, determined to come in "ten days, and came in five; he came and found "them (the Jews) busy in the law on that verse, *the "Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far,* &c. "he said unto them, what are ye busy in? they an- "swered him, so and so; he replied to them, this is "the man (meaning himself) who thought to come in "ten days, and came in five; and he surrounded them "with his legions, and slew them:" as swift *as the eagle flieth;* which may respect not so much the swiftness of this creature, the words which convey the idea being a supplement of the text, as the force with which it flies when in sight of its prey, and hastes unto it and falls upon it, which is irresistible; and this is the sense of the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and is what is ascribed to the eagle by other writers[w]. Now though this figure is used of the Chaldeans and Babylonians, Jer. iv. 13. Lam. iv. 19. Hab. i. 8. it agrees full as well or better with the Romans, because of their swiftness in coming from distant parts, and because of the force and impetus with which they invaded Judea, besieged Jerusalem, and attacked the Jews everywhere; and besides, the eagle was bore on the standard in the Roman army[x]: *a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand;* which, though it is also said of the language of the Chaldean nation, Jer. v. 15. yet as the Chaldee and Hebrew languages were only dialects of one and the same language, common to the eastern nations, the Chaldee language, though on account of termination of words, pronunciation, and other things, might be difficult, and hard to be understood by the Jews, yet must be much more easy to understand than the Roman language, so widely different from theirs.

Ver. 50. *A nation of fierce countenance,* &c.] Or, *strong of face*[y]; which aptly describes the old Romans, who are always represented as such; and whereas it is said of the Chaldeans, that they were a nation dreadful and terrible, Hab. i. 7. the same is said of the fourth beast, or Roman empire, Dan. vii. 7. who were a terror to all the world; *which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young;* cruel, unmerciful, and uncompassionate, to persons of whatsoever age or sex; which, as it was the character of the Chaldeans, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17. so of the Romans, who especially shewed no mercy to the Jews, as Josephus[z], who was an eye-witness, testifies. "The Ro- "mans (says he) shewed no mercy to any age, out "of hatred to the nation (of the Jews), and in re- "membrance of the injuries done to Cestius;" one of their governors, when among them. And in another place he says[a], "the Romans, remembering what "they suffered in the siege, spared none, and shewed "no mercy."

Ver. 51. *And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle,* &c.] Larger and lesser, oxen and sheep, as their calves and lambs, and kids of the goat: *and the fruit of thy land;* their wheat, barley, figs, grapes, pomegranates, olives, and dates: *until thou be destroyed;* the land of Judea, and all the increase of it: this being before said, ver. 31, 33. and here repeated, shews that the same should be fulfilled at different times, as by the Chaldeans, so by the Romans; whose nation, or army, with their general at the head of them, may be more especially here intended by *he,* that should eat up their fruit until utter destruction was brought upon them: *which also shall not leave thee* either *corn, wine, or oil,* or *the increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee;* all being consumed by the Roman army. There is a promise and prophecy, that though this would be the case, as it has been, there shall be a time when it shall be so no more; see Isa. lxii. 8, 9.

Ver. 52. *And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates,* &c.] That is, in all their cities and walled towns, which had gates and bars for security: *until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land;* the Jews had several cities well fenced and strongly fortified, besides Jerusalem, which was fortified both by art and nature, and in which they greatly put their trust and confidence; but these were broken down, particularly by the battering rams of the Romans: *and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee;* this is repeated for the certainty of it, and that it might be taken notice of, and abate their trust and confidence in their outward strength. Now all this was fulfilled, partly in the siege of Samaria by the king of Assyria, who went through all the land of the ten tribes, 2 Kings xvii. 5. and xviii. 9, 10. and in Sennacherib's taking the fenced cities of Judah, 2 Kings xviii. 13. and in the siege of Jerusalem, and breaking down the walls of it by Nebuchadnezzar, 2 Kings xxv. 10. and, last of all, in the siege of Jerusalem, and battering down the walls of it, by

[s] —— In ultimos orbis Britannos, Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 35.
[t] De Termino Vitæ, l. 3. sect. 5. p. 129.
[u] T. Hieros. Succah, fol. 55. 2.
[w] Vid. Homer. Iliad. 21. l. 252.

[x] Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 4.
[y] עז פנים fortem faciebus, Montanus; robustam facie, Vatablus.
[z] De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 7. sect. 1.
[a] Ibid. sect. 34.

the Romans; at which time also all their strong and fenced cities throughout the land were taken and demolished.

Ver. 53. *And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body*, &c.] Than which nothing can be more shocking and unnatural, which is explained as follows: *the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee;* which is an aggravation of the cruel and inhuman fact: *in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee*; this shews the cause of it, a famine by reason of the closeness of the siege, so that no provisions could be brought in for their relief; and all within being eaten up, and every thing that was eatable, even the most nauseous and disagreeable, they would be led on to this strange, unheard-of, and barbarous action, eating their own children. This was fulfilled in the siege of Samaria, 2 Kings vi. 25, 28, 29. and in the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Lam. ii. 10. and iv. 10. Baruch ii. 4. and in the siege of the same city by the Romans; of which an instance will be hereafter given.

Ver. 54. So that *the man that is tender among you, and very delicate*, &c.] Not only the rustic that has been brought up meanly, and used to hard living; but one that has been bred very tenderly, and lived in a delicate manner, like the rich man in Luke xvi. 19. that fared sumptuously every day: *his eye shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom, and towards the remnant of his children which he shall leave;* that is, he shall grudge his brother, who is so nearly related to him, the least bit of food; yea, his wife, he dearly loved, and is one flesh with him, his other self, and even his children, which are parts of himself, such of them as were left not eaten by him; or his eye should be evil upon them, he should look with an evil eye on them, determining within himself to kill and eat them next. Though the particular instance in which his eye would be evil to them follows, yet no doubt there are other instances in which his eye would be evil towards them, as there were at the siege of Jerusalem, and have been since. Josephus[b] says, "that in every house where there was any "appearance of food (or any thing that looked like it, "that had the shadow of it) there was a battle; and "the dearest friends fought with one another, snatch-"ing away from each other the miserable supports "of life;" as the husband from his wife and children, and the wife from her husband and children; see more in ver. 56. and, in after-times, we are told by the Jewish historian[c], that wrote an account of their sufferings and distresses since their dispersion, that at Fez the Jews sold their children for slaves for bread.

Ver. 55. *So that he will not give to any of them of the flesh of his children whom he shall eat*, &c.] Neither give to a brother, nor to a wife, nor to any of his remaining children, the least bit of the flesh of a child he has killed and dressed for his own food; which adds to the barbarity of his action: *because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates;* every creature being eaten up, dogs, cats, &c. and whatsoever else could be any ways made food of; as the dung of beasts, girdles, shoes, the leather on shields, &c. as Josephus[d] says they did eat; and this being the case, nothing eatable remaining, therefore his heart would be hardened against his nearest relations, and not allow them the least part with him, even of what was so shocking and unnatural.

Ver. 56. *And the tender and delicate woman amongst you*, &c.] Who is instanced in because of her sex, which is more pitiful and compassionate, and especially one that has been brought up genteelly, and has always lived deliciously, on the most delicate fare, and nicest dainties, and used to all the delights of nature: *which would not venture to set her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness;* for fear of taking cold, or defiling her feet: *her eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter;* grudge them every bit they eat, and restrain food from them as much as in her lies, and even snatch it out of their mouths; so Josephus[e] relates, that "women snatched the food out of the mouths of "their husbands, and sons out of the mouths of their "fathers; and, what is most miserable, mothers out "of the mouths of their infants."

Ver. 57. *And toward her young one that cometh out from between her feet*, &c.] Or her secundine, *her after-birth*, as in the margin of our Bibles; so the Targum of Jonathan and Aben Ezra interpret it. The latter describes it, "the place of the fœtus, whilst it "abides in the womb of its mother;" the membrane in which the child is wrapped; and it is suggested that, as nauseous as that is, the delicate woman should eat it, and then the new-born child that was wrapped in it; so Jarchi interprets it, little children; though it seems to be distinguished from the children she bears or brings forth in the next clause: *and towards her children which she shall bear;* that is, have an evil eye towards them, to eat them, as follows: *for she shall eat them for want of all things secretly in the siege and straitness, wherewith thine enemy shall distress thee in thy gates;* that is, eat her children, being reduced to the utmost extremity, being in want of all things, having nothing at all to abate her sharp hunger; which, and nothing else, could incline her, and prevail upon her, to do an action so monstrously horrid: and which she would do in the most private and secret manner; both lest others should partake with her, as well as being conscious of the foulness and blackness of the crime, that would not by any means bear the light; and all this owing to the closeness of the siege, and the unspeakable distress they should be in through it. For the illustration of this, take the following story, as related by Josephus[f]; "a woman, whose name was "Mary, that lived beyond Jordan, illustrious for her "descent and riches, fled with the multitude to Jeru-"salem when besieged, carrying with her her sub-"stance, and what food she could get that were left "her by the spoilers; where being pressed with fa-"mine, she took her sucking child, killed it, boiled "it, and ate half of it, and then laid up the rest, and "covered it; and when the seditious party entered

[b] De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 3.
[c] Shebet Judah, sive Hist. Jud. p. 326.
[d] De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 3.
[e] De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 10. sect. 3.
[f] Ibid. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 4.

"the house, they smelt it, and demanded her food, "threatening to kill her if she did not deliver it; which "when she brought forth, declaring what she had "done, they were struck with horror; to whom she "said, this is my son, and this my own deed; eat, for "I have eaten; be not more tender or softer than a "woman, and more sympathizing or more pitiful than "a mother." All the ideas that this prophecy of Moses conveys are to be met with in this account; as of a woman well bred and delicate, reduced to the utmost distress, and wanting all the necessaries of life, killing her tender infant, a sucking babe, eating it secretly, and laying up the rest covered against another time. If Moses had lived to have known the fact committed, as Josephus did, he could not have expressed it well in stronger and clearer terms than he has done. This is a most amazing instance of a prophecy delivered out 2,000 years or more before the fact was done, and of the exact accomplishment of it; and if the observation of a learned critic [g] can be established, that the first word of this verse should be ובשלה, and so be rendered, *and she shall boil that which cometh out from between her feet, even her children which she shall bear*, the fulfilment of the prophecy will appear still more exact, both at the siege of Samaria, 2 Kings vi. 29. and of Jerusalem, as in the above relation of Josephus.

Ver. 58. *If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law, that are written in this book*, &c.] Of Deuteronomy, in which there is a repetition of the laws before delivered, and an addition of some new ones; all which were to be so observed as to be done, to this end, *that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name of the Lord thy God*; or that it might appear that the fear of God was before their eyes, and in their hearts, by their obedience to his law; that they had a proper awe and reverence of him, who is glorious in his titles and attributes, and whose name Jehovah is holy and reverend; and who, as the covenant God of his people, is to be feared for his goodness-sake.

Ver. 59. *Then the Lord will make thy plagues wonderful*, &c.] Visible, remarkable, distinguishable, and astonishing to all that see them: *and the plagues of thy seed*; for they were to continue, as they have done, with their posterity, age after age: even *great plagues, and of long continuance*; great as to quality and quantity, and firm, sure, lasting, and durable; the word used is rendered *sure* in Isa. lv. 3. sure by prophecy and in the event; and which when inflicted remained, as they have 1,700 years; all which might be believed as certain, or what would certainly come to pass, and be depended on: *and sore sicknesses, and of long continuance*: besides those diseases mentioned ver. 27, 35. or however others including them.

Ver. 60. *Moreover, he will bring upon thee all the diseases of Egypt*, &c.] All that in a way of judgment were brought upon the Egyptians for refusing to let Israel go; or all such diseases as were peculiar to them, and common among them, as the leprosy, the itch, ulcers, &c. *which thou wast afraid of*: when living among them, lest they should catch them of them, or they should be inflicted on them by the hand of God: *and they shall cleave unto thee*: not only should come upon them, but continue with them; they should not easily get rid of them, or be cured of them.

Ver. 61. *Also every sickness and every plague which is not written in the book of this law*, &c.] Which is not here mentioned or threatened; and it suggests, that whatsoever sickness or disease that could be thought of or named, or were at any time in any place among men, might be expected to come upon them for their disobedience: *them will the Lord bring upon thee until thou be destroyed*: the Jews themselves [h] own this has been fulfilled on them.

Ver. 62. *And ye shall be left few in number*, &c.] There were but very few left in the land of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar's general when Jerusalem was taken by him; and these were of the poorer sort, and were left for vine-dressers and husbandmen, Jer. xxxix. 10. and lii. 16. and how much they were reduced by the Romans will appear by the accounts Josephus gives of those that were slain, and made prisoners by them: he says [i], "there were 1,100,000 slain at the siege of "Jerusalem and by the war, and 97,000 made prisoners:" and it is computed that 1,240,490 were destroyed in Jerusalem and other parts of the nation [k]; and it is also said by their historian [l], that of those that were transported from Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine into Spain, scarce a thousandth part remained, and that an infinite number were slain in France and Germany; and though their number equalled those that came out of Egypt, yet scarce 5,000 of them were left: *whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude*; and, as it is sometimes said, as the sand of the sea, as was promised to Abraham, Gen. xv. 5. and xxii. 18. and was fulfilled in the days of Solomon, 1 Kings iv. 20. *because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the Lord thy God*; in his law, and by his prophets; and especially by the voice of the true Messiah, in his everlasting Gospel; of whom it is said, *to-day if ye will hear his voice*; &c. Heb. iii. 7.

Ver. 63. *And it shall come to pass, that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good*, &c.] The Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan; who with great delight and pleasure in them brought them out of Egypt, conducted them through the wilderness, protecting them and providing all good things for them; and brought them into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey, and settled them there; and gave them judges and kings, priests and prophets, for a long series of time, with other innumerable blessings he bestowed upon them: *and to multiply you*; so that they became as the stars of heaven, and the sand of the sea, as before observed: *so the Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and to bring you to nought*; take as much pleasure in their ruin and destruction, whereby his justice would be glorified, and the honour of his laws preserved, as before in bestowing good things on them, in which mercy and kindness were dis-

[g] Dr. Kennicot's State of the Hebrew Text, Dissert. 1. p. 421.
[h] Shebet Judah, p. 218.
[i] De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3.
[k] See Dr. Newton (Bp. of Bristol) on Prophecies, vol. 1. Dissert. 7. sect. 6. p. 186.
[l] Shebet Judah, sect. 49. p. 216.

played: *and ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it:* in a violent manner, by their enemies, and against their wills, they being loth to leave it. The Emperor Adrian, to prevent their insurrections and rebellions, which had given him a great deal of trouble, ordered by an edict that no Jew should come into Jerusalem, nor into the land of Judea, or be seen in it, which is observed by several writers[m]; by which means the country was cleared of them. In after-times some of them did get thither again, but they were but few. Benjamin of Tudela, a Jew of the 12th century, travelled into several parts of the world in quest of his countrymen, and particularly into Judea, and his view was to magnify his people; and yet owns he found at Jerusalem only 200 persons, whose employment was dying wool, and dwelt in a corner of the town under the tower of David; and but 12 at Bethlehem, 3 at Maresha, at Shunem indeed 300, none at Gilead, 2 at Nob, who were diers, 3 at Ramah, one at Joppa, none at Jafne, where had been a famous academy, none at Ashdod, and at Tiberias about 50[n]. And our countryman Sandys[o], who travelled into Judea in the last century, says, "here be some Jews, yet inherit they no part of the "land, but in their own country do live as aliens."

Ver. 64. *And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the* other, &c.] Which refers to their present dispersion, being now, more or fewer, in all parts of the world, east, west, north, and south: *and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known,* even *wood and stone:* it may be observed, that the phrase, *which neither thou nor thy fathers have known,* is fitly added here, which is not used of them, ver. 36. and well agrees with the idols of the Papists, their images of the Virgin Mary, and saints departed, made of wood and stone, which were such the fathers of the Jews never knew; just as it is said of the host, the consecrated wafer, the breaden god honoured by antichrist, that it is *a god whom his fathers knew not,* Dan. xi. 38. the apostles and ancient fathers of the church. Now in Popish countries the Jews have often been prevailed upon to change, or at least dissemble their religion, and embrace Popery; and have worshipped images of wood and stone. The author of the history of their calamities and sufferings owns this; "multitudes (he says[p]) "in Spain and Portugal forsook the law of Moses, and "joined the Papists, pretending at least to be of their "religion." He makes mention of 16,000 at one time[q], and some, he says[r], "that were driven out of "Spain, came into Italy, where the young men pressed "with famine could not bear it, and changed their religion, and began to worship images that they might "have to satisfy their hunger; and the Papists used "to go about with a crucifix in one hand, and a piece "of bread in the other, promising the bread to those "that would worship the crucifix; and so many famishing persons forsook the law of Moses, and "mixed with them:" and to this day the convents of monks and nuns in Spain are full of them; and most of their canons, inquisitors, and bishops, are Jews[s]. The Targum of Jonathan indeed, to clear them from idolatry itself, gives another sense of these words, paraphrasing them, "ye shall pay tribute to the worshippers of idols."

Ver. 65. *And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest,* &c.] No quiet settlement, nor certain dwelling, being obliged to move from place to place through cruel edicts, heavy fines and mulcts, exorbitant taxes and impositions, and diligent search made after them by the courts of the inquisition, especially where any substance was to be got. The Jews themselves[t] own that this passage is now fulfilled in them: *but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart;* being always in fear lest their persons should be seized on, their children taken from them, and their goods confiscated; hence the poet[u] gives them the epithet of *trembling: and failing of eyes;* in looking for a vainly-expected Messiah, to deliver them from all their fears and troubles: *and sorrow of mind;* under their present afflictions and calamities.

Ver. 66. *And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee,* &c.] Whether it shall be spared or not by the enemy: *and thou shalt fear day and night;* being in continual dread of being killed: *and shalt have none assurance of thy life;* of its being continued a moment scarcely, but live in constant fear and expectation of its being taken away.

Ver. 67. *In the morning thou shalt say, would God it were even,* &c.] Wishing they might get through the day well, fearing their life would be taken away before night, or some sad calamity befall them before the day was past: *and at even thou shalt say, would God it were morning;* dreading what would happen to them in the night, that some messenger of death would be sent to dispatch them, or they should be haled out of bed to a court of inquisition, and cast into a dungeon: *for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see;* often beholding such dreadful sights, as their countrymen put upon the rack, and cruelly tortured, and then burnt alive; and so their hearts would fear and tremble, lest they should be the next that would be taken up and used in this manner; besides other severities and hard usages, with which their brethren were treated, and they in continual fear of.

Ver. 68. *And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again with ships,* &c.] Either into a state of hard bondage and slavery, like that their fathers were in in Egypt; or rather, strictly and literally, should be brought into Egypt again, since it is said to be *with* or *in ships.* This does not respect the going of those Jews into Egypt who were left in the land of Judea, after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; for that was against the express command of God, Jer.

[m] Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Eusebius. See Dr. Newton ut supra.
[n] Itinerar. p. 41—53.
[o] Travels, sect. 3. p. 114. Ed. 5.
[p] Shebet Judah, p. 109, 154, 212, 313, 338, 339.
[q] Ibid. p. 312.
[r] Ibid. sect. 56. p. 327.

[s] See Addison's present State of the Jews, c. 2. p. 30, 31. Dr. Newton ut supra, sect. 15. p. 197.
[t] Shebet Judah, p. 108, 109. Manasseh Ben Israel de Termino Vitæ, l. 2. sect. 3. p. 133.
[u] ——Judea tremens——. Juvenal, Satyr 6. v. 543.

xlii. 13—22. and xliii. 4, 5, 6, 7. There were several removes of them into Egypt after that time; an Heathen historian [w] tells us, that not a few thousands of Jews went into Egypt and Phœnicia, because of the sedition in Syria after the death of Alexander; and where, it seems, in process of time, they became slaves: for we are told by Josephus [x], that 120,000 slaves were set free by Ptolemy Philadelphus; but what is chiefly respected here is their case in the times of the Romans, and by their means. Now when Jerusalem was taken by Titus, those above 17 years of age were sent by him to the works, or mines, in Egypt, as the same historian relates [y]; and after their last overthrow by Adrian many thousands were sold, and what could not be sold were transported into Egypt, and perished by *shipwreck*, or famine, or were slaughtered by the people [z]; whereby this prophecy was literally and exactly fulfilled, and which is owned by the Jews themselves. Manasseh Ben Israel [a] observes, that though Vespasian banished the Jews into divers countries, Egypt is only mentioned by way of reproach, as if it had been said, ye shall go captives into the land from which ye went out triumphant: *by the way whereof I spake unto thee, thou shalt see it no more again;* the Targum of Jonathan is, "the Word of the Lord shall bring "thee into Egypt again in ships;" even the same divine Word, the Son of God, that brought them out of it, and went before them in a pillar of cloud and fire, now provoked by their rejection of him, would lead them back again thither; the paraphrast adds, "through the midst of the Red sea, in the path in "which ye passed;" as if they were carried over into Egypt in ships, just in that part of the sea in which they had passed before; but that was an unknown and unseen path, after the waters were closed up, and never to be seen more, and which is here meant; for not Egypt, but the way in which they passed, was to be seen no more: *and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and no man shall buy* you; that is, there in Egypt they would be offered to sale, and so many would be sold until the market was glutted with them, and there would be no buyers. The Targum of Jonathan is, "ye shall be sold there at "first to your enemies, at a dear price, as artificers, "and afterwards at a mean price as servants and hand-"maids, until ye become despised, and be brought to "serve for nothing, and there be none to take you in." Jarchi interprets it of they themselves being desirous, and seeking to be sold, to avoid cruelties and death; which agrees with the sense of the word, which may be rendered, *ye shall offer yourselves to sale;* but there will be no buyer, because their enemies will determine upon the slaughter and consumption of them; and to the same purpose Aben Ezra. There were such numbers of them to be sold both at Egypt and at Rome, that the sellers of them had but a poor market for them; and it seems not only because of their number, but the ill opinion had of them as servants. Hegesippus [b] says, "there were many to be sold, but there "were few buyers; for the Romans despised the Jews "for service, nor were there Jews left to redeem their "own." It is said [c], that thirty were sold for a penny; a just retaliation to them, who had sold their Messiah for thirty pieces of silver.

CHAP. XXIX.

THIS chapter begins with an intimation of another covenant the Lord was about to make with the people of Israel, ver. 1. and, to prepare their minds to an attention to it, various things which the Lord had done for them are recited, ver. 2—9. the persons are particularly mentioned with whom the covenant would now be made, the substance of which is, that they should be his people, and he their God, ver. 10—15. and since they had seen the idols in Egypt and other countries, with which they might have been insnared, they are cautioned against idolatry and idolaters, as being most provoking to the Lord, ver. 16—21. which would bring destruction not only on particular persons, but upon their whole land, to the amazement of posterity; who, inquiring the reason of it, will be told, it was because they forsook the covenant of God, and particularly were guilty of idolatry, which, whether privately or openly committed, would be always punished, ver. 22—29.

Ver. 1. *These are the words of the covenant,* &c.] Not what go before, but follow after, in the next chapters, to the end of the book; in which are various promises of grace, and promises of good things, both with respect to Jews and Gentiles, intermixed with other things: *which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab;* or to declare unto them, and acquaint them with, they being now in the plains of Moab, ready to enter into the land of Canaan: *besides the covenant which he made with them at Horeb;* or Sinai; which Jarchi interprets, besides the curses in Leviticus delivered on Sinai; he seems to have respect to Lev. xxvi. This covenant was different from that at Sinai, spoken of Exod. xxiv. 8. being made not only at a different time, at near forty years' distance, and at a different place, not Sinai; but when Israel were come nearer Mount Sion, and were actually possessed of part of their inheritance, the land of promise, that part of the land of Moab which the two kings of the Amorites had seized and dwelt in, whom Israel had dispossessed; and with different persons, that generation being dead, excepting a very few, which were at Sinai: but it was different as to the substance and matter of it, it not only including that, and being a renewal of it, as is generally thought, but containing such declarations of grace which had not been made

[w] Hecatæus apud Joseph. contr. Apion, l. 1. sect. 22.
[x] Antiqu. l. 12. c. 2. sect. 1.
[y] De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 2.
[z] Hieron. in Zech. ii. fol. 120. L.
[a] De Termino Vitæ, l. 3. sect. 2. p. 131, 132.
[b] De excidio Urb. Hieros. l. 5. c. 47. p. 645.
[c] Ib. p. 680.

before, not only respecting the repenting and returning Israelites, but the Gentiles also; for this covenant was made with the stranger, as well as with Israel, ver. 11. and relates to the times of the Messiah, the call of the Gentiles, the conversion of the Jews, and their return to their own land in the latter day.

Ver. 2. *Moses called unto all Israel*, &c.] He had been speaking before to the heads of them, and delivered at different times what is before recorded; but now he summoned the whole body of the people together, a solemn covenant being to be made between God and them; or such things being to be made known unto them as were of universal concernment: *and said unto them;* what is in this chapter; which is only a preparation or introduction to what he had to declare unto them in the following: *ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt;* the Targum of Jonathan is, "what the Word of the Lord "did;" for all the wonderful things there done in Egypt were done by the essential Word of God, Christ, the Son of God; who appeared to Moses in the bush, and sent him to Egypt, and by him and Aaron wrought the miracles there; which many now present had seen, and were then old enough to take notice of, and could remember, though their fathers then in being were now dead: *unto Pharaoh and unto all his servants, and unto all his land:* the plagues he inflicted on the person of Pharaoh, and on all his courtiers, and on all the people in Egypt, for they reached the whole land.

Ver. 3. *The great temptations which thine eyes have seen*, &c.] Or trials, the ten plagues which tried the Egyptians, whether they would let Israel go; and tried the Israelites, whether they would believe in the Lord, and trust in his almighty power to deliver them: *the signs and those great miracles;* as the said plagues were such as were beyond the power of nature to produce, and which only Omnipotence could really effect.

Ver. 4. *Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive*, &c.] They had some of them seen the above miracles with their bodily eyes, but had not discerned with the eyes of their understanding the power of God displayed in them, the goodness of God to them on whose behalf they were wrought, in order to obtain their deliverance, and the vengeance of God on the Egyptians for detaining them; so Jarchi interprets it of an heart to know the mercies of the Lord, and to cleave unto him: *and eyes to see, and ears to hear, unto this day;* to see and observe the gracious dealings of God with them, and to hearken to his voice and obey it: so the understanding heart, the seeing eye, and hearing ear, in things spiritual, are from the Lord, are special gifts of his grace, which he bestows on some, and not on others; see Prov. xx. 12. The Targum of Jonathan is, "the Word of the Lord "did not give you an heart, &c."

Ver. 5. *And I have led you forty years in the wilderness*, &c.] From the time of their coming out of Egypt unto that day, which though not quite complete, is given as a round number. Eupolemus[a], an Heathen writer, confirms this date of the ministry of Moses among the Israelites; he says, Moses performed the office of a prophet forty years: *your clothes are not waxen old upon you:* were not worn out; all those forty years they had been in the wilderness, they had never wanted clothes fitting for them, according to their age and stature, and which decayed not; see the note on ch. viii. 4. *and thy shoe is not waxen old upon thy foot;* which were necessary to wear in travelling, and especially in a rugged wilderness; and yet, though they had been always in use during so long a time, were not worn out, which was really miraculous; see the note on the place before referred to.

Ver. 6. *Ye have not eaten bread*, &c.] Bread made of corn, common bread, of their own preparing, made by the labour of their own hands; but manna, the food of angels, the bread of heaven: *neither have you drank wine, nor strong drink;* only water out of the rock, at least chiefly, and for constancy; though it may be, when they were on the borders of other countries, as of the Edomites, they might obtain some wine for their money: *that ye might know that I am the Lord your God;* who was both able and willing to provide food, drink, and raiment for them, and supply them with all good things, and support them without the use of the common necessaries of life; which were abundant proofs of his power and goodness.

Ver. 7. *And when ye came unto this place*, &c.] The borders of Moab, the wilderness before it, to which joined the plains they were now in; see Numb. xxi. 13, 20. Deut. ii. 26. *Sihon king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, came out against us unto battle;* not together, but one after the other, and that very quickly; as soon almost as they had fought with the one, and conquered him, the other came out against them: *and they smote them*. killed them and their armies, and the inhabitants of their countries; the history of which see in Numb. xxi. 23—35.

Ver. 8. *And we took their land*, &c.] Which belonged to the two kings, the lands of Jazer, Gilead, and Bashan, fine countries for pasturage: *and gave it for an inheritance unto the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh;* who requested it, and to whom it was granted on certain conditions, and they were now in possession of it; see Numb. ch. xxxii.

Ver. 9. *Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them*, &c.] To do which they were laid under great obligations, through the goodness of God to them, in giving them victory over the two kings, and delivering their countries into their hands, as well as by all the favours bestowed on them in the wilderness, where they were sufficiently supplied with food, drink, and raiment; all which is made use of as a motive and argument to engage them to observe and keep the covenant the Lord made with them: *that ye may prosper in all that ye do;* in all their occupations and businesses of life, in their manufactures and commerce, in the culture of their fields and vineyards, and in whatsoever they were employed in a lawful way; the word used has sometimes the signification of acting wisely and prudently, as in Isa. lii. 13. hence the Septuagint version is, *that ye may understand all that ye do;* and so the Jerusalem Targum.

Ver. 10. *Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord*

[a] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.

your God, &c.] Being gathered together at the door of the tabernacle, at the summons of Moses. Aben Ezra interprets it round about the ark, which was the symbol of the divine Presence: *your captains of your tribes*; the heads and rulers of them: *your elders and your officers*, with *all the men of Israel*; not the 70 elders only, but their elders in their several tribes, cities, and families, men of gravity and prudence, as well as of age, and who were in some place of power and authority or another: and the *officers* may design such who attended the judges, and executed their orders; see ch. xvi. 18. and with them were the common people, the males, who were grown persons. Aben Ezra thinks they stood in the order in which they here are mentioned, which is not improbable; next to Moses the princes, then the elders, and after them the officers, and next every man of Israel, the males; and then the little ones with the males; after them the women, and last of all the proselytes.

Ver. 11. *Your little ones, your wives*, &c.] Who are scarce ever mentioned in any special law or solemn transaction: *and thy stranger that is in thy camp*; not only the proselyte of righteousness, who embraced the Jewish religion entirely, but the proselyte of the gate, who was admitted to dwell among them, having renounced idolatry. These standing with the Israelites, when this covenant was made, has respect to the Gentiles, who as well as the Jews have an interest in the covenant of grace made with Christ; in whom there is, neither Jew nor Gentile, any difference between them: *from the hewer of thy wood to the drawer of thy water*; that hewed wood for firing and other uses, and drew water for the camp; who were generally mean persons, and perhaps some that came out of Egypt with them are here intended; however, mean and abject persons are meant, and signifies that none should be excluded from a concern in this solemn affair on account of their meanness.

Ver. 12. *That thou shouldest enter into covenant with the Lord thy God*, &c.] That is, they were all to appear and stand in this order before the Lord, that they might solemnly avouch him to be their God, and hear him declaring them to be his people, and the many promises and prophecies of good things he should deliver to them, as well as threatenings of wrath and vengeance in case of disobedience to him: *or that thou shouldest pass*[e]: which some think is an allusion to the manner of making covenants, by slaying a creature, and cutting it in pieces, and passing between them, as in Jer. xxxiv. 18. so Jarchi and Aben Ezra: *and into his oath*; annexed to his covenant and promise, to shew the immutability and certain fulfilment of it on his part; and may signify not only the oath he swore that they should be his people, but the oath he gave them, and they took, that he should be their God: *which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day*; which refers both to the covenant and the oath, or the covenant confirmed by an oath, even the covenant now made in the plains of Moab, distinct from that at Horeb or Sinai.

Ver. 13. *That he may establish thee this day for a people unto himself, and that he may be unto thee a God*, &c.] Which contains the sum and substance of the covenant; see Jer. xxxii. 38. *as he hath said unto thee, and as he had sworn unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob*; ch. xxvi. 17, 18. and xxviii. 9.

Ver. 14. *Neither with you only do I make this covenant and this oath.*] That is, Moses; for he was ordered to make this covenant with them in the name of the Lord; what promises of good things, or declarations of his mind and will, God would make, Moses was to deliver to them; and what was required of them he would inform them of. Aben Ezra interprets it, not only you, but those that will come after you, your sons and your sons' sons.

Ver. 15. *But with him that standeth here with us this day before the Lord our God*, &c.] Who are before specified according to their dignity, age, sex, and station of life; or rather, *but as with him that standeth*, &c. *and so with* him *that* is *not here with us this day*; detained at home by illness and indisposition of body, or by one providence or another; so that they could not come out of their tents, and make their appearance before the tabernacle; though Jarchi interprets this of the people of future generations.

Ver. 16. *For ye know how we have dwelt in the land of Egypt*, &c.] How long they and their fathers had dwelt there, the number of years they had been in the land, as the Targum of Jonathan, which was upwards of 200 years; and being a country the inhabitants of which were much given to idolatry, they had seen many of their idols, and much of their idolatrous worship; and their hearts had been apt to be ensnared by it, and the minds of some tinctured with it, and the remembrance thereof might make ill impressions on them; to remove or prevent which this covenant was made: *and how we came through the nations which ye passed by*; as the Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites, and Midianites, as Aben Ezra observes, through whose borders they came, as they passed by their countries in their journeys in the wilderness.

Ver. 17. *And ye have seen their abominations and their idols*, &c.] Or, *their abominations, even their idols*: for the same are meant by both: it is common in Scripture to call the idols of the Gentiles abominations, without any other explanation of them; see 1 Kings xi. 5. 7. because they are abominable to God, and ought to be so to men: the word for idols has the signification of dung, and may be rendered dunghill-gods, either referring to such that were bred and lived in dung, as the beetle, worshipped by the Egyptians, as Bishop Patrick observes; or which were as much to be loathed and abhorred as the dung of any creature: *wood and stone, silver and gold*: these are the materials of which the idols they had seen in the several countries they had been in, or passed through, were made of; some of wood, others of stone cut out of these, and carved; others more rich and costly were made of massy gold and silver, and were molten ones; or the images of wood were gilded with gold and silver. Now these being seen by them as they passed along, they might run in their minds, or be called to remembrance by them, and so they be in danger

[e] לעברך ut transeas, V. L. Tigurine version, Munster, Vatablus, Pagninus, Piscator, Coccelus; ad transeundum, Montanus.

of being drawn aside to make the like, and worship them.

Ver. 18. *Lest there should be among you man or woman, or family, or tribe, &c.*] These words stand in connexion with ver. 15, the 16th and 17th verses being in a parenthesis, as may be observed, and shew the design of this solemn appearance of the people, and their entering afresh into covenant; which was to prevent their falling into idolatry, and preserve them from it, whether a single person of either sex, or a whole family, or even a tribe, which might be in danger of being infected with it, and so all the people: *whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of those nations*; whose heart is enticed and drawn aside at the remembrance of the idols he has seen worshipped by others; and is looking off from the Lord God, his faith in him being weakened, his fear of him removed, and his affections for him lessened; and is looking towards the idols of the nations, with a hankering mind to serve and worship them: *lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood*; the word *rosh*, which we render *gall*, signifies, according to Jarchi, a bitter herb, which better suits with a root than gall, and is elsewhere by us rendered *hemlock*, Hos. x. 4. and is by him very rightly interpreted of a wicked man among them; for not a principle of immorality, or heresy, rooted in the mind, productive of bitter fruits, or evil actions, is meant; but a bad man, particularly an idolater, who is rooted in idolatry, and is guilty of and commits abominable actions; the issue of which will be bitterness and death, if not recovered; which agrees with what the apostle says, Heb. xii. 15. who manifestly alludes to this passage; see 1 Maccab. i. 11. and is confirmed by what follows.

Ver. 19. *And it cometh to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, &c.*] That is, the man before compared to a root bearing bitter herbs, when he should hear the curses pronounced by the law against such persons as himself: *that he bless himself in his heart*; inwardly pronounce himself blessed, thinking himself secure from the curse of the law, and flattering himself it will never reach him nor come upon him: *saying, I shall have peace*; all happiness and prosperity, in soul, body, and estate; inward peace of mind now, and eternal peace hereafter: *though I walk in the imagination of my heart*; in worshipping idols which he vainly and wickedly imagined to be gods; to the worship of which his wicked heart prompted him, and he was resolutely and stubbornly bent upon, and in which he continued: *to add drunkenness to thirst*; as a thirsty man to quench his thirst drinks, and adds to that, or drinks yet more and more until he is drunken; so a man inclined to idolatry, that has a secret desire after it, thirsts after such stolen or forbidden waters, and drinks of them, adds thereunto, drinks again and again until he is drunk with the wine of fornication, or idolatry, as it is called Rev. xvii. 2. so the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan understand the words of adding sin to sin, particularly of adding sins of ignorance to pride, or to presumptuous ones. Wicked men, deceivers and deceived, always grow worse and worse, increasing to more ungodliness, and yet promise themselves peace and impunity, 1 Thess. v. 3.

Ver. 20. *Then the Lord will not spare him, &c.*] Have no mercy upon him, nor forgive him, being an hard-hearted, impenitent, stubborn, and obstinate sinner, as well as guilty of the grossest and most provoking sin, as idolatry is: *but then the anger of the Lord, and his jealousy, shall smoke against that man*; or, *the nose of the Lord shall smoke*[f]; alluding to an angry, wrathful, furious man, whose brain being heated, and his passions inflamed, his breath steams through his nostrils like smoke; it denotes the vehement anger, the greatness of God's wrath and indignation against such a person, and his burning zeal or jealousy for his own honour and glory injured by the idolater: *and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him*; for as he that offends in one point is guilty of all, and especially in such a principal point as this, which concerns the being and worship of God; so he makes himself liable to all the curses of the law, which shall not only come upon him, but abide on him; and there is no being clear of them but by redemption through Christ, who, by being made a curse for his people, has redeemed them from the curse of the law: *and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven*; he shall have no name in Israel, not in the church, and among the people of God, from whom he is to be excommunicated; shall have no name and place in the earth, being cut off from the land of the living; and shall have no name or fame after his death, his memory shall rot and perish; and he shall appear to have no name in the book of life; see Psal. lxix. 28. Rev. iii. 5.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, &c.*] Unto the evil of punishment, devote and consign him to it, and make him a visible and distinguished mark of his displeasure and vengeance. So some men are righteously separated from others, and pre-ordained unto condemnation, being wicked and ungodly men; for such God has made or appointed for the day of evil; see Prov. xvi. 4. Jude, ver. 4. *according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law*; the evil of punishment he shall be separated unto shall be according to them, or include them all; the sense is, that the wrath of God, and the whole curse of the law due to him for his sin, shall come upon him; see ch. xxviii. 16, 17, 18, &c.

Ver. 22. *So that the generation to come of your children that shall rise up after you, &c.*] Not the next generation, but in future times, in ages to come, at a great distance, even after the destruction of Judea by the Romans; to which the following verse seems to refer: *and the stranger that shall come from a far land*; on trade and business, or for the sake of travelling, his road either lying through it, or his curiosity leading him to see it: *shall say, when they see the plagues of the land*; cities and towns in ruins, fields lie uncultivated, and the whole land depopulated, and all become a barren wilderness, which was once a fruitful country, a land flowing with milk and honey: *and the sicknesses*

[f] יעשן אף יהוה fumabit nasus Domini, Montanus.

which the Lord hath laid upon it: upon the inhabitants of it, as the pestilence and other diseases, which shall have swept the land of them; see ch. xxviii. 22, 27, 35. This case supposes a general departure from the worship of God to the service of idols; otherwise single individuals are punished in their own persons, as in the preceding verses.

Ver. 23. *And the whole land thereof* is *brimstone and salt, and burning,* &c.] That is, is become exceeding barren, as all such land is where there are sulphureous mines, or salt pits, or burning mountains; not that this would be, or has been the case of the land of Judea in a strict literal sense; only these are expressions made use of to shew the barrenness of it, which is its case at this day, not through the nature of its soil being changed, but through the slothfulness of the inhabitants of it; to which time it better agrees than to the time of its falling into the hands of the Chaldeans, who left men in it for husbandmen and vinedressers. Aben Ezra understands this as a prayer to God, that the land might be burnt up; that is, for the sins of the people: *that it is not sown, nor beareth, nor any grass groweth therein:* not being sown, it would bear and produce no corn for men; and not being manured, no grass would spring up for the cattle: *and so would* be *like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, of Admah and Zeboim:* which indeed are, strictly speaking, become a sulphureous and bituminous lake, called the salt sea, and the lake Asphaltites, and where no green grass or corn, or any kind of fruit grow: *which the Lord overthrew in his anger and in his wrath:* the Targum of Jonathan is, "which the Word "of the Lord overthrew;" and it was Jehovah, the Word, or Son of God, who rained, from Jehovah the Father, out of heaven, fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah, and the rest of the cities; see Gen. xix. 24. and the note there, in which chapter is the history of this fatal overthrow.

Ver. 24. *Even all nations shall say,* &c.] For the destruction of this land, and the people of it, would be, as it has been, so very great and awful, and so very remarkable and surprising, that the fame of it would be heard among all the nations of the world, as it has been; who, upon hearing the sad report of it, would ask the following questions: *wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land?* so distinguished from all others for the fruitfulness and pleasantness of it; the people, the inhabitants of which, he chose, above all others, to be a special and peculiar people; and where he had a temple built for him, and where he had his residence, and worship used to be given unto him: *what* meaneth *the heat of this great anger?* what is the reason of his stirring up his fierce wrath, and causing it to burn in so furious a manner? surely it must be something very horrible and provoking indeed!

Ver. 25. *Then men shall say,* &c.] The answer that will be returned to the above questions will be this: *because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers:* breakers of covenants with men are always reckoned among the worst of men, see Rom. i. 31. and especially breakers of covenant with God, and with such a God as the God of Israel was, so good, so kind, and gracious; and of such a covenant he made with them, in which so many good things were promised unto them, on condition of their obedience; as the continuance in such a land they dwelt in, with an abundance of privileges, civil and religious: and this covenant-God of theirs was the God of their fathers also; and it was always reckoned an heinous sin among the Heathens to forsake the gods of their ancestors; see Jer. ii. 11. *which he made with them when he brought them out of the land of Egypt:* which is another aggravation of their breach of the covenant the Lord made with them; it being made with them by that God, and at that time, when he in so wonderful a manner, with such mighty power, and a stretched-out arm, and in great kindness and tenderness to them, brought them out of hard bondage and most wretched slavery in Egypt.

Ver. 26. *For they went and served other gods, and worshipped them,* &c.] As did all Israel, in the times of Solomon, and the ten tribes under Jeroboam, and other succeeding kings of Israel; and the two tribes in the times of Ahaz, and especially of Manasseh, when they worshipped all the host of heaven; see 1 Kings xi. 33. and xii. 28. 2 Kings xvi. 4. and xxi. 3. *gods whom they knew not:* to whom they, as well as their fathers before them, were strangers, and approved not of them; and of whose power and goodness they had no experience, and of which there never were any instances; yet such was their stupidity, as to leave their God, the only true God, of whom they had many proofs in both respects, and worship these idols, which had never been profitable and serviceable to them on any account: *and* whom *he hath not given unto them:* which version seems not to afford a good sense; for to what people soever has God, the true God, given other gods to worship, which this seems to imply, though he had not given or allowed any to them? Onkelos paraphrases it, *did not do them good:* which Jarchi explains, the gods they chose them did not impart to them any inheritance, or any portion; for the word used signifies to divide, or part a portion or inheritance; now the Lord God did divide to Israel the land of Canaan for an inheritance, but these idols had never divided any thing to them, and had been in no instance profitable or advantageous to them; and therefore it was madness and folly in them to worship them, as well as great ingratitude to the Lord their God, who had done such great and good things for them; for so the words may be rendered, *and did not impart* or *divide to them* [g] any thing; that is, not any one of them did; for the verb is singular.

Ver. 27. *And the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land,* &c.] For this their idolatry and base ingratitude: *to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book:* in this book of Deuteronomy, and particularly ch. xxviii. 16. to the end; see Dan. ix. 11.

Ver. 28. *And the Lord rooted them out of the land,* &c.] Which was true both at the Babylonish captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, and at their present one by the Romans; and especially the latter, by whom they have

[g] ולא חלק להם qui nihil impertitus est eis, Pagninus; & quorum nullus impertitus fuerat eis quidquam, Piscator; neque partitus est ipsis, Cocceius.

been so rooted out, as that they have not been able to return to it these 1700 years, nor to have any inheritance or possession in it; whereas, at the end of 70 years, they returned from the Babylonish captivity to their land again: and which was done *in anger, and in wrath, and in great indignation;* which were most abundantly shewn in the utter destruction of their land, city, and temple, by the Romans: *and cast them into another land, as* it is *this day;* the ten tribes were cast into Assyria, and from thence into the cities of the Medes, the two tribes into the land of Chaldea, and now into all lands; and none their own, but another, a strange and foreign country. The word *cast* denotes the vehemence of the divine displeasure at them, expressed by the removal of them out of their own land into another. In the Hebrew word for *cast*, a middle letter in it is greater than usual; the reason of which perhaps is, that this dealing of God with them might be observed and taken notice of as very remarkable; and Ainsworth thinks it is to observe the greatness of the punishment; and the Jews understand this of the casting away of the ten tribes: and they gather from hence that the ten tribes shall not return, though about it they are divided; for so they say in the Misnah [h], "the "ten tribes shall not return, as it is said, *and cast them* "*into another land, as this day;* as the day goes and "does not return, so they go and return not; these "are the words of R. Akiba. R. Eliezer says, as the "day brings on darkness and light, so the ten tribes "who are now dark shall be enlightened."

Ver. 29. *The secret things belong unto the Lord our God,* &c.] Respecting the people of Israel, and the providential dealings of God with them, and especially the final rejection of them; with respect to which, the apostle's exclamation agrees with this, Rom. xi. 33. and though the Lord had revealed many things which should befall them, there were others still secret with him, and the reasons of others; and particularly the times and seasons of their accomplishment, which he retains in his own power, Acts i. 6. There are many secret things in nature, which can't be found out and accounted for by men, which the Lord only knows; and there are many things in Providence, which are unsearchable, and past finding out by finite minds, especially the true causes and reasons of them; and there are many things relating to God himself, which remain secret with him, notwithstanding the revelation he has made of himself; for not only some of his perfections, as eternity, immensity, &c. are beyond our comprehension; but the mode of subsistence of the three divine Persons in the Godhead, the paternity of the one, the generation of the other, and the procession of the Spirit from them both; the union of the two natures, divine and human, in the person of Christ; the thoughts, purposes, and decrees of God within himself, until brought into execution; and so there are many things relating to his creatures, as the particular persons predestinated unto eternal life, what becomes of such who die in infancy, what will befall us in life, when we shall die, where and in what manner, and also the day and hour of the last judgment. The Jews generally interpret this and what follows of the sins of men, and punishment for them, and, particularly, idolatry; take Aben Ezra's sense instead of many, "he that commits idolatry secretly, his punishment "is by the hand of heaven (from God immediately); "he that commits it openly, it lies upon us and upon "our children to do as is written in the law:" *but those things which are revealed* belong *to us and to our children for ever;* the things of nature and Providence, which are plain and manifest, are for our use and instruction; and especially the word and ordinances of God, which are the revelation of his will, the doctrines and promises contained in the Scriptures, the several duties of religion, and the commandments of God, such as are of eternal obligation, which may be chiefly designed, because it follows: *that we may do all the words of this law:* for the end of this revelation is practice; hearing and reading the word will be of no avail, unless what is heard and read is practised. Some render the words [i], "the secret things of the Lord our God are re- "vealed to us and to our children;" but neither the construction of the words in the original, nor the Hebrew accents, will admit of such a version; otherwise it would furnish out a very great truth: for the secrets of God's love, of his council and covenant, are revealed unto his people, as well as many of his providences, and the mysteries of his grace: see Psal. xxv. 14. There are some extraordinary pricks in the Hebrew text on the words *to us and to our children:* which are designed to point out the remarkable and wonderful condescension and goodness of God, in making a revelation of his mind and will, both with respect to doctrine and duty, to the sons of men.

CHAP. XXX.

THIS chapter contains some gracious promises of the conversion of the Jews in the latter day, of their calling things to mind that have befallen them, of their repentance, and the circumcision of their hearts to love the Lord, of the return of them to their own land, and of the great increase of them, and of their enjoyment of plenty of good things, ver. 1—10. in it is an account of the Gospel, or word of faith, which at this time should be brought near to the Jews, and be received by them, ver. 11—14. and for the present Moses desires them to consider what he now set before them, and what would be the consequences of receiving or rejecting it, and so what it would be most proper for them to make choice of, ver. 15—20.

Ver. 1. *And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee,* &c.] Declared, pronounced, foretold, and prophesied of in the three preceding chapters, especially in ch. xxviii. *the blessing and the curse*

[h] Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 3.

[i] So some in Pagnin and Vatablus.

which I have set before thee: the blessings promised to those that pay a regard to the will of God, and obey his voice, and curses threatened to the disobedient; see ch. xxviii. 1—20. *and thou shalt call* them *to mind among all the nations whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee:* recollect the promises and the threatenings, and observe the exact accomplishment of them in their several captivities, and especially in this their last and present captivity.

Ver. 2. *And shalt return unto the Lord thy God,* &c.] By repentance, acknowledging their manifold sins and transgressions, particularly their disbelief and rejection of the Messiah, now seeking him and salvation by him; see Hos. iii. 5. *and shalt obey his voice;* in the Gospel, yielding the obedience of faith to that; embracing the Gospel, and submitting to the ordinances of it: *according to all that I command thee this day, thou, and thy children;* which was to love the Lord, and walk in his ways, directed to in the Gospel, and which were to be regarded from a principle of love to God and the blessed Redeemer; see ver. 6, 16. *with all thine heart and with all thy soul;* that is, both their return unto the Lord, and their obedience to his voice or word, should be hearty and sincere; which being the case, the following things would be done for them.

Ver. 3. *That then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion on thee,* &c.] Return them from their captivity, or bring them out of it, both in a temporal and spiritual sense; free them from their present exile, and deliver them from the bondage of sin, Satan, and the law; and all this as the effect of his grace and mercy towards them, and compassion on them; see Jer. xxx. 18. The Targum of Jonathan is, " his Word shall receive with good will " your repentance;" it being cordial and unfeigned, and fruits meet for it brought forth: *and will return and gather thee from all the nations whither the Lord thy God scattered thee;* or, *will again gather thee*[k]; as he had gathered them out of all places where they had been scattered, on their return from the Babylonish captivity; so will he again gather them from all the nations of the earth, east, west, north, and south, where they are now dispersed; when they shall turn to the Lord, and seek David their King, the true Messiah. Maimonides[l] understands this passage of their present captivity, and deliverance from it by the Messiah.

Ver. 4. *If* any *of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven,* &c.] As many of them are in this remote island of ours, Great Britain, reckoned formerly the uttermost part of the earth, as Thule, supposed to be Schetland, an isle belonging to Scotland, is said to be[m]; see the note on ch. xxviii. 49. and as some of them are thought to be in America, which Manasseh Ben Israel[n] had a firm belief of: *from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee:* whose eye is omniscient, and reaches every part of the world; and whose arm is omnipotent, and none can stay it, or turn it back. The Targum of Jonathan is, " from thence will he bring you near by " the hands of the King Messiah."

Ver. 5. *And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it,* &c.] That the Jews upon their conversion in the latter day will return to the land of Judea again, and possess it, is the sense of many passages of Scripture; among others, see Jer. xxx. 18. Ezek. xxviii. 25, 26. and xxxvii. 21, 22, 25. Zech. x. 10. the above Targum is, " the Word of the Lord will bring thee, " *&c.*" *and he will do thee good;* both in things temporal and spiritual; see Ezek. xxxiv. 24—31. *and multiply thee above thy fathers,* increase their number more than ever they were in any age; for they shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered, Hos. i. 10, 11.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed,* &c.] No mention is made of circumcision of the flesh, which will now be out of use with the Jews; they being fully convinced of the abrogation of the ceremonial law by the Messiah, whom they will now receive. It is spiritual circumcision only that is here spoken of, with which the Jews will be circumcised, when they shall be pricked and cut to the heart, and be thoroughly convinced of sin; when the iniquity of their hearts will be laid open to them, and they put to pain, and filled with shame and loathing for it; when the hardness of their hearts will be removed, and the foolishness of them will be exposed and taken away, and they will be made willing to part with their sins, and with their own righteousness; when the graces of the Spirit will be implanted in them, and the blood of Christ applied to them for pardon and cleansing. This is the circumcision made without hands, which is not of men, but of God; what he calls for, and exhorts unto, as being necessary, ch. x. 16. he here promises to do; and indeed none but himself can do it; for he only can come at the hearts of men, to take any thing out of them, or put any thing into them; it is he that opens the heart, softens, quickens, enlightens, and purifies it: Baal Hatturim says this respects the times of the Messiah: *to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;* which, though the duty of every man, is performed by none but those that have the grace of God; there is no love to God in the heart before this inward and spiritual circumcision of it: it is a fruit of the spirit in conversion when the affections are taken off of other things, and set on Christ; when a man sees his sin and his Saviour, and the one is odious, and the other precious; when the blessings of grace are applied, and the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, which cause love to God and Christ again: *that thou mayest live;* spiritually and eternally; for there is no spiritual life in the soul till the heart is circumcised, or, in other words, regenerated and renewed; then it is quickened; then a man lives a life of faith on Christ, of holiness from him, of communion with him, and has both an open right unto, and meetness for, eternal life.

[k] וקבצך ושב καὶ πάλιν συνάξει, Sept. & rursum congregabit te, V. L. & iterum colliget te, Piscator.
[l] Hilchot Melachim, c. 11. sect. 1.

[m] Ultima Thule, Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 30. Seneca Medea, Act 2. in fine.
[n] Spes Israelis, sect. 38.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord thy God will put all these curses upon thine enemies,* &c.] Recorded in ch. xxviii. that is, the Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan; for he being now sought unto, and embraced, will be their King and their Saviour, and revenge their enemies: *and on them that hate thee, which persecuted thee:* the Turks and Papists, the former having taken possession of their land, and the latter being violent persecutors of them in all their countries. This will be fulfilled when the vials of God's wrath will be poured on the antichristian states, Rev. xvi.

Ver. 8. *And thou shalt return, and obey the voice of the Lord,* &c.] In the Gospel; obey the form of doctrine delivered to them, embrace the truth of the Gospel cordially, and yield a cheerful subjection to the ordinances of it; or receive the Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan, Christ, the essential Word, by faith, as the Saviour and Redeemer, Mediator, Prophet, Priest, and King: *and do all his commandments which I command thee this day:* the commandment nigh unto them, in their mouths and hearts, even the word of faith, the ministers of Christ preach, ver. 11. besides, all the moral precepts and commands of the law, which will then be in force, being eternal and invariable; which faith in Christ, and love to him, will influence and constrain them to observe.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord thy God will make thee plenteous in every work of thine hand,* &c.] In every manufacture, trade, or business of life in which they should be employed; the meaning is, that the Lord will greatly bless them in all that they shall set their hands to in a lawful way; so that they shall abound in good things, and have enough and to spare, a redundancy of the good things of life, great plenty of them: *in the fruit of thy body:* abundance of children: *and in the fruit of thy cattle:* a large increase of oxen and sheep: *and in the fruit of thy land for good:* it being by the blessing of God on their labours restored to its former fertility, though now barren through want of inhabitants, and the slothfulness of those that are possessed of it; for travellers observe[o], the soil is still good, was it properly manured and cultivated: *for the Lord will again rejoice over thee for good, as he rejoiced over thy fathers;* particularly in the days of Solomon and David, when the people of Israel enjoyed plenty of all good things, and so they will hereafter; see Hos. ii. 15, 21, 22. The Targum of Jonathan is, "the Word of the Lord will return to rejoice, &c." See Jer. xxxii. 41.

Ver. 10. *If thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God,* &c.] Or rather, *for thou shalt hearken*[p]; seeing it is before promised that the Lord would circumcise their hearts to love him, and they should obey his voice, ver. 6, 8. The Targum is, "receive "the Word of the Lord:" *to keep his commandments and his statutes, which are written in this book of the law;* particularly in this chapter, and all that are of a moral nature: and *if thou return unto the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul:* or, *for thou shalt return,* &c. as it is promised they should, ver. 8.

Ver. 11. *For this commandment which I command thee this day,* &c.] Which the Jews understand of the law, but the Apostle Paul has taught us to interpret it of the word of faith, the Gospel preached by him and other ministers, Rom. x. 6, 7, 8. which better suits with the context, and the prophecies before delivered concerning the conversion of the Jews, their reception of the Messiah, and his Gospel: *it is not hidden from thee;* being clearly revealed, plainly and fully preached: if hidden from any, it is from them that are lost; from the wise and prudent, while it is revealed to babes, and given to them to know the mysteries of it: or too *wonderful*[q]; hard, difficult, and impossible; its doctrines are not beyond the understanding of an enlightened person; they are all plain to them that understand and find the knowledge of them; and the ordinances of it are not too hard and difficult to be kept; the commandments of Christ are not grievous: *neither is it far off;* for though it is good news from a far country, from heaven, it is come down from thence; it is brought nigh in the ministry of the word to the ears and hearts of men.

Ver. 12. *It is not in heaven,* &c.] The scheme of it was formed in heaven, it was hid in the heart of God there, before revealed; it was ordained before the world was for our glory; it was brought down from thence by Christ, and committed to his apostles and ministers of the word to preach it to men; and has been ever since continued on earth, and will be at the time of the conversion of the Jews: *that thou shouldest say;* that there should be any occasion of saying; it forbids any such kind of speech as follows: *who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it to us, that we may hear it, and do it?* there is no need of that, for it is brought from thence already, and may be heard, and should be obeyed; for to put such a question would be the same as to ask *to bring Christ down from above,* who is come down already by the assumption of human nature, to preach the Gospel, give the sense of the law, and fulfil it, to do the will of his father, bring in an everlasting righteousness, and save his people; so that there is no need of his coming again on the same errand, since he has obtained eternal redemption, and is the author of everlasting salvation, which is the sum and substance of the Gospel.

Ver. 13. *Neither is it beyond the sea,* &c.] There is no need to travel into foreign parts, into transmarine countries for it, as the Heathen philosophers did to get knowledge; for the Gospel is ordered to be preached to all the world, and sent into all nations; and at the time of the conversion of the Jews the earth will be filled with the knowledge of it, as the waters cover the sea; so that there will be no need to go into distant countries for it; nor any occasion *that thou shouldest say, who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?* which would be all one as to desire *to bring up Christ again from the dead;* when he is already risen, and is gone to heaven, where he ever lives to make intercession for us; is thereby declared to be the son of God with power, and is discharged as the surety of his people, having done com-

[o] See Shaw's Travels, p. 336. Ed. 2.

[p] כי תשמע quis obedies, Cocceius.

[q] נפלאת mirabile, Montanus, Cocceius.

pletely what he engaged to do; and is risen for their justification, and become the first-fruits of the resurrection of the dead; wherefore whoever confesses with his mouth, and believes with his heart, that God has raised him from the dead, that is enough, he shall be saved: what a sublime sense of the words is this the apostle gives, and how jejune is that of the Chaldee paraphrast in comparison of it! see the note on Rom. x. 6, 7.

Ver. 14. *But the word is very nigh unto thee*, &c.] In the ministration of it by those who clearly, plainly, and faithfully preach it, and in the application of it by the spirit of God to the heart; and in the gracious experience converted persons have of the power and efficacy of it in them, and of the comfort they receive from it: *in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it*: in the mouth by confession, being not ashamed to own it, and profess it before men; and in the heart, where it is come with power, has a place, and works effectually, and is cordially believed, and comfortably experienced; and when this is the case, its ordinances will be faithfully kept as delivered, and cheerfully submitted to.

Ver. 15. *See, I have set before thee this day*, &c.] Moses here returns to press the Israelites to the present observance of the laws, statutes, and judgments of one sort and another, he had been delivering to them; as being of great moment and importance to them, no other than *life and good, and death and evil*; which are the effects and consequences of obedience and disobedience to them; a happy temporal life, and a continuance of it in the good land of Canaan, and an enjoyment of the blessings and good things thereof to them that are obedient; for not spiritual and eternal life, or spiritual blessings and everlasting happiness, are to be had by man's obedience to the law of works, only through Christ, through his obedience, righteousness, sufferings, and death; see Gal. iii. 21. so temporal death, or a cutting short of natural life in the promised land, and evil things, calamities, and distresses, or a deprivation of all the good things of it to the disobedient; see Isa. i. 19, 20.

Ver. 16. *In that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God*, &c.] Which is the sum and substance of the first table of the law, and includes the whole worship of God, the contrary to which are idolatry, superstition, and will-worship, from which Moses had been dissuading and deterring them: *to walk in his ways*; which he has prescribed, as his will to walk in, and his law directs to: *and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments*: his laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial, Moses had been repeating and reciting: *that thou mayest live and multiply*: live in the land of Canaan, and have a numerous offspring and posterity to succeed and continue in it, which is confirmed by what follows: *and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it*: with health and happiness, with an affluence of all good things, in the land of Canaan they were just entering into to take possession of.

Ver. 17. *But if thine heart turn away*, &c.] From the true God, and the right worship of him, and from his commands, statutes, and judgments: *so that thou wilt not hear*: the voice of the Lord and obey it, or hearken to his laws, and do them: *but shalt be drawn away*: by an evil heart, and by the ill examples of others: *and worship other gods and serve them*: the gods of the Gentiles, the idols of the people, besides the one living and true God, the God of Israel.

Ver. 18. *I denounce unto you this day that ye shall surely perish*, &c.] By one judgment or another; this he most solemnly averred, and it might be depended upon that it would certainly be their case; see ch. iv. 26. and that *ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it*: but be cut short by death, of one kind or another, by sword, or famine, or pestilence, or be carried into captivity; one or other of which were frequently their case.

Ver. 19. *I call heaven and earth to record this day against you*, &c.] Either, literally understood, the heavens above him, and the earth on which he stood, those inanimate bodies, which are frequently called upon as witnesses to matters of moment and importance; see ch. iv. 26. and xxxii. 1. Isa. i. 2. or figuratively, the inhabitants of both, angels and men: that *I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing*; had plainly told them in express words what would be the consequence of obedience and disobedience to the law of God; long life, and the blessings of it in the land of Canaan, to those that obey it; death, by various means, and dreadful curses, to those that disobey it; of which see at large ch. xxviii. *therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live*: that is, prefer obedience to the law, and choose to perform that, the consequence of which is life; that they and their posterity might live comfortably and happily, quietly and safely, and constantly, even to the latest ages, in the land of Canaan.

Ver. 20. *That thou mayest love the Lord thy God*, &c.] And shew it by keeping his commands: *and that thou mayest obey his voice*: in his word, and by his prophets: *and that thou mayest cleave unto him*: and to his worship, and not follow after and serve other gods: *for he is thy life, and the length of thy days*; the God of their lives, and the father of their mercies; the giver of long life, and all the blessings of it; and which he had promised to those that were obedient to him, and which they might expect: *that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them*: the land of Canaan, often thus described; this was the grand promise made to obedience to the law, and was typical of eternal life and happiness; which is had, not through man's obedience to the law, but through the obedience and righteousness of Christ.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL, THE TANJORE

CHAP. XXXI.

MOSES being old, and knowing he should quickly die, and must not go over Jordan with the people of Israel, acquaints them with it, and encourages them and Joshua to go over notwithstanding, and not be afraid of their enemies, since the Lord would go with them, and deliver them into their hands, ver. 1—8. and having written the law, he delivered it to the priests, and ordered that it should be read at the end of every seven years before all the people, that they and theirs might learn it, and fear the Lord, ver. 9—13. and whereas the death of Moses was very near, and the Lord foreseeing the people would quickly fall into idolatry, which would bring great calamities upon them, he directed Moses to write a song, which should be a witness for him, and against them, in ages to come; which Moses accordingly did, ver. 14—22. and Moses having given a charge to Joshua, and finished the writing of the law in a book, gave it to the Levites to put it in the side of the ark, ver. 23—27. and then ordered the chief of the tribes to be gathered together, that he might deliver the song, which by the direction and under the inspiration of God he had written, ver. 28, 29, 30. which song is recorded in the following chapter.

Ver. 1. *And Moses went and spake these words unto all Israel.*] The following words, even to the whole body of the people summoned together on this occasion. It seems that after Moses had made the covenant with them he was directed to, he dismissed the people to their tents, and went to his own, and now returned, having ordered them to meet him again, very probably at the tabernacle; with which agrees the Targum of Jonathan, he "went to the tabernacle of "the house of doctrine;" though, according to Aben Ezra, he went to the several tribes separately, as they lay encamped; his words are these, "he went to every "tribe and tribe, to acquaint them that he was about "to die, and that they might not be afraid, and to "strengthen their hearts;"—he adds, "in my opinion "he then blessed them, though their blessings are "afterwards written;" which is not improbable.

Ver. 2. *And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day, &c.*] Whether the meaning is, that that day precisely was his birth-day, is a question; it may be the sense is only this, that he was now arrived to such an age; though Jarchi takes it in the first sense, to which are objected his words in ver. 14. yet it seems by ch. xxxii. 48. that having delivered to the children of Israel the song he was ordered this day to write, on the self-same day he was bid to go up to Mount Nebo and die: and it is a commonly-received tradition with the Jews, that Moses died on the same day of the month he was born; see the notes on ch. xxxiv. 7. *I can no more go out and come in:* not that he could no longer go out of his tent and return without great trouble and difficulty, being so decrepit; but that he could not perform his office as their ruler and governor, or go out to battle and return as their general; and this not through any incapacity of body or mind, both being vigorous, sound, and well, as is clear from ch. xxxiv. 7. but because it was the will of God that he should live no longer to exercise such an office, power, and authority: *also the Lord hath said unto me,* or *for the Lord has said*[r], and so is a reason of the foregoing; the Targum is, "the Word of the Lord "said:" *thou shalt not go over this Jordan;* to which he and the people of Israel were nigh, and lay between them and the land of Canaan, over which it was necessary to pass in order to go into it; but Moses must not lead them there, this work was reserved for Joshua, a type of Christ; not Moses and his law, or obedience to it, is what introduces any into the heavenly Canaan; only Jesus and his righteousness; see ch. iii. 27.

Ver. 3. *The Lord thy God, he will go over before thee, &c.*] This he said to encourage the people of Israel; that though he should die, and not go over with them, their ever-living and true God, the great Jehovah, the Lord of hosts, he would go before them, and fight their battles for them; so that they had nothing to fear from their enemies: and *he will destroy those nations from before thee:* the seven nations which then inhabited the land: *and thou shalt possess them:* their countries, cities, and houses, fields, and vineyards: *and Joshua, he shall go over before thee:* as their general to fight for them, subdue their enemies, and put them into the possession of the land, and divide it to them: *as the Lord hath said;* ch. iii. 28.

Ver. 4. *And he shall do unto them as he did unto Sihon, and to Og, kings of the Amorites, &c.*] Deliver them up into their hands; see the history of this in Numb. xxi. *and unto the land of them whom he destroyed:* put them into the possession of the land of Canaan, as they were now in possession of the land of those two kings he destroyed by them. This instance is given to encourage their faith, assuring them that what had been done to them would be done to the Canaanitish kings, and their subjects, and their lands.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord shall give them up before your face, &c.*] To ruin and destruction; the Targum of Jonathan is, "the Word of the Lord shall deliver them "up:" *that ye may do unto them according to all the commandments which I have commanded you:* that is, utterly destroy them, make no covenant with them, enter into no alliances nor contract any marriages with them; but demolish their altars, cut down their groves, and break their images in pieces; of which last Aben Ezra interprets the words; but they are not to be restrained to that single instance; see ch. vii. 1—5.

Ver. 6. *Be strong and of a good courage, &c.*] The Septuagint version is, "play the men, and be strong;" be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, trusting and relying on him that goes before you; and so take heart, and be of good courage, and act the manly part; the apostle seems to refer to this passage,

[r] ויהוה præsertim cùm et Dominus, V. L. ו sometimes signifies *for.* See Noldius, p. 285. So Ainsworth and Patrick here.

1 Cor. xvi. 13. *fear not, nor be afraid of them*: their enemies, though so numerous, so mighty, and some of them of a gigantic stature, and their cities strong and well fenced: *for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee*: in comparison of whom, numbers of men, their strength of body, and fortified places, signify nothing: *he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*; not fail to fulfil his promises to them, not leave them till he had given them complete victory over their enemies, put them into the possession of their land, and settled them in it. This promise, though made to literal Israel, belongs to the spiritual Israel of God, and is made good to every true believer in the Lord; see Heb. xiii. 5.

Ver. 7. *And Moses called unto Joshua*, &c.] Who might be at some distance from him, with the tribe to which he belonged. The Targum of Jonathan adds, "out of the midst of the people:" *and said unto him, in the sight of all Israel*; now assembled together, and what follows was said in their hearing, to make him the more respectable to them: *be strong and of a good courage*; the same that is said to the people in the preceding verse, and which was still more necessary in him, who was to be their general, and to go at the head of them, and lead them on to battle; and though Joshua was a man of courage and valour, as well as had military skill, as appears by his fight with Amalek, Exod. xvii. 9—13. yet such an exhortation was not needless, seeing he had so much work to do, and so many enemies to contend with: *for thou must go with this people unto the land which the Lord hath sworn unto their fathers to give them*; the Targum of Jonathan is, "which the Word of the Lord hath sworn to give;" the land of Canaan, thither he must go with them; this was the will and determination of God, and he must go alone without him, Moses, which would be a trial of his courage.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee*, &c.] The Word of the Lord, his Shechinah, according to the above Targum, and so in the next clause; the same that brought Israel out of Egypt, had gone before them in the wilderness, and now would go before Joshua and them into the land of Canaan: *he will be with thee*; to guide and direct, to assist and strengthen, to protect and defend, to give success to his arms, and victory over his enemies: *he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee*; not fail to give him counsel and direction, to afford him strength, and to fill him with courage, and to deliver his enemies into his hands; nor forsake him till he had finished the work he was to do, had made a complete conquest of the Canaanites, and settled the people of Israel in their land: *fear not, neither be dismayed*; at the number and strength of the enemy, nor at any difficulties that might lie in the way of finishing so great an undertaking, since the Lord would be with him; see Rom. viii. 31.

Ver. 9. *And Moses wrote this law*, &c.] The book of Deuteronomy, or the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, which he had now finished, and which all of them together are sometimes called the law, Gal. iv. 21. *and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi*; who were the teachers of the law, as Aben Ezra observes; see Mal. ii. 7. and therefore it was proper to put it into their hands, to instruct the people in it, and that the people might apply to them in any matter of difficulty, or when they wanted to have any particular law explained to them: *which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord*: for though they were the Levites, and particularly the Kohathites, who in journeying carried the ark; see Numb. iv. 5—15. and x. 21. yet sometimes it was bore by the priests; see Josh. iii. 13—17. and vi. 6. 1 Sam. iv. 4. *and unto all the elders of Israel*; the judges and civil magistrates in the respective tribes; for as there were in the book of the law several things which belonged to the priests to perform, and all of them they were to instruct in, so there were others which were to be the rule of judgment to judges, and all civil magistrates, and which they were to take care were put in execution; and therefore it was proper that they should have a copy of this law, and which must be here understood; for it cannot be thought that one and the same copy should be given both to the priests and to all the elders. The Jews say Moses wrote 13 copies of the law, 12 for the 12 tribes, and one to be put into the ark, to convict of fraud or corruption, should any be made[r].

Ver. 10. *And Moses commanded them*, &c.] The priests and the elders, to whom the law was delivered: *saying*; as follows: *at the end of every seven years*; every seventh year was a year of rest to the land, and of remission of debts to poor debtors: at the close of this year, or going out of it, according to the Misnah[s], even on the eighth year coming in, the following was to be done, namely, the reading of the law; and so Jarchi interprets it of the first year of release, the eighth, that is, the first year after the year of release; but Aben Ezra better interprets it of the beginning of the seventh year; for as he elsewhere observes on ch. xv. 1. the word signifies the extremity of the year, and there are two extremities of it, the beginning and the end, and the first extremity is meant; which is more likely than that the reading of the law should be put off to the end of the year, and which seems to be confirmed by what follows: *in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles*, or *in the appointed time*[u]; of the year of release, of the release of debtors from their debts, ch. xv. 1, 2. when the time or season appointed and fixed was come: moreover, what is here directed to being to be done at the feast of tabernacles, shews it to be at the beginning of the year, since that feast was in the month Tisri, which was originally the beginning of the year, before the coming of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and still continued so for many things, and particularly for the years of release[w]; and this was a very proper time for the reading of the law, when all the increase of the earth and fruits thereof were gathered in; and so their hearts filled, or at least should be, with gladness and gratitude; and when there was no tillage of the land, being the seventh year, and so were at leisure for such service; and when all poor debtors were released from

[r] Debarim Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 244. 2.
[s] Sotah, c. 7. sect. 8.

[u] במועד in tempore statuto, Pagninus, Montanus; stato tempore, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[w] Misn. Roshhashanah, c. 1. sect. 1.

their debts, and so were freed from all cares and troubles, and could better attend unto it.

Ver. 11. *When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God,* &c.] As all the males were obliged to do three times in the year, and one of those times was the feast of tabernacles, and so a proper season for the reading of the law; see Exod. xxiii. 14—17. *in the place which the Lord shall choose*: the city of Jerusalem, and the temple there: *thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing*; the book of Deuteronomy, as Jarchi, or it may be the whole Pentateuch: who were to read it is not expressly said; the speech seems to be directed to the priests and elders, to whom the law written by Moses was delivered, ver. 9. and who were either to read it themselves, or take care that it should be read. Josephus[x] ascribes this service to the high-priest; he says, standing in an high pulpit (or on an high bench), "from whence he may be heard, he must "read the laws to all;" but the Jewish writers commonly allot this work to the king, or supreme governor, who at least was to read some parts of it; so Jarchi says, the king at first read Deuteronomy, as it is said in the Misnah[y]; "he read from the beginning of Deu-"teronomy to ch. vi. 4. *hear, O Israel,* &c. and then "added ch. xi. 13. then ch. xiv. 22. after that ch. "xxvi. 12. then the section of the king, ch. xvii. 14. "next the blessings and the curses, ch. xxvii. and ch. "xxviii. with which he finished the whole section;" and so we find that Joshua, the governor of the people after Moses, read all his laws, Josh. viii. 35. and so did King Josiah at the finding of the book of the law, 2 Kings xxiii. 2. and Ezra, Neh. viii. 3. The king received the book from the high-priest standing, and read it sitting; but King Agrippa stood and read, for which he was praised.

Ver. 12. *Gather the people together, men, and women, and children,* &c.] At the three grand festivals in other years, only males were obliged to appear; women might if they would, but they were not bound to it; but at this time all of every age and sex were to be summoned and assembled together; and it is said[z], when the king read in the book of the law, all the people were obliged to come and bring their families, as it is said Deut. xxxi. 12. *gather the people,* &c. and as it could not be done when it happened on the sabbath-day, the reading of the section was put off to the day following: *and thy stranger that is within thy gates*: not only the proselyte of righteousness, but the proselyte of the gate that renounced idolatry, for his further conviction and thorough conversion to the religion of the true God; or, as the Targum of Jonathan expresses it, that they might see the honour and glory of the law. The end is more fully expressed as follows, *that they may hear*: all the laws which God had given: *and that they may learn*; and attain unto the true knowledge and right understanding of them: *and fear the Lord your God*; serve and worship him internally and externally, according to these laws: *and observe to do all the words of this law*; so take notice of them as to put them in practice; and reading them in such a solemn pompous manner made them the more observable, and raised the greater attention to them, and to the importance of them; otherwise they were read in their families, and on sabbath-days in their synagogues; see ch. vi. 7. Acts xiii. 15. and xv. 21.

Ver. 13. *And that their children, which have not known any thing,* &c.] Of God and of his law, and of their duty to God, to their parents, and the rest of their fellow-creatures: *may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God*; hear the law of God, learn the meaning of it, and so be brought up in the fear, nurture, and admonition of the Lord, and serve him their Creator in the days of their youth: *as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it*; this being a means to continue the fear, service, and worship of God in their posterity, and so of their long continuance in the land of Canaan.

Ver. 14. *And the Lord said unto Moses,* &c.] Either at the same time, or quickly after; rather, perhaps, the same day: *behold, thy days approach that thou must die*; which does not necessarily imply that he had some days to live, though but few; but that the time of his death drew nigh, his last moments were approaching; the time of his death being, as every man's is, fixed by the Lord, with whom is the number of his years, months, days, and moments, beyond which he cannot pass, Job xiv. 5. *call Joshua, and present yourselves in the tabernacle of the congregation, that I may give him a charge*: this looks as if the people had been dismissed after the above exhortations given; and now Joshua was called, and Moses with him, to have a charge given him: *and Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tabernacle of the congregation*: before the Lord. Aben Ezra says, Moses went from the camp of Israel where he was, to the camp of the Shechinah; the Jews pretend to know in what form they walked thither. Moses, they say[a], went on the left hand of Joshua; and they went to the tabernacle, and the pillar of cloud descended and separated between them.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud,* &c.] As he was wont to do, see Exod. xxxiii. 9. in which cloud there was a lustre, a brightness, a glory visible, which shewed that he was there: *and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle*; it seems to have appeared first in the tabernacle, and then it came out of it, and stood over the door of it, near to which Moses and Joshua were: the Targum of Jonathan adds, "Moses and Joshua "stood without;" though the former clause, according to Noldius[b], should be *over the tabernacle*, or above it, where the cloud was wont to be.

Ver. 16. *And the Lord said unto Moses,* &c.] Out of the pillar of cloud: *behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers*; a phrase expressive of death, frequently used both of good and bad men, which serves to render death easy and familiar, and less formidable; and to assure and lead into an expectation of an awaking out of it, or a resurrection from it: *and this people will rise up*: in their posterity; for not till after Joshua's death,

[x] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 12.
[y] Sotah, ut supra.
[z] Bartenora in Misn. Megillah, c. 1. sect. 3.

[a] Debarim Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 244. 2.
[b] Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 164. No. 737.

and the death of the elders of Israel, did they revolt to idolatry, Josh. xxiv. 31. *and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be amongst them*: that is, after the gods of the Canaanites, who though at this time the inhabitants of the land, yet when the children of Israel became possessors of it, they were the strangers of it; and being suffered to continue contrary to the directions God had given to destroy them, would be a means of drawing them into the worship of their idols, expressed here by going a whoring after them, or committing whoredom with them. Idolatry in Scripture is frequently signified by fornication and adultery; and, as foretold, this was the case; see Psal. cvi. 35—39. *and will forsake me*: their husband, departing from his worship and service: *and break my covenant which I have made with them at Sinai*; and now again in the plains of Moab, and which had the nature of a matrimonial contract; see Jer. xxxi. 32.

Ver. 17. *Then my anger shall be kindled against them in that day*, &c.] As the anger of a man is against his wife who has treacherously departed from him: and jealousy, which is the rage of such a man, is very cruel; and much more the wrath and anger of a jealous God, who is a consuming fire: *and I will forsake them*: withdraw his favours from them, and his protection of them: *and I will hide my face from them*: take no notice of them in a providential way for good, nor hear their cries, to deliver them from evil: *and they shall be devoured*: by their enemies, or by the sore judgments of God, by famine, sword, pestilence, and evil beasts, they and their substance: *and many evils and troubles shall befall them*; both in their own land, and in other countries, where they would be, and have been carried captive: *so that they will say in that day, are not these evils come upon us, because our God is not amongst us?* of which they would be sensible by their being exposed to their enemies for want of his protection, and by the evils upon them through his displeasure, and by their being deprived of the good things that came from him; but no intimation is given of their being sensible of their sins as the cause of all this.

Ver. 18. *I will surely hide my face in that day*, &c.] Which is repeated for the certainty of it, and that it might be taken notice of; that he was the spring and source of all their good things, their sun and their shield, who being withdrawn from them, they would be deprived of every thing that was good, and be liable to all evil; and this he would do, *for all the evils which they shall have wrought*: for all the immoralities they should be guilty of, every transgression of his law, whether of the first or second table, and especially idolatry: *in that they are turned unto other gods*: to the worship and service of them, which of all evils would be the most provoking to God; and the way of speaking suggests as if all evils were included in idolatry, and sprang from it, or were committed with it.

Ver. 19. *Now, therefore, write ye this song for you*, &c.] Which was now dictated by the Lord, and given to Moses and Joshua to write, which is recorded in the following chapter: *and teach it the children of Israel*: teach them by it, instructing them in the meaning of it: thus it was usual in ancient times to write things in verse, that they might be the more pleasingly attended to and regarded, and be longer retained in memory; and especially this practice was used with children, and still is: *put it in their mouths*; oblige them to get it by heart, or lay it up in their memories, and repeat it frequently, that it may be familiar to them, and not be forgotten by them: *that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel*; when in times to come they shall call to mind how in this song they were cautioned against such and such sins, and what they were threatened with should befall them on account of them, and how all things have come to pass exactly as foretold in it; which would be a testimony for God of his goodness to them, of his tender care of them, and concern for them, in the previous cautions he gave them; and of his fore-knowledge of future events; and a testimony against them for their ingratitude and other sins.

Ver. 20. *For when I shall have brought them into the land which I sware unto their fathers*, &c.] To give it to them, and put them into the possession of it, even the land of Canaan, often thus described, and as it is by the following character: *that floweth with milk and honey*: aboundeth with all good things; see Exod. iii. 8. *and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat*: that is, after they have for a considerable time enjoyed the good things of the land, and they abound with them, and increase in them, and have great fulness of them: *then will they turn unto other gods*: turn from the Lord who has brought them into all this plenty, from the fear, worship, and service of him, and turn to the worship of idols: *and serve them*; the works of men's hands, and at most but creatures, and not the Creator; than which nothing can be more absurd and stupid, as well as wicked and ungrateful: *and provoke me*: nothing being more provoking to the Lord than idolatry, it striking at his very nature, being, and glory: *and break my covenant*; now made with them; this being foretold by the Lord, which exactly came to pass in numerous instances, proves his precise fore-knowledge of future events, even such as depend on the inclinations, dispositions, and wills of men.

Ver. 21. *And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them*, &c.] As did in the times of the judges, in the Babylonish captivity, and do now in their present exile: *that this song shall testify against them as a witness*; which so clearly points at their sins, with all their aggravated circumstances, and describes so fully their calamities, distresses, and punishment for them: *for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed*: which shews that it respects time to come, their later posterity, whose memory of this song would be rubbed up by the evils that should come upon them for their sins; nor is it forgotten by them to this day, who acknowledge there are some things in it now fulfilled or fulfilling in them: *for I know their imagination which they go about even now*; or are *making*[e]; forming and framing within themselves, there being a secret inclination in their

[e] עשה faciens, Montanus; quam facit, Pagninus.

minds to idolatry, which were working and contriving schemes to bring it about, and set it up; and this, God, the searcher of hearts, knew full well, and that in process of time this evil imagination would break forth into act, in an open and flagrant manner: *before I have brought thee into the land which I sware;* to their fathers, to give it to them for an inheritance, as is suggested in a preceding verse.

Ver. 22. *Moses therefore wrote this song the same day,* &c.] The same day it was dictated to him by divine inspiration; he wrote it, as Josephus says [a], "in hex-" ameter verse, which he left in the holy Bible or book " (the Pentateuch), containing (as he adds) a prophecy " of things future, according to which all things have " been done, and are done; and in nothing of it has he " erred from the truth;" which is a very just account of it, and worthy of observation: *and taught it the children of Israel;* instructed them in the meaning of it, directed them to repeat it frequently, to lay it up in their memories, and often meditate upon it; as being a divine composition, and of great importance, as the consideration of it will make appear.

Ver. 23. *And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge,* &c.] It may be a question who gave this charge, the Lord or Moses; according to the connexion of the words with the preceding, it seems to be the latter; for the immediate antecedent to the relative *he* is Moses, and so the Septuagint interpreters understand it: but then they are obliged to read some following clauses different from the original, as, instead of *I swear,* they read *the Lord sware;* and the last clause they read, *and he shall be with thee;* but Aben Ezra gives the same sense without departing from the common and genuine reading, supposing that Moses gave the charge in the name and by the authority of the Lord; his words are, "he gave charge by the commandment of the " Lord, therefore he saith, *which I sware unto them;*" but it seems best to understand this of the Lord himself, since he ordered Moses and Joshua to present themselves before him, that he might give the latter a charge, ver. 14. and the language of the following clauses best agrees with him: *and said, be strong and of a good courage;* see the notes on ver. 6. 7. *for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I sware unto them;* see the note on ver. 7. *and I will be with thee:* see the note on ver. 8. the Targum of Jonathan is, "my Word shall be thy help."

Ver. 24. *And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book,* &c.] In this book of Deuteronomy, and which concluded the Pentateuch: *until they were finished,* all the words of the law, and the whole five books of Moses, excepting some few verses at the end of ch. xxxiv. which were added by another hand, Joshua or Ezra.

Ver. 25. *That Moses commanded the Levites,* &c.] These were not the common Levites, but the priests who were also Levites, to whom the law was given, ver. 9. and none but they might touch the ark, or go so near it as they are bid to do, to put the law on the side of it; so Aben Ezra; it follows, *which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord:* as the priests are said to do, ver. 9. see the note there; for though in journeying the Kohathites carried it, yet not until it was covered by the priests, for they must not touch it; as these must do when they put the law on the side of it, as they are ordered in the next verse: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 26. *Take this book of the law,* &c.] Not Deuteronomy only, but the whole Pentateuch: *and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God;* not in the ark, for there were nothing there but the two tables of stone with the ten commands on them, 1 Kings viii. 9. but on one side of it: the Targum of Jonathan says, it was "put in a chest (or box) on the " right side of the ark of the covenant;" which is very probable. Jarchi observes, that the wise men of Israel are divided about it in the Talmud [b]; some of them say there was a table (or ledge) that stood out from the ark without, and there it was put; others say it was put on the side of the tables of the law within the ark; the former are in the right: *that it may be there for a witness against thee;* when they fall into idolatry or any other sin, a transgression of any of the laws therein contained.

Ver. 27. *For I know thy rebellion and thy stiff neck,* &c.] How rebellious they were against the Lord and his laws, and how unwilling they were to admit the yoke of his commandments to be put upon them, and submit to it; this he had an experience of for forty years past: *behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord;* murmuring at his providences, speaking against his ministers, breaking his laws, particularly being guilty of idolatry, in making and worshipping the golden calf; and even now, as in ver. 21. were imagining, forming, and framing in their minds something of the same kind, from the time of their coming out of Egypt unto this time they were now on the borders of Canaan; this had all along been their character; see ch. ix. 7, 24. *and how much more after my death?* When he would be no more with them to instruct and advise them, to caution and reprove them, and to keep them in awe by his authority.

Ver. 28. *Gather unto me all the elders of your tribes, and your officers,* &c.] The heads of the tribes, the princes, and all other inferior magistrates: *that I may speak these words in their ears;* not the words of the law, but of the song which he was ordered to write, and is recorded in the following chapter: *and call heaven and earth to record against them;* to bear witness of what he delivered to them, and to bear witness against them should they transgress the laws he gave them; and to bear witness that they had been faithfully cautioned against transgressing, and had been severely threatened, and the punishment plainly pointed out that should be inflicted on them in case of disobedience, so that they were left entirely without excuse.

Ver. 29. *For I know that after my death,* &c.] Which was just at hand, some time after that, not immediately; this he knew by a spirit of prophecy, namely, what follows: *ye will utterly corrupt yourselves;* their ways, works, and manners, and so themselves; corrupt the worship of God by making idols, and serving them, which is the corruption chiefly intended: *and turn*

[a] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 44.

[b] T. B. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 1. 2.

aside from the way which I have commanded you: from the way of the commandments of God, which Moses had given them in his name, and in which they were directed to walk; but, as here foretold, would wander and swerve from them as they did: *and evil will befall you in the latter days:* not only in the times of the judges, and in the time of the Babylonish captivity, but in their present captivity, as they call it; which shews that the following song has things in it which respect times at a great distance, and even the present ones, and yet to come: *because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the work of your hands;* their idols, idolatry being the evil chiefly designed, which is of all things the most provoking of the Lord.

Ver. 30. *And Moses spake in the ears of all the congregation of Israel, &c.*] Not in the hearing of the whole body of the people, and every individual thereof; no man could be able to speak to such a numerous congregation, as that they should hear him; but in the hearing of their heads and representatives, the elders of their tribes and officers, ordered to be gathered together for this purpose, ver. 28. *the words of this song, until they were ended;* which song is recorded in the following chapter, and reaches from ver. 1. to the end of ver. 43.

CHAP. XXXII.

THIS chapter contains the song mentioned and referred to in the former, the preface to it, ver. 1, 2, 3. the character of the divine and illustrious Person it chiefly respects, ver. 4. the ingratitude of the people of the Jews to him, who were a crooked and perverse generation, aggravated by his having bought, made, and established them, ver. 5, 6. and which is further aggravated by various instances of divine goodness to them, first in providing and reserving a suitable country for them, at the time of the division of the earth to the sons of men, with the reason of it, ver. 7, 8, 9. then by what the Lord did for them in the wilderness, ver. 10, 11, 12. after that in the land of Canaan, where they enjoyed plenty of all good things, and in the possession of which they were, when the illustrious Person described appeared among them, ver. 13, 14. and then the sin of ingratitude to him, before hinted at, is fully expressed, namely, lightly esteeming the rock of salvation, the Messiah, ver. 15. nor could they stop here, but proceed to more ungodliness, setting up other messiahs and saviours, which were an abomination to the Lord, ver. 16. continuing sacrifices when they should not, which were therefore reckoned no other than sacrifices to demons, and especially the setting up of their new idol, their own righteousness, was highly provoking; and by all this they clearly shewed they had forgot the rock, the Saviour, ver. 17, 18. wherefore, for the rejection of the Messiah and the persecution of his followers, they would be abhorred of God, ver. 19. who would shew his resentment by the rejection of them, by the calling of the Gentiles, and by bringing the nation of the Romans upon them, ver. 20, 21. whereby utter ruin and destruction in all its shapes would be brought upon them, ver. 22—25. and, were it not for the insolence of their adversaries, would be entirely destroyed, being such a foolish and unwise people, which appears by not observing what the enemies of the Messiah themselves allow, that there is no rock like him, whom they despised, ver. 26—31. which enemies are described, and the vengeance reserved for them pointed out, ver. 32—35. and the song closed with promises of grace and mercy to the Lord's people, and wrath and ruin to his and their enemies, on which account all are called upon to rejoice in the latter day, ver. 36—43. and this song being delivered by Moses, the people of Israel are exhorted seriously to attend to it, it being of the utmost importance to them, ver. 44—47. and the chapter is concluded with a relation of Moses being ordered to go up to Mount Nebo and die, with the reason of it, ver. 48—52.

Ver. 1. *Give ear, O ye heavens, and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth.*] This song is prefaced and introduced in a very grand and pompous manner, calling on the heavens and earth to give attention; by which they themselves may be meant, by a *prosopopœia*, a figure frequently used in Scripture, when things of great moment and importance are spoken of; and these are called upon to hearken, either to rebuke the stupidity and inattention of men, or to shew that these would shed or withhold their influences, their good things, according to the obedience or disobedience of Israel; or because these are durable and lasting, and so would ever be witnesses for God and against his people: Gaon, as Aben Ezra observes, by the heavens understands the angels, and by the earth the men of the earth, the inhabitants of both worlds, which is not amiss: and by these words of Moses are meant the words of the song, referred to in the last verse of the preceding chapter; here called his words, not because they were of him, but because they were put into his mouth, and about to be expressed by him, not in his own name, but in the name of the Lord; and not as the words of the law, which came by him, but as the words and doctrines of the Gospel concerning Christ, of whom Moses here writes; whose character he gives, and whose person and office he vindicates against the Jews, whom he accuses and brings a charge of ingratitude against for rejecting him, to which our Lord seems to refer, John v. 45, 46. the prophecies of their rejection, the calling of the Gentiles, the destruction of the Jews by the Romans, and the miseries they should undergo, and yet should not be wholly extirpated out of the world, but continue a people, who in the latter days would be converted, return to their own land, and their enemies be destroyed; which are some of the principal things in this song, and which make it worthy of attention and observation.

Ver. 2. *My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, &c.*] Which some, as Aben Ezra, take to be a prayer or wish, that the doctrine spoken by him might fall upon men like rain and

dew on the earth, penetrate into their hearts, and influence them, and produce good effects there; but the words rather seem to be a prophecy of what would be: and by his *doctrine* and *speech*, which signify the same thing, is meant, not his law, which was fiery, this cooling, like rain and dew; that was like a storm, this as a gentle rain; that was terrible, this desirable; that was distressing, this refreshing, this no other than the Gospel, the speech of God, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of grace, and mercy through him, and of life and salvation by him: it has its name from a word, which signifies to *receive*[f]; for it was received from God by Moses, and by the prophets after him, by Christ himself, as Mediator, and by the apostles from him, and is worthy of the acceptation of all: this is comparable to *rain*, because, like that, it comes from heaven, is the gift of God, tarries not for man, but comes without any desert of man, and often without his desire; falls by divine direction in places and on persons, as the Lord's will and pleasure is, and that in great plenty, with a fulness of spiritual blessings, and precious promises; and for its effects, it cools the conscience, filled with fiery wrath and indignation, moistens and softens the hard heart, like the dry and parched earth, refreshes and revives the drooping spirit, and makes barren souls fruitful in grace and good works: and it is like *dew*, which also is from heaven, and of God, fell in the night of the world; and as that falls in a temperate air, so this, when the stormy dispensation of the law was over; and though but a small thing in the eyes of the world, is of great influence, the power of God unto salvation, very grateful and delightful, and of great moment and importance; hereby the love and favour of God is diffused, the blessings of grace dispensed, the heavenly manna communicated, and the spirit and his graces received: and this, like rain and dew, *drops* and *distils* silently, not in a noisy manner as the law; insensibly, falling on persons at an unawares, in great abundance, like the drops of rain and dew; and effectually, working in all that believe: dew was a symbol of doctrine with the Egyptians[g]: this is further illustrated: *as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass*: the first of those words for *rain*, according to Jarchi, has the signification of a stormy wind, but that seems to contradict the gentle dropping and distilling of it: rather it signifies *hairs*[h], and denotes, as our version, the smallness of the rain, being as small, thin, and light as hairs; and the latter word[i] has the signification of millions and thousands, there being such vast numbers as those in a shower of rain: the *tender* herb and *grass* may denote the multitude of persons to whom the Gospel would come, and be made useful; and may describe sensible sinners, tender consciences, such as are weak in themselves, with whom it is the day of small things, are new-born babes, little children; who are just springing up in grace, as among the grass, and as willows by the water-courses: now all this is said by Moses, to recommend his doctrine, as well as what follows.

Ver. 3. *Because I will publish the name of the Lord*, &c.] Not call on his name, as some, nor call to the heaven and earth in his name, as others, but proclaim his name, even the same that was proclaimed before Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. and this is to be understood, not of Jehovah the Father, nor of Jehovah the Spirit, but of Jehovah the Son, the rock whose work is perfect, and the rock of salvation, ver. 4, 15. and not of any particular name of his, unless any of those mentioned can be thought to be intended; rather his perfections and attributes, or his Gospel, called his name, Acts ix. 15. though his name may signify no other than himself, who is the sum and substance of the Gospel, and who, in his person, office, grace, and salvation, is to be published and proclaimed, openly and publicly, constantly and faithfully, and his name only; for there is no other under heaven whereby man can be saved: *ascribe ye greatness unto our God*; to Christ, the rock of salvation, who is truly God, our God, God in our nature, God manifest in the flesh, and who is the great God, and our Saviour, and therefore greatness is to be ascribed to him: he is great in his person and perfections; his works are great, those of creation and providence, and particularly of redemption and salvation; he is great in his offices, a great Saviour, a great High-priest, a great Prophet, a great King, and the great Shepherd of the sheep: those that are called upon to give greatness to him, which is his due, are the heavens and the earth, ver. 1. and both have, literally and figuratively considered, bore a testimony to his greatness; the heavens, at his birth a wonderful star appeared, directing the wise men to him; at his death the sun was darkened; at his ascension the heavens were opened and received him, and still retain him; even God in heaven, by a voice from thence, bore witness of him as his beloved son, in whom he was well-pleased; also by raising him from the dead, declaring him to be the son of God with power, and by exalting him at his right hand as a Saviour, and by the effusion of the spirit on his apostles, to preach and spread his Gospel; the angels in heaven ascribed greatness to him, by their worship of him when he came into the world, by the declaration they made of him at his incarnation, and by the testimony they bore to his resurrection, and by their subjection to him in all things: the church below, sometimes called heaven, in the book of the Revelation, ascribe all honour, glory, and greatness to him: the earth, the whole terraqueous globe, in it have been displayed the greatness of Christ, the power and glory of his divinity; in the sea by becoming a calm at his word of command, in the rocks by being rent at his death, and will be in both by delivering up the dead in them, at the last day: the inhabitants of the earth, especially the redeemed from among men, ascribe greatness to him, by attributing daily to him all the perfections of the Godhead, and the glory of their salvation: Aben Ezra says, Moses refers to the heavens and the earth, or respects them, and compares with this Psal. xix. 1.

Ver. 4. He is *the rock*, &c.] That is, Jehovah is the rock, whose name Moses proposed to publish; and our God, to whom the heavens and the earth are called

[f] לקחי a לקח accepit.
[g] Hor. Hieroglyph. l. 1. c. 26.
[h] שעירים a שער pilus, Lev. xiii. 10.
[i] רביבים a רבב multum, see Psal. cxliv. 13.

upon to ascribe greatness, even Christ the rock of salvation: here begins the song; the first word in it is very emphatical; it has a letter in it larger than usual, to denote the greatness of this Person, and to make it observable; he is *this* or *that rock*[k], by way of eminence, that rock and stone of Israel, Jacob prophesied of, which was typified by the rock Moses had smitten in the wilderness, and which, no doubt, he knew, as the Apostle Paul did, that it was a type of Christ, and had taught the Israelites so to understand it; and therefore this epithet of a divine Person would not seem strange to them, and yet is that rock the unbelieving Jews would and did stumble at, and the rock of salvation they lightly esteemed and rejected; the rock of refuge for sensible sinners to flee unto for shelter and safety from the wrath and justice of God, and from every enemy; the rock the church of God and every believer are built upon, and in which they dwell; and who is the rock of ages that will endure for ever, as the Saviour of his people, and the foundation of their faith and hope: *his work is perfect:* not so much the work of creation or of providence, which are both the works of Christ, but that of redemption and salvation, in which there is not only a display of all the divine perfections, but is complete in all its parts; the law is perfectly fulfilled, justice is fully satisfied, a perfect righteousness is wrought out, a complete pardon is procured, perfect peace is made, full atonement of sins obtained, and the whole work is finished; and is so perfect that nothing is wanting in it, or can be added to it, nor can it be unravelled or undone again: likewise the work of building the church on this rock is carrying on, and will be perfected when all the elect of God, all given to Christ and redeemed by his blood, shall be called by grace and gathered in; when the last of the chosen ones, and redeemed of the Lamb, is brought in and laid in the building; when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father complete, and God shall be all in all, and his church and people will be in a perfect state to all eternity: *for all his ways are judgment:* his ways, which he himself has taken and walked in; his ways of providence are according to the best judgment and highest wisdom, and according to the strictest justice and equity; his ways of grace towards the salvation of his people, and the building up his church on himself, the rock; all the methods he took in eternity and time were all formed according to the counsel of God, and planned with the greatest wisdom, founded in his righteous nature, and according to covenant-compact with his father, and entered into in the most honourable manner; and in which he brought about the salvation of his people, in perfect consistence with the justice and holiness of God, and to the honour of them and his holy law: and he has executed all his offices of prophet, priest, and King, in the most just and righteous manner: the ways which he has prescribed his people to walk in, and in which he leads them, are ways of truth, righteousness, and holiness; such are all his ordinances and commandments: *a God of truth:* so Christ is called, Isa. lxv. 16. see the note there; or the true God, which also is his name, 1 John v. 20. and is so called in opposition to fictitious deities, and such who are only so by name or office, but not by nature; whereas he is truly and properly God, as appears from his names and nature, from his perfections, works, and worship, ascribed to him: *or God the truth*[l], for he is *the truth*, John xiv. 6. the truth of all types, promises, and prophecies, which all have their accomplishment in him; the sum and substance of all truths and doctrines, from whom they all come, and in whom they all centre: or *the God of faith* or *faithfulness*[m]; the object of faith, and the author and finisher of it; and who is faithful, as the God-man and Mediator, to him that appointed him, being intrusted with all the elect of God, with all promises and blessings of grace for them, with the fulness of grace to communicate unto them, with the glory of God in their salvation, and with their future and final happiness; and is faithful in the discharge of his offices of prophet, priest, and King: *without iniquity;* in his nature, in his heart, in his lips, and in his life; nor was ever any committed by him: *just and right is he; just,* both as a divine Person, and as man and Mediator; a lover and doer of righteousness, a worker out of righteousness for his people, and the justifier of them by it; just and righteous, as the servant of God, as King of saints, and Judge of the whole world; *right* or *upright,* which is the character of a divine Person, agrees with Christ, and may denote his sincerity, uprightness, and faithfulness.

Ver. 5. *They have corrupted themselves,* &c.] This and what follows may seem to be the characters of the enemies of Christ, who lightly esteemed and rejected him, set in a contrast with him; who were not only corrupt by nature, as all men are, but were men of corrupt minds in their tenets and principles; who corrupted the word of God by their traditions, in the times of Christ; and were men of corrupt practices themselves, and corrupters of others: *their spot is not the spot of his children;* of the children of the divine Person before described; Christ the rock has *children* given him by his Father, in whose adoption he has a concern, and by whose Spirit they are regenerated: these have their *spots;* by which are meant sins, and by those men are stained and polluted; so called in allusion to the spots of animals, as leopards; or to spots in faces and garments, through dirt and the like: by nature they are as others, and whilst in an unregenerate estate, and indeed after conversion; though they are washed from their sins by the blood of Christ, and are justified by his righteousness, and so without spot, yet in themselves they are not without spots or sins, as their confessions and complaints, and all experience testify; but the spots or sins of wicked men are not like theirs; the children of Christ sin through infirmity of the flesh, and the force of temptation, but wicked men through the malignity of their hearts, willingly and purposely; what good men do of this kind they hate, but what Christless and graceless sinners do they love; saints do not continue in sin, but ungodly men do, and proceed to more ungodliness, and wax worse and worse; gracious souls, when they sin, are sorry for

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[k] הצור quod attinet ad rupem illam, Piscator; rupes illa, Van Till; rupes illa, Vitringa.

[l] אל אמונה Deus veritas, Pagninus, Montanus.

[m] Deus fidei, Vatablus, Cocceius; Deus veritatis sive fidei, Vitringa.

it, repent of it, are melted for it, and take shame to themselves on account of it; but unconverted men repent not of their wickedness, are hardened in it, and glory of it; see the character of the Jews in Christ's time, to which this song refers, John viii. 44. though these clauses may be rendered to another sense, more agreeably to the context, and to the Hebrew accents, as they are by some; *is there any corruption in him? no*[n], that is, is there any corruption in the illustrious Person before described, as without iniquity, just, and right? no, none at all in his nature, divine or human; not in his divine nature, being the incorruptible God; nor in his human nature, which is entirely free from that corruption by sin, common to all that descend from Adam by natural generation, he being conceived under the power of the Holy Ghost; nor any in his life and conversation, being perfectly agreeable to the pure and holy law of God; nor any in his doctrines, however they may be charged by ignorant and malicious men, a proof of which follows: or *his children are their spot*[o]; so the clause may be rendered; the spots of the Jewish nation, the most wicked and vilest among them, became his children; not only the lowest and meanest of them, as to civil and worldly things, but the more ignorant and the more wicked, even publicans and harlots; these, and not the righteous, he came to call and save, and did receive; these were regenerated by his grace, and they believed in him; and to them gave he power to become his children: but then did they remain the wicked persons they had been? no, they were made new creatures, they were internally sanctified, and lived holy lives and conversations; a clear proof this, that there was no corruption in Christ, nor in his doctrine, and that he neither by his tenets nor example encouraged sin, but all the reverse; Wisdom is justified of her children, Matt. xi. 19. but then the rest, and the far greater part of the Jewish nation, in his time, have their character truly drawn, as follows: they are *a perverse and crooked generation*; men of perverse and crooked natures, tempers, dispositions, ways, and works; who walked contrary to the will and law of God, and were indeed contrary to all men, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. this is the very character that is given of them, Matt. xvii. 17. Acts ii. 40.

Ver. 6. *Do you thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise*, &c.] This is also a proper character of the Jews in the times of Christ, who are often by him called *fools*, Matt. xxiii. 17, 19. being very ignorant of the Scriptures, and of the prophecies in them respecting him, setting up their own traditions on a level with the word of God, or above it; they were ignorant of the law of God, and the meaning of it; of the righteousness of God, of the righteousness of his nature, and of what the law required, as well as of the righteousness of Christ, and of him as a spiritual Redeemer, and of salvation by him; and a most egregious instance of their folly, and of want of wisdom, was their ingratitude to him, in disesteeming and rejecting him; which is what is here referred to and meant by ill-requiting him, though not expressed till ver. 15. and a most sad requital of him it was indeed, that he should come to them, his own, in so kind and gracious a manner, and yet be rejected by them; that he should become man, and yet for that reason be charged with blasphemy for making himself God; horrid ingratitude, to infer the one from the other! and because he appeared as a servant, disowned him as the son of God; and because he came in the likeness of sinful flesh to take away sin, they traduced him as a sinner: is *not he thy father, that hath bought thee?* hath he not *made thee, and established thee?* Moses, in order to aggravate this their ingratitude, rehearses the various instances of divine goodness to them, from the beginning of them as nation; it was the Lord that was the founder of them as a nation, whose son, when sent unto them, was rejected by them; it was he that bought them, or redeemed them from Egyptian bondage, that made or formed them into a body politic, or civil commonwealth, that established and settled them in the land of Canaan: this is expressed in general terms; particular instances of the goodness of God to them are after enumerated: or if this is to be understood of Christ himself, who was rejected by them, it is true of some among them, in a spiritual and evangelic sense, and so, by a figure, the whole is put for a part, as sometimes the part is for the whole: Christ, the everlasting Father of the world to come, had many children in the Jewish nation, for whose sake he became incarnate, and whom he came to seek and to save; and whom he *bought* with his precious blood, and whom, by his spirit and grace, he *made* new creatures, the children of God, kings and priests unto God; and *established* them in the faith of him, and upon him, the sure foundation; or whom he fashioned, beautified, and adorned with his righteousness, and with the graces of his spirit.

Ver. 7. *Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations*, &c.] That went before the times of Christ, and the Jews' rejection of him, and observe the instances of divine goodness to them; as in the time of the Maccabees, whom God raised up as deliverers of them, when oppressed by the Syrians and others; and in the time of the Babylonish captivity, how they were delivered out of it; in the times of David and Solomon, when they enjoyed great prosperity; and in the times of the judges, by whom they were often saved out of the hands of their enemies; and in the times of Moses and Joshua, how they were led, by the one out of Egypt and through the wilderness, and by the other into the land of Canaan; and thus might they be led on higher, to the provision and reservation of the good land for them in the times of Noah and his sons, which they are referred to in the next verse; and in all these times, days, years, and generations, they might consider what notices were given of the Messiah, the rock of salvation, rejected by them; not only by the prophets since the captivity of Babylon and in it; but before it by Isaiah and others, and before them by David, and Solomon his son, by Moses and by all the prophets, from the beginning of the world; all which would serve to aggravate their sin in refusing him: Jarchi's note on the passage is, " *remember*—

[n] שחת לו לא an est ipsi corruptio? non, Coccelus, Van Till, Vitringa.

[o] בניו מומם filii ejus macula eorum, Van Till; filii ejus labes ipsorum, Coccelus.

"*consider*—to know what is to come; for it is in his "hand (or power) to do you good, and cause you to "inherit the days of the Messiah, and the world to "come:" *ask thy father, and he will shew thee*: either their immediate parents, father for fathers, or such as were their seniors, or rather Abraham, their father, is meant; whom they might inquire of, not by personal application to him, but by consulting the writings of Moses, and observe what is there related of him; how he was called out of Chaldea to go into the land of Canaan, his seed was after to inherit; and how he had an express grant of that land to his posterity, and where they might be shewn and see the prophecy delivered to him of their being in Egypt, and coming out from thence; and what he knew of the Messiah, whose day he saw, and rejoiced at, now rejected by them his offspring: *thy elders, and they will tell thee*; not their present elders who rejected the Messiah, but those in ages past; the elders of Israel, who saw the glory of the God of Israel, and were present at the covenant made at Horeb, Exod. xxiv. 9, 10. or rather the sons of Noah, by whom the earth was divided, to which the following verse refers; or the ancient writers, the writers of the Scriptures: Jarchi, by *father*, understands the prophets, and by *elders*, the wise men: the Targum of Jonathan is, "read in the books of the law and they "will teach you, and in the books of the prophets and "they will tell you."

Ver. 8. *When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance*, &c.] In the times of Noah and his sons, in the days of Peleg, who had his name from thence, Gen. x. 25. the *Most High* is a well-known and proper epithet of God; the dividing of the earth to the several nations of it, and giving to every one their part and portion to possess and inherit, was the work of God; for though it was done by the sons of Noah, yet by the order, appointment, and direction of the Most High, who rules in heaven and in earth, Gen. x. 32. men might not and did not take what they pleased, or seize on as much as they could, but each had their parcel allotted and portioned out to them, by the Lord himself; so the Targum of Jonathan, "when by lot "the Most High divided the world to the people that "sprung from the sons of Noah:" *when he separated the sons of Adam*; one from another; distinguished by the persons from whom they descended, by the tribes and nations to which they belonged, and by the countries they inhabited; for though they descended from Noah and his sons, they were the sons of Adam, the first man: or rather *the children of men*, as the wicked of that generation were called, in distinction from the sons of God, or his people and worshippers; and may have respect to the separation of them at Babel, where their languages were confounded, and they were scattered about, and some went into one part of the world, and some into another, according to the appointment and direction of divine Providence; so the builders of Babel are called, and this was what befell them, Gen. xi. 5, 8, 9. which sense the above Targum confirms, "when he separated the writings, the languages of the "children of men in the generation of the division:" *he set the bounds of the people*; or nations, the seven nations of the land of Canaan; he pitched upon and fixed the land they should inherit, and settled the bounds of it, how far it should reach, east, west, north and south: *according to the number of the children of Israel*: the sense is, that such a country was measured out and bounded, as would be sufficient to hold the twelve tribes of Israel, when numerous, and their time was come to inhabit it; and which, in the mean while, was put into the hands of Canaan and his eleven sons to possess; not as their proper inheritance, but as tenants at will, until the proper heirs existed, and were at an age, and of a sufficient number to inherit; in which may be observed the wise disposition of divine Providence, to put it into the hands of a people cursed of God, so that to take it from them at any time could not have the appearance of any injustice in it; and their enjoying it so long as they did was a mercy to them, for so long they had a reprieve: now here was an early instance of the goodness of God to Israel, that he should make such an early provision of the land flowing with milk and honey for them, even before they were in being, yea, before their ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, existed; as early as the days of Noah; and yet, ungrateful as they were, despised and set at nought his son, the rock of salvation, when sent unto them: thus the heavenly inheritance, typified by the land of Canaan, was not only promised, but prepared, provided, secured, and reserved for the spiritual Israel of God, before the foundation of the world, from all eternity, and which is appointed according to their number; there is room enough in it for them all, though they are many; in it are many mansions for the many sons to be brought to glory.

Ver. 9. *For the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.*] This is the reason why the Lord so early provided a portion or inheritance for the children of Israel in the land of Canaan; because they were his part, his portion, his inheritance, which he chose by lot for himself, or allotted to himself; whom he chose to be his special and peculiar people; for though all the world is his, he only reserved a part for himself, which he separated from all the rest, and considers as his portion and inheritance, see Psal. xxxiii. 12. thus the spiritual Israel of God, as they are his people, whom he has chosen, taken into covenant, given to Christ, and are redeemed and saved by him; they are his part or portion, separated by distinguishing grace from the rest of the world; and are the inheritance of Christ, who is appointed heir of all things, and is an unalienable inheritance; and is obtained by lot, or rather is measured out by a rod or line; by the line of electing grace, by which the church and people of God are circumscribed, marked out, and distinguished from others; and by the line and rule of the sacred Sciptures, which are the measure and standard of faith and practice, of worship and discipline to them.

Ver. 10. *He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness*, &c.] In this and the two following verses instances are given of the goodness of God to the people of Israel, when in the wilderness; by which is meant, either the wilderness of the land of Egypt, as it is called, Ezek. xx. 36. where they were in a most miserable and forlorn condition, in which the Lord found them, and out of which he brought them; or

ather the desert of Arabia, a waste place, where no provisions could be had; a howling wilderness, through the blowing of the winds, the cries of wild creatures, as dragons, owls, ostriches, and the like, as the Targum of Jonathan, Jarchi, and Aben Ezra, and the howling of passengers lost, or for want of provisions; here the Lord found them, and they were as acceptable to him as grapes to a traveller in a wilderness, Hos. ix. 10. see the note there: this is an emblem of the world, in which the spiritual Israel are, when called by grace out of it; or of an unregenerate state, in which they are found, and out of which they are brought: the phrase sometimes signifies sufficing, or finding with every thing sufficient; see Numb. xi. 22. so Onkelos renders it here; which is true of the Lord's dealing with this people; he supplied them with manna, the corn of heaven, angels' food, and with water out of the rock, and flesh to eat in fulness, yea, with raiment as well as food; with every thing convenient for them: so the Lord does for his spiritual Israel, feeding them with his word and ordinances, clothing them with the righteousness of his son, giving them fresh supplies of grace, and withholding no good thing from them; so that they have enough, having all things richly to enjoy: *he led him about*; when he brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, he did not lead them the nearest way to the land of Canaan, through the way of the land of the Philistines, but he led them about through the way of the wilderness of the Red sea; and when they were come to the borders of the land, because of their murmurings, and disobedience, they were ordered back into the wilderness again; nor were they suffered to go through the land of Edom when on the confines of it, which would have been a shorter way; but they were obliged to go round that land, which was very discouraging to them, see Exod. xiii. 17, 18. Numb. xiv. 25. and xxi. 4. and thus the Lord, though he could, if he would, bring his people at once to heaven; he could sanctify them at once, as well as justify them; he could take them the moment he regenerates them into his kingdom, as the thief on the cross; yet this is not his usual way: though he calls them out from among the men of the world, he continues them in it, having something for them to do or suffer for his name's sake; he indeed leads them soon into the right and plain way of salvation, and not in a round-about way of duties; yet he leads them in many round-about ways in Providence, which are all right, though sometimes rough; they seem at times to be near to heaven, and then they are turned into the world again; nay, the Apostle Paul was in heaven, and yet sent into the wilderness of the Gentiles again, for the good of souls and the interest of a Redeemer; however, they all at last come safe to heaven and happiness: the words may be rendered, *he surrounded* or *compassed him about*[r], and the rather, since leading them about seems to be by way of resentment or punishment, whereas Moses is enumerating instances of goodness and kindness, as this was one; he covered them with the clouds of glory, so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, Jarchi and Aben Ezra: he protected them with his power and providence, and preserved them from serpents and scorpions, and the wild beasts of the wilderness, as well as from all their enemies: and the Lord surrounds his spiritual Israel with angels, who encamp about them; with himself, who is a wall of fire round about them; with his power, in which they are kept as in a garrison; and with his love, which encompasses them as a shield: *he instructed him*; he taught him the law, as the Targum of Jonathan; so Jarchi and Aben Ezra; or the decalogue, as the Jerusalem Targum; he instructed him in the knowledge of the true God and his worship; in the knowledge of the Messiah, and of his righteousness, and salvation by him; for he instructed him by his good spirit, Neh. ix. 20. so the Lord instructs his spiritual Israel, by his spirit, his ministers, his word and ordinances, in the knowledge of themselves, and of himself in Christ, and of Christ and the way of life by him; and this being joined with the Lord's leading about his people, may suggest that he instructs them by adverse dispensations of Providence: the word [s] signifies causing to understand; and God only can teach and instruct in such sense as to give men an understanding of the things they are taught and instructed in: *he kept him as the apple of his eye*; in the most careful and tender manner: the apple of the eye is an aperture in it, which lets in rays of light into the *retina* or chamber where the images of things are formed; this is wonderfully guarded in nature, for, besides the orbit of the eye, which is strong and bony, and the eye-lids, which in sleep are closed, to prevent any thing falling into the eye to disturb it; and the eye-brows, which are fringed with hair to break off the rays of light, which sometimes would be too strong for it; besides all these, there are no less than six tunics or coats to keep and preserve it: and in like manner did the Lord keep and guard Israel, whilst passing through the wilderness, from fiery serpents, scorpions, and the nations, that none might hurt, as Jarchi; and especially thus he keeps his spiritual Israel, who are parts of himself, one with him, near and dear to him; and about whom he sets guard upon guard, employs all his perfections to secure them, and constantly watches over them night and day, and keeps them from all evil and every enemy, and preserves them safe to his kingdom and glory.

Ver. 11. *As an eagle stirreth up her nest*, &c.] Her young ones in it, to get them out of it: Jarchi says the eagle is merciful to its young, and does not go into its nest suddenly, but first makes a noise, and disturbs them with her wings, striking them against a tree or its branches, that so they being awakened may be fitter to receive her: with respect to literal Israel, Egypt was their nest, where they were, who were then in their infant state, lay like young birds in a nest; and though it was a filthy one, and where they were confined, yet they seemed sometimes as if they did not care to come out of it; until the Lord made use of means to get them out, by the ministry of Moses and Aaron, by suffering their task-masters to make their bondage heavier, and by judgments inflicted on the

[r] יסבבנהו circumdedit eum, Piscator; so Cocceius, Van Till, Vitringa.

[s] יבוננהו intelligere fecit eum, Pagninus, Cocceius.

Egyptians, which made them urgent upon them to depart: with respect to spiritual Israel, their nest is a state of unregeneracy, in which they are at ease, and do not care to be awakened and stirred out of it; but the Lord, in love to them, awakens them, stirs them up, and gets them out, by sending his ministers to arouse them, by letting in the law into their consciences, which works a sense of wrath, by convincing them by his spirit of their sin and danger, opening their eyes to see their wretched and miserable estate and condition, and by exerting his almighty power, plucking them as brands out of the burning: *fluttereth over her young;* by that means to get them out of the nest, and teach them to fly, as well as to preserve them from the attempts of any to take them away; for though some writers represent the eagle as hard-hearted to its young, casting them out of the nest, when they are taken care of by the offfrage; yet this is to be understood of it when tired with nursing, and when its young are capable of taking care of themselves; or of some sort of eagles; for Ælianus[r] testifies, that of all animals the eagle is most affectionate to its young, and most studiously careful of them: when it sees any one coming to them, it will not suffer them to go away unpunished, but will beat them with its wings and tear them with its nails: Jarchi thinks this phrase is expressive of the manner of its incubation on its young; it does not, he says, lie heavy upon them, but lifts up herself, and touches them as if she did not touch them; but it rather signifies the motion she makes with her wings to get her young, when fledged, out of the nest, and to teach them to make use of their wings, as she does; and we are told that young eagles, when their wings are weak, will fly about their dams and learn of them to fly[s]; and hence it is that young eagles whilst they are eating flutter their wings, that motion being so natural to them, and seeing their dams do so likewise[t]: this passage seems to contradict a notion that has obtained with some, that an eagle only breeds one at a time; the philosopher says[u], the eagle lays three eggs and casts out two of them; according to the verse of Musæus, it lays three, casts out two, and brings up one; and so, he says, it commonly is the case: but sometimes three young ones are seen together; and the black eagles are more kind to their young, and careful in the nourishment of them; and the same says Pliny[w]; yea, we are told, that sometimes seven are seen in a nest[x]: *spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings;* that is, spreads forth her wings when she flutters over her young to instruct them; or she does this in order to take up her young and carry them on them: it is said that eagles fly round their nest, and vary their flights for the instruction of their young; and afterwards taking them on their backs, they soar with them aloft, in order to try their strength, shaking them off into the air; and if they perceive them too weak to sustain themselves, they with surprising dexterity fly under them again, and receive them on their wings to prevent their fall[y]; see the note on Exod. xix. 4. thus the Lord, comparable to this creature for his affection to the people of Israel, his care of them, and his strength to bear and carry them, did bear them as on eagles' wings, and carried and saved them all the days of old; even Christ, the Angel of Jehovah's presence, the rock of salvation they rejected, see Exod. xix. 4. Isa. lxiii. 9. and all this in a spiritual and evangelic sense may be expressive of the gracious dealings of God with his spiritual Israel; teaching and enabling them to mount up with wings as eagles, to soar aloft in the exercise of faith, hope, and love, entering thereby within the vail into the holiest of all, and living in the constant and comfortable expectation of heaven and happiness; and of the Lord's taking his people up from the low estate in which they are, and raising them up to near communion with himself, bearing them on his heart, in his hands, and on his arm, supporting them under all their afflictions, and carrying them, through all their troubles and difficulties, safe to eternal glory and happiness.

Ver. 12. *So the Lord alone did lead him, &c.*] Out of Egypt, through the wilderness, to the land of Canaan, going before them in a pillar of fire and cloud; though this is not to be understood to the exclusion of the ministry of Moses and Aaron, by whom he led them, Psal. lxxvii. 20. it may be interpreted of the people being alone in the wilderness when led: *and there was no strange god with him;* with Israel; so Aben Ezra, no idolatry among them then; to which sense are the Targums of Jerusalem and Jonathan; but it may rather signify that the Lord alone was the leader of his people, and he had no assistant in that work, and therefore all the glory should be given to him: he is the leader of his people, in a spiritual sense, out of a state of unregeneracy, which is a state of darkness and bondage; out of the ways of sin, and from the pastures of their own righteousness, into an open state of grace, which is a state of light and liberty; in Christ the way, and in the paths of faith, truth, holiness, and righteousness, unto the heavenly glory, typified by the land of Canaan, the blessings of which are next described: the Jews say[z], this will be in the days of the King Messiah; when there will be no abominable thing in Israel, the Lord alone shall lead him.

Ver. 13. *He made him to ride on the high places of the earth, &c.*] Or land, the land of Canaan; by which are meant the towers, castles, and fortified places in it, some of which might be built on hills and mountains; and being made to ride on them may denote the delivery of them into their hands, their conquests and possession of them, and triumph in them; see Isa. lviii. 14. so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, "made him to dwell in the towers of the land of "Israel," those high-walled and strongly-fenced cities which they dreaded; this may be an emblem of the conquest believers have of their spiritual enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, in and through Christ; of their safety and triumph in him: of their high and elevated frames of soul, when they have got above the world

[r] Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 40.
[s] Suidas, vol. 1. p. 89.
[t] Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 3. col. 178.
[u] Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 6.
[w] Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 3.
[x] Vid. Bochart. ut supra.
[y] See Harris's Voyages, vol. 1. B. 1. c. 2. sect. 14. p. 456.
[z] Tikkune Zohar, Correct. 18. fol. 32. 2. 36. 2.

and the things of it: this will be the case of spiritual Israel in every sense in the latter day, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains: *that he might eat the increase of the fields;* the produce of them, particularly corn for bread, and which the Israelites ate of as soon as they came into the land of Canaan, Josh. v. 11, 12. an emblem of the Gospel, and the truths of it, which are salutary, nourishing, strengthening, reviving, and cheering, and of Christ the bread of life, which believers by faith eat of, and feed upon and live: *and he made him to suck honey out of the rock;* not water out of the rock, as sweet to them as honey, that they had in the wilderness; but either the honey of bees that made their nests in rocks, as a swarm of them did in the carcass of a lion; and so in like manner as honey came out of the lion, it may be said to be sucked out of the rock: so Homer [a] speaks of swarms of bees out of a hollow rock: or this was the honey of palm-trees, as Aben Ezra observes, some say, which might grow on rocks, see the note on ch. viii. 8. and this is favoured by the Targum of Jonathan, which paraphrases the words, "honey from those fruits which grow on the "rocks," unless it means honey gathered by bees from such fruits; the rock may typify Christ, and the honey out of it the Gospel, which is from him and concerning him; comparable to honey for the manner of its production and gathering, by the laborious ministers of the word; for its nourishment, and especially for its sweetness, its precious promises, and pleasant doctrines: *and oil out of the flinty rock:* that is, oil out of the olives, which grow on rocks, and these delight to grow on hills and mountains; hence we read of the mount of Olives, see Job xxix. 6. and so the Targum of Jonathan, "and oil out of the olives and suckers "which grow on the strong rocks;" this may signify the spirit and his graces, the unction which comes from Christ the holy One, and the blessings of grace had from him, and the Gospel and its truths; which are cheering and refreshing, mollifying and healing, feeding and fattening, pure and unmixed, and useful for light, as oil is.

Ver. 14. *Butter of kine,* &c.] Made of milk, which kine or cows give; Jarchi says, this is the fat that is gathered on the top of milk, he means cream, and which indeed was the butter of the ancients, and is here meant: *milk of sheep;* which they give, though not in such plenty as the kine, yet what is very wholesome and nourishing: the philosopher [b] observes, that sheep give more milk in proportion to the bigness of their bodies than cows: and Pliny [c] says their milk is sweeter and more nourishing, and the butter made of it is the fattest: *with fat of lambs;* or fat lambs, rich and delicious food: *and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats;* a fruitful country abounding with pasturage, where rams and goats of the best sort were fed, and the breed of them was coveted and had in the land of Canaan; the kine of Bashan are mentioned elsewhere, Psal. xxii. 12. Amos iv. 1. *with the fat of kidneys of wheat;* that is, the best wheat, the grains are plump and full; and Aben Ezra observes, that a grain of wheat has some likeness to a kidney, see Psal. lxxxi. 16. and cxlvii. 14. *and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape;* wine which comes from the grape, red wine, pure and unmixed, see Gen. xl. 12. the land of Canaan was a land of vines, and abounded with good wine, ch. viii. 8. which the Israelites, when they came into it, drank of in common, who had only drank water in the wilderness, and had but little flesh, and lived on manna, and now abounded with plenty of all good things; all which are observed as instances of divine goodness, and to aggravate their ingratitude in rejecting the Messiah, they then enjoying all these good things, the land being alike fertile and affluent then, as appears from Isa. vii. 14, 15, 21, 22. Jarchi applies this fruitfulness to the times of Solomon, as the butter of kine, and the kidneys of wheat, 1 Kings iv. 22, 23. and fat of lambs, and the blood of the grape, to the times of the ten tribes, Amos vi. 4—6. but this was the constant fertility of the land, and lasted to the times of the Messiah: now all these may be expressive of the blessings of grace, and the spiritual food of the Gospel: Ainsworth very prettily remarks, that here is both food for babes and for grown persons, butter and milk for the one, and meat for the other, and drink for them both: the plain truths of the Gospel are like butter, soft and easy to be taken in, and like milk, easy of digestion, cooling, nourishing, sweet, and pleasant; the more sublime truths of the Gospel are meat for strong men, signified by the flesh of fat lambs, rams, and goats; which all being used in sacrifices were typical of Christ; as also the finest of wheat is an emblem of him the bread of life, on whom the weakest believer lives by faith; and the drink for both, the wine the blood of the grape, may signify the love of Christ, the Gospel and the truths of it, and the blessings of grace, which come through the everlasting covenant.

Ver. 15. *But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked,* &c.] This is undoubtedly a name of the people of Israel; it is to be met with only in three places more, in ch. xxxiii. 5. 26. Isa. xliv. 2. it is generally thought to come from a word [d] which signifies upright and righteous, such these people ought to have been, and some among them were; and they generally professed themselves, and outwardly appeared to be upright, just, and righteous persons, and were desirous of being reckoned so; which was their character in the times of Christ, when they rejected him: others derive it from a word [e] which signifies to behold, to see, and so describes them as seeing ones; and such they had been in the times of Moses, saw extraordinary sights and wonders in Egypt, the great salvation at the Red sea, the Lord going before them in a pillar of cloud and fire; the manna every day falling about their tents; twice rocks smitten, and waters flowing from them, and had often very uncommon sights of the glory of God: and in the times of Christ, to which this song refers, they saw him in the flesh, preaching in their synagogues, doing miracles, riding on an ass to Jerusalem, according to one of their prophecies, and expiring on the cross, and yet rejected him. They

[a] Iliad. 2. l. 87, 88.
[b] Aristot. Problem. sect. 10. qu. 6.
[c] Nat. Hist. l. 22. c. 9.

[d] ישר rectum esse.
[e] שור cernere, intueri, Cocceius, Van Till.

are said to *wax fat*, enjoy great outward prosperity, to abound in temporal good things, as they also did in spiritual privileges; enjoying, or they might have enjoyed, such a ministry of the word, as never was before or since, the ministry of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, of Christ himself, and of his apostles, yet they *kicked*: which may denote their disobedience to the laws of God, moral and ceremonial, see 1 Sam. ii. 29. Neh. ix. 25, 26. and particularly the introduction of idolatry among them, which was kicking against God, and his worship; first among the ten tribes, in the times of Jeroboam, and among the two tribes, more especially in the times of Manasseh; and this kicking was particularly verified in Judas's lifting up his heel against Christ, and betraying him; which was not merely the sin of him only, but what the whole body of the people were involved in, see Psal. xli. 9. Acts vii. 52: *thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered* with fatness; which is repeated and expressed by different words, both for the certainty of it, and to denote their great affluence of good things, and so the more to aggravate their impiety and ingratitude, next observed: *then he forsook God* which *made him*: the worship of God, as the Targum of Jonathan, giving into idolatry in times past; and the written word of God, by giving heed to the traditions of the elders, to the making void and of none effect the word of God; or Christ, the essential Word of God; so the Targum of Jonathan, "and left the Word of "God, who created them;" that Word of God which was in the beginning of all things, and by whom all things were made, and they also; who in the fulness of time was made flesh, and dwelt among men, John i. 1, 2, 3, 14: *and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation*: the same divine Person, described ver. 4. and there called the rock, see the note there; here *the rock of salvation*; because salvation flows from him: he is the author of it, and it is to be had of him, and no other; and this epithet shews not only his ability and strength to effect it, but the security of it in him, which being wrought out is an everlasting one. He is said to be the rock of *his* salvation, Jeshurun or Israel, he being of the Jews, raised up among them, and sent unto them, and was the Saviour of some of them actually, even of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and on account of his salvation deserving of universal esteem. But the Jews *lightly esteemed* him, had no value for him, set this rock and stone at nought; he was refused and rejected by the builders, who is now the head of the corner; they despised him, mocked at him, and treated him with the utmost contempt and disdain, yea, with abhorrence; all which, and more, is signified by the word here used: they traduced him as a vile and wicked person, and charged and treated him as such, so some render the word[f]; and, as others[g], they made a dead carcass of him, they crucified and slew him; this is the crime of ingratitude hinted at in ver. 6. and all between is an enumeration of instances of divine goodness to this people, mentioned with a view to aggravate this unheard-of sin.

Ver. 16. *They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, &c.*] Or *with others*[h]; the word *gods* is not in the text, nor were the Jews guilty of worshipping strange gods or idols in the times of Christ, nor had they been from the time of their coming out of the Babylonish captivity; but the word, as Cocceius observes, is used for *another*, as in Job xix. 27. and signifies other saviours, other messiahs, whom the Jews set up when they rejected Christ, the rock of salvation; and it is observable, that before the coming of Christ, they never attempted to set up any; but, after they had rejected him, were ready to embrace every one that offered, of which one, called Bar Cochab, the son of a star, in allusion to Numb. xxiv. 17. is a flagrant instance; and whom, when they found themselves deceived, they called Bar Cozba, the son of a lie, or a lying fellow; to whom our Lord may be thought to have respect, John v. 43. and where he expressly calls him *another*. Now, not only to reject Jesus, the true Messiah, but to set up others in his room, false Christs, was highly provoking to God, who is a jealous God, and will not give his glory to another: *with abominations provoked they him to anger*: by advancing the traditions of the elders to an equality with, and above the word of God; and by continuing sacrifices, after the great sacrifice was offered up, when they ought to have ceased; for, by continuing them, it was saying Christ was not come in the flesh, nor his sacrifice offered up; it was trampling under foot the son of God, and treating his blood and sacrifice with contempt; which must be an abomination to God, and highly provoking of his anger, when that sacrifice was of a sweet-smelling savour to him; and especially what was abominable to him, and grievously provoked him to anger and wrath, was their setting up the idol of their own righteousness, refusing to submit to the righteousness of Christ, Rom. x. 3. and indeed, whenever any thing is set up in competition with him, or in opposition to him, be it what it will, it must be an abomination to God; because it opposes his purposes and resolutions of saving men by Christ alone, reflects on his wisdom in the scheme of salvation, flies in the face of his love, grace, and mercy, makes the death of Christ of none effect, advances pride in the creature, gives God the lie, who says there is no other Saviour, and is a total slight and neglect of his Gospel; all which must be abominable, and dreadfully provoking to him; see Isa. lxv. 5. Luke xvi. 15. and xviii. 14.

Ver. 17. *They sacrificed to devils, not to God, &c.*] Their sacrifices being continued, when it was the will of God they should cease, were reckoned by him not as offered to him, but to demons, and to such that were not God; they being therein under the instigation of Satan, and doing his lusts, John viii. 44. just as Pagans and Papists, worshipping idols under the influence and direction of Satan, are said to worship devils, and sacrifice to them, 1 Cor. x. 20. Rev. ix. 20. and indeed setting up their own righteousness was sacrificing to their own net, and burning incense to their own drag, to an idol, and not to God: to which may be added, that whereas they trampled under foot the Son of G d, and did despite to the Spi-

[f] ינבל pro scelerato tractavit, Cocceius.
[g] Cadaver fecit, Van Till.

[h] בזרים per alios, Cocceius.

rit of grace, by which Christ cast out devils, and offered himself without spot, they excluded two of the divine Persons in the Deity, and so worshipped not the true God, Father, Son, and Spirit: *to gods whom they knew not, to* gods *that came newly up*; such as angels, into the worship of which they fell, as their writings testify[i], and to which the apostle seems to have respect, Col. ii. 18. *whom your fathers feared not*; paid no regard unto, put no trust or confidence in; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, "with whom your fathers "had nothing to do:" as they had not with the idol of man's righteousness, but wholly looked unto and trusted in the grace and righteousness of Christ, and expected salvation alone by him: the Gospel of righteousness and salvation by Christ was preached to our first parents in Eden's garden, which they embraced and believed in; Noah was an heir and preacher of the righteousness of faith, that is, of the righteousness of Christ, received by faith; that righteousness, which was what Abraham believed in, was imputed to him for his justifying righteousness; and Jacob waited for the Messiah, the salvation of God; in short all the Old-Testament saints were saved by the grace of Christ, as we are; the idols, the works of men's own righteousness, are new deities they paid no deference to, placed no confidence in.

Ver. 18. *Of the rock that begat thee thou art unmindful*, &c.] The same with the rock of salvation, ver. 15. repeated and expressed in different words, that their wretched ingratitude might be taken notice of and observed: begetting is ascribed to this rock, as regeneration is to Christ, 1 John ii. 29. and was true of some among the Jews: some choose to render the words, *the rock of thy kindred*[k]; being a near kinsman, a brother through his incarnation, which aggravated their unmindfulness of him: *and hast forgotten God that formed thee*; for the rock they were unmindful of and forgot is the true God and eternal life, the essential Word of God, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem interpret it; him the Jewish nation forgot; they forgot the characters given of him in the promises and prophecies of the Old Testament; and therefore they knew him not when he came and fulfilled the voices of the prophets they were ignorant of in condemning him: hence they were unmindful of his person, his offices, his works, his benefits, and the great salvation by him; as indeed too many are that call themselves Christians: some observe that the word here used signifies bringing forth children with pain, and so may respect the bitter sorrows and sufferings of Christ, sometimes expressed by a word[l] which signifies the pains of women in childbirth, Acts ii. 24. and called the travail of his soul, Isa. liii. 11. and so a further aggravation of their ingratitude, that they should forget him that suffered so much, at least on account of some of them; for, those he endured to bring forth children unto God, or to gather together the children of God, scattered abroad both in Judea and in the whole world, John xi. 51, 52.

Ver. 19. *And when the Lord saw* it, &c.] The disregard of the Jews to Christ, their forgetfulness of him, their disesteem and rejection of him; their continuance of sacrifices, when the great sacrifice was offered up; their setting up other messiahs and saviours, and the idol of their own righteousness, in opposition to the righteousness of Christ; all which not only as the omniscient God he saw, but took notice of, and considered, and did not at once pass judgment on them, at least did not immediately execute it, but waited some time to see how they would afterwards behave; for it was thirty years or more after the crucifixion of Christ that the utter destruction of the Jews came upon them: *he abhorred* them; in his heart, despised them, and at last rejected them with contempt and abhorrence, very righteously and in just retaliation, see Zech. xi. 8. as for what before observed, so for what follows: *because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters*; which is not to be understood of the Lord being provoked to wrath by the sins of those who called themselves or were called his sons and daughters; for these are such who were truly his sons and daughters, and different from those in the following verse, said to be *children in whom is no faith*: these are no other than the disciples and followers of Christ, that believed in him, both men and women, and so the children of God, his sons and his daughters by special grace; and the *provoking* of them is the wrath of the enemy against them, as the same word is used and rendered in ver. 27. and should be here, *because of wrath*, or *indignation against his sons and his daughters*[m]; meaning the affliction, distress, and persecution of them, through the wrath of the unbelieving Jews; for after the death of Christ they persecuted his apostles, they beat them and cast them into prison, and put some to death; a persecution was raised against the church at Jerusalem, in which Saul was concerned, who breathed out threatenings and slaughters against the disciples of the Lord, and haled men and women, the sons and daughters of God, and committed them to prison, and persecuted them to strange cities, and gave his voice to put them to death; and in the Gentile world, when the Gospel was carried there, the Jews stirred up the Gentiles everywhere against the followers of Christ, to harass and distress them; and this the Lord saw, and he abhorred them for it, and rejected them.

Ver. 20. *And he said, I will hide my face from them*, &c.] Now the Lord proceeds to pass sentence on the Jews for their ill-treatment of his son, and of his followers; which respects judgments that should come upon them, both spiritual and temporal, or corporal; the former lies in this and the following verse, and the latter in ver. 22, 23, 24, 25. and this the Lord said in his own heart and mind, decreed and determined it within himself, and declared it in his word by his prophets, as here and in other places: and this first part of the sentence denotes the withdrawment of the gracious presence of God, and the manifestation of his favour, from the people of the Jews, his dislike and contempt of them, having taken out from among them the rem-

[i] Vid. Van Till in loc.

[k] צור ילדך rupem cognationis tuæ, i. e. fratrum tuorum, Van Till; see Rom. ix. 4, 5.

[l] מחללך parturientis te, Montanus; parturitorem tuum, Van Till.

[m] מכעס בניו præ ira in filios suos, Pagninus; propter iram in filios suos, Van Till; so Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 36.

nant according to the election of grace, the disciples and followers of Christ; and the removal of the Gospel, and the ordinances of it, from them, the means of light and knowledge, joy and comfort, and the giving of them up to blindness and hardness of heart, which continues to this day; they have a vail of darkness and ignorance upon their hearts whilst reading the books of the Old Testament, which will be done away when they turn to the Lord, and not before; likewise this was fulfilled when all the symbols of the divine Presence were removed, when the temple was destroyed, and all things in it, or carried away; and this house, which was formerly the house of God, and where he dwelt, was left desolate by him; and it is remarkable, that a little before the destruction of Jerusalem, a voice was heard in the temple, *let us go hence*, as Josephus relates [*]: *I will see what their end* shall be: their destruction, called in the New Testament *the end of the world*; the end of the Jewish church-state and commonwealth: this the Lord said, not as ignorant what it should be, or when it would be; but the sense is, either that he would cause them and others to see it, when he should bring wrath upon them to the uttermost; or that he would look upon it with pleasure and delight, which would be an aggravation of their punishment, Prov. i. 26. *for they* are *a very froward generation*; men of perverse spirits, of a contrary and contradictory temper and disposition, who pleased not God, and were contrary to all men; as well as contradicted and blasphemed the Gospel of Christ, were men of distorted principles in religion, implicated and inconsistent, they wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction; and were obstinate, stubborn, and inflexible in their notions and practices, and that to the last, which was their ruin: *children in whom is no faith*; for though they had faith in one God, in the Scriptures of the Old Testament as the word of God, in the law of Moses, and in a future state, the resurrection of the dead, and judgment to come; especially the Pharisees, the greater part of the Jews; yet though they were the children of Abraham, and would be thought to be the children of God, they had no faith in Jesus, the true Messiah; him they disbelieved and rejected; and as their fathers could not enter into the land of Canaan, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, because of unbelief; so these were cast out of the land, and from the Lord, because of their unbelief in the rejection of the Messiah. Aben Ezra observes, that it may be interpreted there is no men of faithfulness, or no faithful men among them, as in Psal. xii. 1. they were a faithless generation, covenant-breakers, broke their covenant with God, and therefore he rejected them.

Ver. 21. *They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God, &c.*] With a false messiah; for after the death of Jesus, the true Messiah, God as well as man, many false Christs arose, as he predicted, and were received for a time, who were mere men, and deceivers; and their now vainly-expected messiah, or whom they look for, according to their own sense of him, is no other than a mere creature, and not God: or with the idol of their own righteousness; which, as an idol is nothing in the world, that is, nothing in the business of justification, and put in the room of Christ highly provokes the Lord to jealousy: *they have provoked me to anger with their vanities*; such were their false Christs they in vain trusted in, and such the idol of their own righteousness they set up, but could not make to stand; and such were the traditions of their elders, they put upon an equality with, or above the word of God; all which stirred up the wrath and anger of God against them: *and I will move them to jealousy with* those which are *not a people*: this is not to be understood of any particular nation, but of the Gentiles in general, and of God's elect among them, and of the calling of them; which would be provoking to the Jews, as the Apostle Paul has taught us to understand it, Rom. x. 19. These were not *the people of God*, or not *my people*, as he says Rom. ix. 25, 26. 1 Pet. ii. 10. In some sense indeed they were his people, being chosen by him, and taken into covenant with him; for he is God not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles also; and those were given to Christ as his people, and are his other sheep which were not of the Jewish fold; and who were redeemed by him to be a peculiar people out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation, all which was before their calling: yet, in another sense they were not his people; they were without any spiritual privileges, the word and ordinances, without the knowledge of God and Christ, without communion with them; they were not a people near unto the Lord, he had not laid hold on and formed them for himself in regeneration and conversion; they were not reckoned the people of God, nor called so, and especially by the Jews, who accounted themselves to be the only people of God; see Eph. ii. 11, 12. *I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation*; either the Romans in particular are meant, so called because of their gross idolatry, to which they were addicted, who otherwise in their political affairs were a wise and understanding people; to these Judea became a province, and were subject to tribute; and by the exactions of the Romans, and their ill usage of them, they were provoked to rise against them, which issued in their ruin: or rather the Gentiles in general, who might be called foolish because of their superstition and idolatry, ignorance, and blindness in religious matters, and especially were so in the account of the Jews; and the elect of God among them in particular, who in their state of unregeneracy were foolish, as all unregenerate men are; both their principles and practices were foolish, and they were the foolish things of the Gentile world that God chose and called: and the calling of them was exceedingly provoking to the Jews; which was as if a man, moved to jealousy by the behaviour of his wife, should strip her of her ornaments and jewels, and reject her as his wife; and take another before her eyes of mean estate, and marry her, and put her ornaments on her, to which the allusion is; for the Lord, being moved to jealousy by the conduct of the Jewish nation towards him, rejected them from being his people, and stripped them of all their privileges, civil and religious, and took the Gentiles in the room of

* De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 3.

them, and so in just retaliation moved them to jealousy and wrath. It was displeasing to the carnal Jews to hear of the prophecies of the calling of the Gentiles, Rom. x. 20. and the first display of grace to them was resented even by believing Jews themselves at first, Acts xi. 2, 3, 18. The anger of the Scribes and Pharisees on this account is thought by some to be hinted at in the parable of the two sons, Luke xv. 2, 27, 28. The Jews were offended with Christ for eating with publicans, the Roman tax-gatherers, and were greatly displeased when he told them the kingdom of God would be taken from them, and given to another nation, Matt. ix. 10, 11. and xxi. 43, 46. Their rage and envy were very great when the Gospel was first preached to the Gentiles, Acts xiii. 41, 44, 45. and there is such an extraordinary instance of their spite and malice to the Gentiles, and of their jealousy and anger they were moved unto, as is not to be paralleled, 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16.

Ver. 22. *For a fire is kindled in mine anger*, &c.] Here begins the account of temporal and corporeal judgments inflicted on the Jews for their disbelief and rejection of the Messiah, their contempt of his Gospel, and ill-treatment of his followers; and this here respects the destruction of the land of Judea in general, and the burning of the city and temple of Jerusalem in particular, as the effect of the wrath and anger of God like fire kindled against them: *and shall burn unto the lowest hell;* which denotes an entire destruction, like that of the burning of Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone from heaven; which issued in a sulphureous lake, and which sulphureous matter sunk to the bottom of the dead sea; and to that destruction is this of the land of Judea compared, ch. xxix. 23. *and shall consume the earth with her increase:* the land of Judea, with the cities and towns in it, and buildings on it, and the fruits of the earth; which were either gathered into their barns and storehouses, or were growing in their fields, and vineyards, and oliveyards; all were destroyed and consumed at or before the destruction of Jerusalem, or quickly after it: *and set on fire the foundations of the mountains:* the city of Jerusalem, as Jarchi himself interprets it, whose foundations were by the mountains, according to Psal. cxxv. 2. and the temple of Jerusalem particularly was built on Mount Moriah, and that as well as the city was utterly consumed by fire: and it is remarkable that when Julian the apostate attempted to rebuild it, as is related even by an Heathen historian [a], that flames of fire burst out from the foundations, and burnt the workmen; so that he was obliged to desist from his rash undertaking.

Ver. 23. *I will heap mischief upon them*, &c.] One calamity upon another, which are after particularly mentioned: *I will spend mine arrows upon them:* God is here represented as an enemy to the Jews, as having bent his bow against them like an enemy, Lam. ii. 4. and as having a quiver, and that full of arrows, and as determined to draw out and spend every one of them, in taking vengeance upon them; which arrows are his four sore judgments mentioned Ezek. xiv. 21. and expressed in the following verses.

Ver. 24. They shall be *burnt with hunger*, &c.] This is the arrow of famine, Ezek. v. 16, 17. the force of which is such that it makes the skin black as if burnt, Lam. v. 10. Onkelos paraphrases it, "inflated or swelled with famine," which is a phrase Josephus [b] makes use of in describing the famine at the siege of Jerusalem. Jarchi observes, that one of their writers [c] interprets the words *hairs of hunger*, because he says that a man that is famishing and pining, his hair grows, and he becomes hairy: this judgment was notorious among the Jews, at the siege of Jerusalem, and was very sore and dreadful: see ch. xxviii. 53, &c. and the notes there: *and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction:* with burning fevers, pestilential ones, with the plague, the arrow of the Lord that flies by day, the pestilence that walks in darkness, and the destruction that wastes at noon-day, Psal. xci. 5, 6. and which also raged at the siege of Jerusalem, arising from the stench of dead bodies, which lay in all parts of the city, and is one of the signs of the destruction of it given by our Lord, Matt. xxiv. 7, 9. *I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust:* another of the arrows in the quiver of the Lord of hosts, or of his four judgments, and which he used to threaten the people of the Jews with in case of disobedience, Lev. xxvi. 22. And such of the Jews who fled to deserts, and caves and dens of the earth, for shelter, could not escape falling into the hands of wild beasts, and of meeting with poisonous serpents that go upon their bellies, and feed on the dust of the earth; and besides, when Titus had taken Jerusalem, he disposed of his captives some one way and some another; and, among the rest, many were cast to the wild beasts in the theatre, as Josephus relates [d]; add to this, that both Rome Pagan, and Roman Papal, are called beasts, Rev. xiii. 1, 11. into both whose hands the Jews fell, and from whom they have suffered much; with which in part agrees the Targum of Jerusalem, "the teeth "of the four monarchies, which are like to wild beasts, "I will send upon them;" and particularly the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases it, "and the Greeks, who "bite with their teeth like wild beasts, I will send "upon them;" but it would have been much better to have interpreted it of the Romans.

Ver. 25. *The sword without*, &c.] Either without the city, the sword of the Roman army besieging it, which destroyed all that came out or attempted to go in; or in the streets of the city, the sword of the seditious, which destroyed multitudes among themselves: *and terror within;* within the city, on account of the sword of the Romans, and the close siege they made of it; and on account of the famine and pestilence which raged in it, and the cruelty of the seditious persons among themselves; all these filled the people with horror and terror in their houses; and even in their bedchambers, as the word signifies, they were not free from terror; yea, from the temple, and inward parts, and chambers of that, which may be referred to, terror came, that being in the hands of the seditious;

[a] Ammian. Marcellin. l. 23. in initio.

[b] [illegible], de Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 23. sect. 4.

[c] R. Moses Hadarsan.

[d] De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 2. & l. 7. c. 3. sect. 1.

they sallied out from thence, and ravaged the city, and filled all places with the dread of them; and many, no doubt, through fear died, as well as by the sword and other judgments; which it is threatened *shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also, with the man of gray hairs;* none of any age or sex were spared, even those unarmed; not the young man, for his strength and promising usefulness; nor the virgin for her beauty and comeliness; nor the suckling for its innocence and tenderness; nor the aged man through any reverence of his gray hairs, or on account of the infirmities of old age, but all would be destroyed; and never was such a carnage made at the siege of any one city in the world before or since; no less than 1,100,000 persons perished in it, as Josephus relates[e].

Ver. 26. *I said*, &c.] Or could have said, or might have said; that is, determined and resolved, as it was in his power, and in right and justice might have done what follows: *I would scatter them into corners;* which does not fitly express the sense of the word used, and besides this was what was done; it is notorious that the Jews were and are scattered into the several corners of the world, and there is no corner where they are not; whereas the phrase is expressive of something that could and might have been done, but was not: moreover, to disperse them into the several parts of the world does not agree with what follows; for that, instead of making their remembrance to cease, would make them the more known, and the more to be remembered. But the word literally taken may be rendered, *I will corner them*[f]; drive them up into a corner, and cut them off together, or search for them in, and ferret them out of, every corner in which they should get, and destroy them all: agreeably to which is the Targum of Onkelos, "mine anger shall rest upon "them, and I will destroy them;" and so Aben Ezra interprets it of the destruction of them, and observes, that otherwise it would not agree with what follows. There may be an allusion in it to the corner of the field, which was ordered to be left to the poor, and not reaped, Lev. xix. 9. and so the sense is, I could and might have determined when the harvest of this land and people was come, or the time of wrath upon them, to cut down every corner, and leave none, no, not one standing stalk of corn, but make clean riddance of them: *I would make the remembrance of them cease from among men;* as of the Amalekites, Moabites, Midianites, Edomites, Chaldeans, and others, whose names as well as nations are no more. This is what the enemies of the Jews plotted and conspired to do, Psal. lxxxiii. 4. and what God could and might have done, but has not; the Jews continue to this day a distinct people, though it is now near 1,700 years since the destruction of their city and temple, and their dispersion in the several parts of the world; which is what was never known of any other people in the like circumstances, and which is a most amazing and surprising event; the reasons of it follow.

Ver. 27. *Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy*, &c.] Satan, the enemy of mankind in general, of the people of God in particular, and especially of the Messiah, the seed of the woman, and of God himself, whom he would dethrone, or at least place himself on an equality with him; this enemy is full of wrath, enmity, and blasphemy, against God, and stirs up all of this kind in the hearts of men, and instigates them to persecute the people of God; and does all he can to obscure the glory of God, and lessens his own *grief*, as the word signifies, occasioned by it: and now though God has nothing to fear, either from the power and policy of the devil, being infinitely mightier and wiser than he; yet as Moses expressed his concern, if God should cut off the people of Israel as one man, that the Egyptians would say he brought them out of Egypt for mischief, or that he was not able to bring them into the land of Canaan, Exod. xxxii. 12. Numb. xiv. 15, 16. so the Lord, speaking after the manner of men, as Aben Ezra observes, expresses his fears of the wrath of the enemy; not properly, but it denotes his precaution, provision, and preparation he made to put a check upon it, and a stop to it, that he might not have the opportunity of instilling it into the minds of men, that God was cruel to his people, or had not ability to save them from their enemies, or was unfaithful to his promises; and therefore he did not entirely cut them off, as he could and might have done, but made a reserve of them, as a standing proof to the contrary: *lest their adversaries;* the Romans, who fought against them, took them, and carried them captive: *should behave themselves strangely;* alienate the glory of God from him, and give it to their strange gods; which the Romans were wont to do when they obtained victories, and did do something of this kind to Jupiter Capitolinus, when they carried the Jews captive, and their trophies in triumph to Rome: yet there was such an apparent hand of God in this affair, that the Heathens were obliged to own it. Titus the conqueror himself confessed that it was God that favoured him, and that it was he that brought the Jews out of the fortresses and fastnesses in which they were; and that no hands of men, or machines, were any thing against such towers as they had[g]: and when some neighbouring nations would have crowned him because of his victories over the Jews, he refused it, saying, he was unworthy of it, he had not done this of himself, but had only lent an hand to God that was angry with them[h]. Cicero also observes[i] the hand of God in the conquest, captivity, and servitude of the Jewish nation; moreover, a remnant was preserved to be to the Romans, as the Canaanites were to the Israelites, thorns in their sides, and pricks in their eyes; to be a burden to them, a dead weight upon them, and to check their ovations and triumphs over them; for, that people conquered gave them great trouble, raised commotions and insurrections in many places, which obliged the emperors in succeeding reigns to come from distant parts, and quell them, and

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[e] De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3.

[f] אפאיהם angulabo illos, Oleaster, Vitringa; ad angulos usque quæram ipsos, seu ad verbum, angulabo ipsos, Van Till; ab angulo succidam ipsos, Cocceius. Vid. Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 661.

[g] Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 1.

[h] Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 6. c. 14.

[i] Orat. 24. pro Flacco.

were the occasion of vast quantities of blood being shed; insomuch that one of their poets[k] wishes Judea had never been subdued by them: likewise a number of them was preserved to prevent the growth and spread of idolatry, and that they might be a standing example and caution to Christians among the Gentiles not to give into it, when they should observe what they suffered on the account of it, as their prophecies, extant in their sacred books preserved, abundantly testified and declared: and *lest they should say, our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this;* lest any one should say among the Gentiles, as particularly deists, lest they should lift up their horn on high, and speak with a stiff neck, and deny that ever any such things were done for this people the Scriptures speak of, as the miracles in the land of Egypt, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness; and confidently affirm there never was any such people, and defy Christians to shew them a Jew if they could: now here was a reserve made of them, to be a standing proof of the truth of divine revelation against such infidels; as also that they might be a check unto all false teachers, and leave them inexcusable who embrace the same errors that have been condemned in them, and God has shewn his displeasure at, and which they still retain; such as the doctrines of free will, of justification by a man's own righteousness, of salvation not being wholly by the Messiah, and of his being non-Jehovah, or only a mere creature; for the words may be rendered, *non-Jehovah hath done all this*[h]; or he that is not Jehovah hath done all that is done for the people of the Jews; and say, all that the Messiah hath done, with respect to salvation, is done by him that is not Jehovah, or God, but a creature. These were the doctrines of the Jews in Christ's time; the Pharisees, the prevailing sect among them, were free-willers, as Josephus relates[i]; and the whole nation were self-justiciaries, as the Apostle Paul assures us, and sought for righteousness not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law, Rom. ix. 31, 32. and x. 3. and such they are to this day, as well as Unitarians to a man; now Arians, Socinians, Pelagians, and Arminians, may look upon these people, who are continued, as having imbibed the same errors; and may read theirs in them, and God's displeasure at them.

Ver. 28. *For they are a nation void of counsel,* &c.] This is said not of the Jews, whose character is given, ver. 6. and instances of their ingratitude, folly, and want of counsel and understanding, have been already mentioned, and punishment for the same inflicted on them, according to this prophetic song; so that the prophecy respecting them is issued, and another people are taken notice of, even their enemies, of whom the Jewish writers in general interpret these words, and what follows; and was true of the Gentiles, both of the Pagan sort of them, who took too much to themselves, and ascribed the destruction of the Jews, and their conquest of them, to themselves, and their idols; and of false Christians among them, when the Roman empire became Christian, such as expressed themselves in the language of the latter part of the preceding verse, *our hand is high,* &c. which plainly shewed them to be a people devoid of the true knowledge of the Scriptures, they should have made the men of their counsel, and have consulted; and of the Gospel of Christ, which is the counsel of God, as the Arians, Pelagians, &c. must be, or they would never imbibe and advance tenets so diametrically opposite thereunto: *neither is there any understanding in them:* of divine and spiritual things, of the Scriptures, and the doctrines of them; of the person of Christ, and his divine perfections, or they would never deny his deity; of the righteousness of God, of that which is required in the law, and revealed in the Gospel, or they would never set up a righteousness of their own for justification; and of themselves, their unrighteousness, impurity, and impotence to that which is good; or they would never so strongly assert the purity of human nature, and the power of man's free will: God foreseeing all the folly, and want of counsel and understanding in the Gentile world, under different characters, preserved a remnant of the Jews as a standing admonition to them.

Ver. 29. *O that they were wise,* &c.] These are not the words of God, and so no instances of mere velleities, and unsuccessful wishes in him, and as arguing a power in man to make himself wise if he would; but of Moses, under a spirit of prophecy, foreseeing the ignorance and stupidity of the above persons; or as personating a true believer in Christ, in the times in which such men should live; for the person speaking is one that had faith in Christ, the rock of salvation, and built upon him alone for it; and who had enemies on that account, as appears from the following verses: and these words are spoken not of the Jews, with whom this song has no more concern, unless it be in what respects their conversion in the latter day; but of false Christians, Pelagians, Arians, &c. whose language and character are expressed in the preceding verses: and contain a pathetic wish that they might have wisdom to see their follies, errors, and mistakes, and renounce them: or, *if they were wise*[k]; as they are not, and their tenets shew it: *they would understand this:* namely, what follows: *they would consider their latter end;* either the latter end of the Jews; had they wisdom, they would understand and observe that the displeasure of God against them, and his destruction of them, was for their lightly esteeming the rock of salvation, as Arians do; and for setting up their own righteousness, in opposition to the righteousness of Christ, as do Pelagians and Arminians; and were they wise, they would be hereby cautioned against such notions; and though imbibed by them, would relinquish them; as they may justly fear some such-like end will be theirs: for if God does not give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth their end must be miserable; since the errors they embrace and profess are what the apostle calls *damnable heresies;* who, denying the Lord that bought them, bring on themselves

[k] Atque utinam nunquam Judæa subacta fuisset, Rutilius.

[h] ולא יהוה & non-Jehovah operatus est omne hoc, Coccelus; so Van Till, Vitringa.

[i] Antiqu. l. 18. c. 1. sect. 3.

[k] לו חכמו o si saperent, Tigurine version; si sapuissent, Vatablus; si saperent, Coccelus.

swift destruction; and whose judgment, he says, lingers not, and their damnation slumbers not, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 3.

Ver. 30. *How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight,* &c.] This is said for the conviction of the Pagan Romans of their folly in behaving strangely, alienating to their gods what belonged to the true God; for since the Jews were more numerous than they, both in Judea, in the times of Titus Vespasian, when the country was subdued by him; and in other parts of the world, in the times of Adrian, when the Jews rose up in vast numbers, greatly superior to the Romans, and yet were conquered; which, allowing the phrase to be hyperbolical, was like one to a thousand, and two to ten thousand: now since this was what was promised to the Jews in case of obedience, that they should in this manner chase their enemies, Lev. xxvi. 8. it can't be accounted for that they should in like manner be chased by their enemies, as threatened Isa. xxx. 17. *except their rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up;* that is, unless the Lord, who was their rock and fortress, and in whom they should have trusted as such, had forsaken them, and given them up into their enemies' hands, shut up as they were in the city of Jerusalem in the times of Titus, and afterwards in Bither in the times of Adrian; it is a plain case that this was of God, and not owing to the idols of the Gentiles; see Psal. xliv. 9, 10, 11, 12. Cocceius and Van Till interpret this of Constantine overcoming Maxentius, Licinius, and Maximinius, whereby the whole Roman empire on a sudden became Christian nominally, when but a little before Dioclesian had erected a trophy with this inscription on it, "the "Christian name blotted out;" so that the odds between the Christians and Pagans were as one to a thousand, and two to ten thousand, and the victory therefore must be ascribed to God; this could never have been unless Satan, the great red dragon, had given his kingdom to the beast, which was done by the permission and sovereign will of God; see Rev. vi. 14. and xii. 7, 8. and xiii. 2. and xvii. 17. so those interpreters, but the former sense seems best.

Ver. 31. *For their rock is not as our rock,* &c.] That is, the gods of the Heathens, the rock in which they trusted, are not like the God of Israel, the rock of salvation, in which all true believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, place their confidence; and indeed let that be what it will, that is short of Christ the rock, men lay the stress of their salvation on, it is no rock, but sand, and will stand them in no stead; see Matt. vii. 24—27. *even our enemies themselves being judges:* as has been confessed of the God of Israel by the Heathens; see Exod. xiv. 25. Numb. xxiii. 8. 1 Sam. iv. 8. and was by Titus with respect to the destruction of Jerusalem; see the note on ver. 27. and by the Roman emperors when conquered by the Christians, who asked pardon of the God of the Christians, and owned that the God of Constantine was the true God; see the note on Rev. vi. 16.

Ver. 32. *For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah,* &c.] This respects the false Christians in the Roman empire, who should have taken warning by the Jews, and not have embraced such sentiments of theirs, which had been resented by the Lord, and condemned in them; such as the doctrines of man's free will, of justification and salvation not alone by Christ, but by their own works of righteousness, saying, *our hand is high, and the Lord hath not done all this,* ver. 27. Now out of the errors and heresies which arose in the primitive Christian church sprung the man of sin, the son of perdition, antichrist, or the antichristian and apostate church of Rome, the degenerate plant of a strange vine; and is here described as *of the vine of Sodom,* a slip from that, transplanted from Judea, and from the worse part of it, Sodom; bearing a resemblance to the old Jewish church in its more degenerate state, reviving many of its antiquated rites and ceremonies, and embracing its unsound doctrines; especially which relate to justification, and salvation by the works of men; and having such a likeness to Sodom in its abominable practices, that it is even called Sodom itself, Rev. xi. 8. particularly for pride, luxury, idleness, idolatry, profaneness, contempt of serious religion, and for bodily uncleanness; even for that sin which has its name from Sodom, which has not only been frequently committed by the popes and other great personages among them, and connived at; but praised and commended in printed books, published and sheltered under public authority; see the note on Rev. xi. 8. and with this compare Ezek. xvi. 49. *and of the fields of Gomorrah;* another city of the plain, destroyed for the same sins that Sodom was; the phrase signifies the same as before; who has not heard of the apples and fruits of Gomorrah, which are said to look very fair and beautiful without, but when touched fall into ashes? a fit emblem of the fair shew of religion and devotion, and the many outward works of piety in the Romish church they pretend to perform, but when examined are *lies in hypocrisy,* 1 Tim. iv. 2. *their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter;* which may denote the large number of the members of this church clustered together, and the many religious orders in it; which make a fair shew in the flesh, but are in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; and the variety of ordinances and institutions of man's devising: so as the ordinances of the true church of Christ are compared to clusters of grapes, Cant. vii. 7. the ordinances of the false church are like clusters of bitter grapes, both for their quantity and quality; and may mean also their many evil works and actions, especially their oppression and cruelty in persecuting the saints, and shedding their blood; just as the wild grapes of the vine of Judah are interpreted of oppression and a cry, Isa. v. 4, 7.

Ver. 33. *Their wine is the poison of dragons,* &c.] Of these creatures, both land and sea dragons, see the notes on Mic. i. 8. Mal. i. 3. Pliny says[l] the dragon has no poison in it; yet, as Dalechamp, in his notes on that writer observes, he in many places prescribes remedies against the bite of the dragon; but Heliodorus[m] expressly speaks of some archers, whose arrows were infected with the poison of dragons; and Leo

[l] Nat. Hist. l. 29. c. 4.

[m] Ethiopic. l. 9. c. 19. p. 438.

Africanus[n] says, the Atlantic dragons are exceeding poisonous: and yet other writers[o] besides Pliny have asserted that they are free from poison. It seems the dragons of Greece are without, but not those of Africa and Arabia; and to these Moses has respect, as being well known to him. The Targum of Jerusalem is, "the poison of this people is like the poison of dragons as they drink wine;" and the Targum of Jonathan, "as the poison of dragons, when they are at or "from their wine;" that is, after and as soon as they have drank it; for, according to natural historians, serpents, though they need and use but little drink, yet are very fond of wine: and it seems that thereby their poison becomes more sharp and intense, as Bochart[p] observes; wherefore the allusion is very proper and pertinent, and denotes the wine of fornication of the apostate church of Rome, frequently spoken of Rev. xiv. 8. and xvii. 2. and xviii. 3. which is no other than her corrupt doctrines, intoxicating, enticing, and leading to idolatry and superstition; and as the true Gospel of Christ is somtimes compared to wine, so the false doctrines of this church; but then 'tis such that is not only loathsome and abominable, but poisonous and pernicious to the souls of men, damnable and ruinous, and brings upon them swift destruction, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11. and may well be compared to the poison of dragons for such reasons; as also because they are doctrines of devils, and come from the great dragon, that old serpent called the devil and Satan, 2 Tim. iv. 1. Rev. xii. 3, 9. *and the cruel venom of asps:* which, of all kind of serpents, Pliny[q] says is the least curable; nay, according to the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions of this clause, it is incurable; and so Aristotle says[r] there is no remedy for it; and so says Ælianus[s], who also observes[t], that the mark it makes is so small, that it is scarcely discerned by the sharpest eye. Pliny[u] represents it as a most revengeful creature; when its mate is killed by any, it will pursue the slayer, flee where he will, and as far and fast as he can: it breaks through all difficulties, and is not to be stopped by rivers, or any obstacles, and will attack the person, whom it presently knows, let him be in ever such a crowd: and therefore it and its poison may well be called cruel; and as the poison of this creature lies under its tongue, this is a fit simile to express the poisonous and pernicious doctrines of the apostate church.

Ver. 34. Is *not this laid up in store with me,* &c.] The fruit of the degenerate vine, its bitter clusters of grapes, and poisonous wine; meaning the evil principles and practices of the apostate church, well known to God, taken notice of by him, and laid up in his mind and memory; for both she and her sins will come in remembrance before God, and will be brought to open view, and appear to have been laid up by him, in order to be exposed at a proper time; see Rev. xvi. 19. and xviii. 5. and so the Targums interpret it of evil works: or this may be understood of the punishment of the evil doctrines and practices of the antichristian church, the sentence of which God had secretly passed in his eternal mind, and which he had in reserve, and in due time would execute; it was drawn and signed by him, and, as he says, *sealed up among my treasures;* his treasures of wrath, denoting the secrecy of it, and the sure and certain performance of it, and the authority of Christ to execute it; to whom this sealed diploma is given, and all judgment committed; and particularly this to judge the whore of Rome; and who is able to open the sealed book of God's purposes and decrees, and to accomplish them; and among the rest those which relate to the utter ruin of antichrist, and the antichristian states: so the Targum of Jerusalem interprets it of the vengeance of the Lord, laid up for the wicked; "is not the cup of the judgment of vengeance mixed and prepared for the ungodly sealed "up among my treasures, to the day of the great judgment?" it is true of the cup of the wine of the fierceness of the wrath of God, or of the wine of the wrath of God poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, which he will make great Babylon, and all the worshippers of the beast, drink of, Rev. xiv. 9, 10. and xvi. 19.

Ver. 35. *To me* belongeth *vengeance and recompense,* &c.] Or, *I will repay,* or *recompence,* as it is quoted in Rom. xii. 19. Heb. x. 30. and so all the three Targums, the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, here, and so Jarchi interprets it. Vengeance belongs only to a divine Person, not to an Heathen deity called Dice, or vengeance, Acts xxviii. 4. nor to Satan and his spiteful angels, nor to any of the sons of men in a private capacity; though magistrates, being in public office, and representing God, are revengers to execute wrath on them that do evil, Rom. xiii. 4. otherwise it is peculiar to God; and there is a great deal of reason to believe he will recompence it, as it may be concluded from his hatred of sin, his strict justice, and his faithfulness to his threatenings as well as his promises; from the instances of his vengeance on the old world, on Sodom and Gomorrah, and others; and from his taking vengeance on the inventions even of good men, whose sins he pardons, and especially from his not sparing his own son, when standing in the law place and stead of sinners: and this is applicable to Christ, who not only in the days of his flesh took vengeance on Satan, and his principalities and powers; and, when he came in his kingdom and power, took vengeance on the Jews his enemies, who would not have him to rule over them; but also, at his spiritual coming, he will take vengeance on antichrist, whom he will destroy with the breath of his mouth, and send that son of perdition into the perdition appointed for him; and pour out the vials of his wrath on all the antichristian states, the time of which is next pointed at: *their foot shall slide in* due *time:* there is a time fixed for the reign of antichrist, when it will end, 42 months, or 1,260 days; that is, so many years; see Rev. xi. 2. and xiii. 5. and a little before the expiration of them, his foot will begin to slide, as the slipping of the foot is

[n] Descriptio Africæ, l. 9. p. 753.
[o] Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 4. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 72.
[p] Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 3. c. 14. col. 439, 429.
[q] Nat. Hist. l. 29. c. 4.
[r] Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 29.
[s] De Animal. l. 1. c. 54. & l. 6. c. 38.
[t] Ibid. l. 9. c. 61.
[u] Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 23.

just before a fall; and then will the foot of antichrist slip and slide, when the witnesses slain by him shall revive and stand upon their feet, and cause fear to fall on them that are on the earth; and when they shall ascend up into heaven, or rise to superior power and authority, greatness and splendour, than they formerly had, and this in the sight of their enemies; and when there will be earthquakes and revolutions in the several antichristian states; and the tenth part of the great city shall fall, and many persons of renown be slain, and others frighted, and will give glory to the God of heaven; when an angel, or a set of Gospel ministers, shall fly in the midst of heaven, with the everlasting Gospel, to preach to all nations; which will be immediately followed by another, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; when the kings of the earth will dislike and resent various things done by the pope of Rome, and shall hate him, and meditate his ruin, and then may his foot be said to slide; see Rev. xi. 11, 13. and xiv. 6, 7, 8. and xvii. 16. *for the day of their calamity is at hand;* a cloudy day, as the word signifies, when the kingdom of the beast will be full of darkness and confusion, Rev. xvi. 10. and when all those calamities shall come upon Babylon, expressed in Rev. xiii. 8—19. *and the things that shall come upon them make haste;* even all those evil things God has determined in his counsels and purposes, and which are foretold in prophecy, these shall come upon antichrist in haste; for, though his judgment and damnation may seem to linger and slumber, it shall not; God will hasten it in his due time, and all his judgments will come on Babylon in one day, Rev. xviii. 8.

Ver. 36. *For the Lord shall judge his people,* &c.] The true church and members of it, in opposition to the false and apostate church; his chosen and covenant people, whom he gave to Christ, and who are redeemed by his blood, and effectually called by his grace; the people he shall call out of Babylon, or preserve from the corruptions of it before its fall; and who are the objects of his love and delight; a distinct, peculiar, and special people, near unto him, and all righteous: these he will judge at this time, distinguish between them and the followers of antichrist: he will take their cause in hand, and plead it, and do justice to them; he will right their wrongs and injuries, and take vengeance on their enemies; he will protect and defend them, reign and rule over them. Now will be the time, when the witnesses slain are raised, that he will take to himself his great power and reign, and the time of the dead when they will be judged, and a reward given to his servants and prophets, to his saints, and all that fear his name; and when he will destroy them that have destroyed the earth, Rev. xv. 17, 18. so the Targum of Jonathan interprets this of the word of the Lord that shall judge his people in mercy: *and repent himself for his servants;* by whom are meant not only the ministers of the Gospel, his witnesses that prophesy in sackcloth, and who will be slain when they have finished their testimony; but all that are effectually called by grace, who though they have been the servants of sin, and the vassals of Satan, yet by the grace of God become the servants of God and of righteousness; dislike and cast off their old masters; readily, willingly, and cheerfully, take upon them the yoke of Christ, and freely obey him, constrained by his love, and influenced by views of interest in him; and so serve him without any selfish views, owning that, when they have done all they can, they are but unprofitable servants: now for or on account of these he will repent himself, because of the evils he has suffered to come upon them, being moved with pity and compassion to them in their miserable circumstances, as they will be in when the witnesses his servants will be slain; not that, properly speaking, repentance is in God; he never changes his mind, counsel, and purposes; he never alters his love, his choice, nor his covenant; or repents of his gifts, and calling of special grace; though he is sometimes said to repent of outward good things he has bestowed, or promised to bestow conditionally; and of evils he has threatened or inflicted; yet this is only to be understood of a change of his outward dealings and dispensations with men, according to his unchangeable will; and this will be the case now with respect to his servants, whom he will have suffered to be slain, and lie unburied; but repenting or changing his manner of conduct to them will revive them, and cause them to ascend to heaven; see Rev. xi. 11, 12. *when he seeth that* their *power is gone:* not the hand and power of the enemy, going and prevailing over them, and strong upon them, as the Targum of Jonathan and Jarchi; but rather the hand and power of the righteous, as the Targum of Jerusalem; and respects not their internal power and strength, which they have not in themselves, but in Christ; though the exertion of that power, and the exercise of their graces, as faith, and hope, and love, will be greatly declined; but their external power, and protection which they had from Protestant princes; they being removed, and others not like them succeeding, or apostatizing to the church of Rome: the outward-court or national establishments are a fence and protection to the inward-court worshippers, or servants of God; when that shall be given to the Gentiles, the Papists, as it will, Rev. xi. 2. the power or hand, the protecting sheltering hand of the saints, will be gone, and they will become a prey to their adversaries: *and there is none shut up or left;* a phrase used to express the miserable state and condition of a people, when none are left, but all are carried off, or cut off, and destroyed, and there is none to help them; see 1 Kings xiv. 10. and xxi. 21. 2 Kings ix. 8. and xiv. 26. when there are none shut up in garrisons, and left there to defend a people; or there are none shut up in prison, or any left to till the ground; which is sometimes the case when a nation is conquered, and the greater part are carried captives; but it denotes such a general destruction, that there are none remaining any where, and thus it will be at the slaying of the witnesses. This passage has respect to their dead bodies, which will not be shut up in graves, nor any left to bury them, Rev. xi. 9. There will scarcely be a professor of religion, or any that will appear to favour the witnesses slain in any respect; there will be "none to "support and uphold," as the Targum of Jerusalem; not to support and uphold the true religion, or to help the people of God in these their distresses: and when the Lord shall see all this, he'll look upon them with

an eye of pity and compassion; he will repent for his servants, according to the multitude of his tender mercies; and will plead their cause, and judge them, and will put on the garments of vengeance, and repay fury and recompense to his and their enemies, Isa. lix. 16, 17, 18. who will insultingly say as follows.

Ver. 37. *And he shall say, where are their gods?* &c.] Not the Lord shall say to Israel, upbraiding them with their idols and their idolatries; but, as the Targum of Jonathan, "the enemy shall say, where is "the God of Israel?" and to the same purpose is the Jerusalem Targum, and which is the sense of other Jewish writers [w]; and the words may be rendered impersonally, and in the singular number, *and it shall be said, where is their God?* as it follows, their *rock in whom they trusted?* that is, it shall be said to the people of God, when in the low estate before described, and which will make it still more distressing; it shall be said to them by their enemies in a sneering way, where is the Lord their God they boasted of, and the rock of salvation in whom they trusted? which agrees with other passages of Scripture, Psal. xlii. 3, 10. and lxxix. 10. Mic. vii. 9. The persons insulted and upbraided are the Protestant witnesses at the time of their being slain; when *they that dwell upon the earth*, the Papists, *shall rejoice over them*, Rev. xi. 10. they are such who are true believers in the God and Father of Christ, as their God and Father in Christ, who of his own free grace has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in him; and who trust in Christ the rock alone for justification before God, for acceptance with him, and for their whole salvation; rejecting the Popish notion of justification by works, the doctrines of merit, and of works of supererogation, and the like; who now will be taunted at, and triumphed over, saying, where is the God of the Protestants they gloried in, as being on their side? and where is their rock on which they say the church is built, and not on Peter?

Ver. 38. *Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink-offerings*, &c.] Alluding to the fat of the sacrifices under the law, which was claimed by the Lord as his, and represented as his food, Lev. iii. 11, 16. and to the drink-offerings of wine, which were of a sweet savour to God, and with respect to which wine is said to cheer him, Numb. xv. 7. Judg. ix. 13. Now New-Testament worship and services are here expressed in Old-Testament language, which is not unusual; see Isa. lvi. 7. and lxvi. 20—23. and signify the best of the sacrifices and services of true believers in Christ, presenting their souls and bodies unto him as a holy, living, acceptable sacrifice, which is but their reasonable service; offering their sacrifices of prayer and praise unto him through Christ; doing all good works in his name and strength, and all acts of beneficence in love to him and his people, with which sacrifices he is well-pleased; yea, cheerfully laying down their lives as victims in his cause, when called unto it. Now these words are a taunt at the Protestant doctrine of the acceptance of the service and sacrifices of believers in Christ, through him, and for his sake, and not for any merit or worthiness in them: *let them rise up and help you;* their God and their rock, Jehovah the Father, their covenant-God, and his Son the rock of their salvation, in whom they trust; and so they will arise and help them in this time of extreme distress; though they may seem as asleep, and to take no notice of the sad estate of saints, they will arise in wrath and indignation at their enemies, and deliver them out of their hands; the Spirit of life from God shall be sent to bring to life the slain witnesses, and Christ will rise up in the exertion of his kingly power; he will take to himself his great power, and reign, and destroy them that destroyeth the earth, Rev. xi. 11, 17, 18. and *be your protection;* or *let him be your hiding-place* [x]; that is, the rock in whom they trusted, and so he is, and will be *an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the storm*, Isa. xxxii. 2. not only from the wrath and justice of God, but from the rage and fury of men; Christ will protect and defend his people against all their enemies, and in his own time will deliver them from them; who, in answer to these taunts and derisions, rises up, and thus he says, as follows.

Ver. 39. *See now that I*, even *I*, am *he*, &c.] Which words are directed to the people of God in their low estate, to look to Christ, and expect deliverance and salvation from him; or to their enemies that insult them, to the despisers, to look, and wonder, and perish, as they will, when the witnesses slain by them shall arise, and go up to heaven in their sight, Rev. xi. 11, 12, 13. they are spoken by the Word and Son of God, to whom the Father has committed all judgment, and who will now rise up and execute it; so the Targum of Jonathan, "when the Word of the Lord shall re-"veal himself to redeem his people, he will say to all "people, see now, *&c.*" and who will declare himself to be the great Jehovah, the self-existent Being, the eternal and immutable I AM; for this phrase is expressive of his existence, eternity, immutability, and sovereignty; and which the above Targum paraphrases thus, "see now that I am he that have been, and am, "and I am he that shall be," which, as it is a deciphering the word Jehovah, is what is applied to Christ, Rev. i. 8. The repeating the word *I*, as it may denote the vehement affection of the speaker, and the certainty of what he would do, so it may have respect to both sorts of persons the words are directed to, and to the several sorts of things to be done, hereafter related; signifying that it is the same I, that does the one, does also the other, kills and makes alive, *&c. and* there is *no god with me:* this the Redeemer and Saviour says elsewhere, Isa. xliv. 6. and xlv. 21. see ver. 12. there is but one God, and Christ the Word, with the Father and the Spirit, are that one God, 1 John v. 7. and there is no other with him; he is the true God, in opposition to all factitious and fictitious gods; he is not a made god, nor a god by office, nor by name and title only, but by nature the one, true, only, and living God; and so it may be most truly believed of him, that he is able to do, and will do, what he next says: *I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal:* Christ is the sovereign disposer of life and death, of sickness and health, in a

[w] Aben Ezra & R. Nehemiah in Jarchi in loc.

[x] סתרה absconsio, Pagninus, Montanus; latibulum, Tigurine version; latebra, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

temporal sense; and in a spiritual sense he wounds and kills, by the law in the hand of his spirit; and he heals and makes alive by his Gospel, as it is accompanied by his spirit and grace also: this is by some referred to the resurrection from the dead, which will be by Christ the resurrection and the life, the earnest, exemplar, and efficient cause of it; so the Targum of Jerusalem, "I am he that kills the living in this world, and "quickens the dead in the world to come:" but it refers to another resurrection previous to that, namely, the reviving of the witnesses after they have been slain three days; who, as they will be killed in a civil sense, in the same sense they will be quickened by the spirit of life from Christ; that is, they will be raised from that very low estate into which they will be brought, into a glorious one, signified by their ascending up into heaven; which will be done by Christ when he takes to himself his great power, and reigns; then as he suffered his witnesses and people to be wounded and killed, he will make them alive, and heal them, and restore comforts and happiness to them, see Rev. xi. 11, 12: *neither* is there any *that can deliver out of my hand;* for, at the same time that he saves his people, he will take their enemies into his hands, out of which there will be no escape; at this time seven thousand names of men, or men of name, will be slain, Rev. xi. 13. see the note there.

Ver. 40. *For I lift up my hand to heaven,* &c.] Which is a gesture used in swearing, Gen. xiv. 22. and is ascribed to a divine Person, Ezek. xx. 5. and particularly to Christ the angel, that is so wonderfully described, Rev. x. 1—5. though sometimes it is used, as Aben Ezra observes, to excite the attention of hearers, but here it signifies swearing; and so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it, "I have lift up "my hands with an oath to heaven;" and to the same sense is the Septuagint version: *and say, I live for ever;* which is the form of an oath; when men swear, they are to swear, the Lord liveth, or to swear by the living God, and him only, Jer. iv. 2. and when the Lord swears in this manner, he swears by his life, by himself, because he can swear by no greater; and his form of swearing is, *as truly as I live, saith the Lord,* Numb. xiv. 21, 28. so the above angel is said to swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, Rev. x. 6. and since Christ is the living God, without beginning of days, and end of life, and lives for evermore, he may be thought to swear by himself, by his own life, which is for ever; and as the oath of the Lord is used in condescension by him, to confirm the faith of his people in the immutability of his counsel and promises, and to ascertain unto them the sure performance of them; so it is also used to assure wicked men of the certain performance of his threatenings; and it is as if Christ here said, as sure as I am the living God, and do and shall live for ever, I will most certainly do the things which next follow.

Ver. 41. *If I whet my glittering sword,* &c.] That is, I will do it as sure as I live, if I do not, be it so and so; what that is is not said, but left to be concluded. A glittering sword is a sword drawn, the blade of it drawn out of the scabbard, cleaned and polished, whetted and made sharp, that it may more easily penetrate and pierce; and this, being brandished, glitters like lightning, as the word used signifies. Whetting the sword is a preparation for doing execution with it; and is a warning, a giving notice of it, as girding the sword on the thigh also is ascribed to Christ, Psal. xlv. 3. This sword intends a sword of justice, the sharp sword said to proceed out of the mouth of Christ, the judiciary sentence which he will pronounce and execute on antichrist, and all his followers, Rev. xix. 15, 21. *and my hand take hold on judgment:* in order to execute it; the allusion is to the laying hold on the instruments of justice and death, as the glittering sword before mentioned, and arrows afterwards; and may have respect to the four sore judgments, or at least to some of them, which the Lord will execute on mystical Babylon, Ezek. xiv. 21. Rev. xviii. 8. and particularly to the seven vials of God's wrath, which will be poured out on the antichristian states, Rev. xvi. *I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and I will reward them that hate me;* his enemies that hate him, and will not have him to rule over them, are the followers of antichrist, who has his name from his opposition to Christ, his hatred of him, and enmity against him; opposing him in his kingly office, taking upon him to exercise dominion and tyranny over the consciences of men, making new laws, and imposing them on them, and dispensing with the laws of Christ; and setting aside his priestly office by the sacrifice of the Mass, granting pardons and indulgences, and advancing the works and merits of men, in opposition to the righteousness of Christ, and pretending even to works of supererogation; making of none effect, as much as in him lies, his prophetic office, by setting up unwritten traditions before the word of God, and making them the rule of faith and practice, and assuming to himself an infallible interpretation of the sense of Scripture. The vengeance Christ will render, as a righteous reward to those his enemies, is expressed by destroying antichrist with the breath of his mouth; by the beast going into perdition; by leading them captive who have led others; by killing them with the sword who have killed others with it; by pouring out the vials of his wrath on them; by giving them the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath; by smiting them with the sword that comes out of his mouth, and by bringing upon them death, mourning, and famine, and burning them with fire; all which he will most surely render unto them, 2 Thess. ii. 8. Rev. xiii. 10. and xv. 1. and xvii. 8. and xviii. 8. and xix. 15, 20, 21.

Ver. 42. *I will make mine arrows drunk with blood,* &c.] Signifying, that by various judgments he would bring upon them, which, like arrows, would come suddenly, fly swiftly, and pierce deeply, there would be a prodigious effusion of blood like that in Rev. xiv. 20. so that these arrows, which cause it, being plunged and soaked, and covered in it, may be said to be inebriated with it, just as the sword is said to be bathed and filled with blood, Isa. xxxiv. 5. which prophecy respects the same vengeance of Christ on the self-same enemies of his as here; and as the whore of Rome is said to be drunken with the blood of the saints and martyrs of Jesus, the arrows of her destruction are represented in just retaliation as drunk with her blood, Rev. xvii. 6. *(and my sword shall devour flesh:)* the flesh of kings, of captains, of mighty men, of horses,

and of them that sit on them, the flesh of all men, bond and free, small and great, Rev. xix. 18. that is, shall destroy great multitudes of men: and that *with the blood of the slain, and of the captives;* that is, his arrows should be drunk not only with the blood of those that were wounded and killed, but of the captives; who commonly are spared, but in this case should not, their blood should be shed: it may be rendered, *because of the blood of the slain,* &c.[y]; because of the blood of the saints whom they have killed, and carried captive, and who have died in prisons: *from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy;* or *of the enemy;* that is, from the time the enemy began to oppress the saints, and take revenge on them, and shed their blood; all that blood shall be found in them that has been from the beginning shed, and charged to their account, and revenged on them; just as the blood of all the righteous, from the beginning of the world, was brought upon the Jews, Matt. xxiii. 35. Rev. xviii. 24. The Targum of Jerusalem is, "from the heads of their "mighty men, the generals of their armies;" to which agrees the Septuagint version, "from the head of the "princes of the enemies;" and so may refer to the head or heads of the antichristian people, the pope of Rome, and his princes, the cardinals, and all the antichristian kings and states, the captains and generals of their armies, which will be brought to Armageddon, and there destroyed, see Psal. lxviii. 21. Rev. xvi. 14, 16. and xvii. 14. and xix. 18, 19, 21.

Ver. 43. *Rejoice, O ye nations,* with *his people,* &c.] Or, *rejoice, ye nations,* who are *his* people; so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it: the Gentiles, who are the Lord's chosen and covenant people, redeemed and called, and the fulness of them now brought in, and so matter of great rejoicing; or rather, as the Septuagint, which is approved and confirmed by the Apostle Paul, *rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people,* Rom. xv. 10. and as it is there applied to the then state of the Christian church, when Jews and Gentiles were incorporated and united together; so here it respects future time, when, as the fulness of the Gentiles will be brought in, so the Jews will be converted, and the *lo-ammi* will be taken off from them, and they will be reckoned among the people of God; and Jews and Gentiles will be joined together in the same Gospel church-state, and so are called upon to rejoice in their common salvation, and in their common blessings and privileges, and particularly for what follows: *for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries;* by *his servants* are meant the martyrs of Jesus, whose blood has been shed by antichrist, and the antichristian powers, his adversaries; as the blood of the Waldenses in the valleys of Piedmont, the Albigenses in Spain, and the Petrobrussians in France, the Bohemians in Germany, the Wickliffites, Lollards, and the *martyrs* in Queen Mary's days in England, with many others; and when inquisition is made for blood, the blood of those will be found out, and vengeance rendered for it: *and will be merciful unto his land,* and *to his people;* or *will atone for*[z], expiate, cleanse, and purge both land and people; clear the whole earth, which is the Lord's, from Mahometanism, Paganism, and Popery, and cover it with the knowledge of the Lord by the everlasting Gospel, which will be preached to all nations; and particularly the land of Canaan, laid under an anathema or curse, as threatened, Mal. iv. 6. under which it has lain ever since the destruction of it by the Romans, and has ever since been inhabited by Pagans, Mahometans, and Papists; and, though once a land flowing with milk and honey, has been turned into a barren wilderness, and will thus remain, and Jerusalem, its metropolis, trodden down by the Gentiles, until their times are fulfilled; which now will be, and then it will be restored to its former fruitfulness and fertility, Luke xxi. 24. Ezek. xxxiv. 25, 26, 27. and will be inhabited by the converted Jews, to whom the Lord will be pacified, upon the foot of Christ's atonement, which now will be made known and applied unto them, with the full and free pardon of all their sins, Rom. xi. 25, 26, 27. and thus ends this most excellent and wonderful song, which is of such a large extent and compass, as to reach from the beginning of the Jewish nation, and before it, to the conversion of the Jews in the latter day; an history of more than four thousand years already; and how long more is yet to come before all in it is fulfilled no man can say.

Ver. 44. *And Moses came,* &c.] To the people, as the Greek version, the heads of the people being gathered together according to his order, ch. xxxi. 28. The Targum of Jonathan says, he came from the tabernacle, the house of instruction: *and spake all the words of this song in the ears of the people;* which is observed both before and after the reading of it, to shew the certainty of it, and how punctually and faithfully he had delivered it: *he, and Hoshea the son of Nun;* the same with Joshua, whose name at first was Hoshea, Numb. xiii. 16. probably Joshua read the song to one part of the people, whilst Moses read it to the other.

Ver. 45. *And Moses made an end of speaking all these words to all Israel.*] Finished all he had to say to them from the Lord, whether by way of precept, moral, civil, and ceremonial, or in the form of a song.

Ver. 46. *And he said unto them,* &c.] By way of exhortation: *set your hearts to all the words which I testify among you this day;* it was not enough to hear them, but they were to lay them up in their hearts, and retain them in their memories; and not only so, but revolve them in their minds, and closely apply to the consideration of them, and get the true knowledge and sense of them, and put it in practice: *which ye shall command your children to observe, to do all the words of this law;* which shews that the exhortation does not respect the song only, but the whole law delivered in this book; which they were not only to attend to themselves, but to transmit to their children, and enjoin them the observance of, that so religion might be perpetuated in their posterity.

Ver. 47. *For it is not a vain thing for you,* &c.] That is, the law is not, and the observance of it in them and their children; it was no light and trifling matter, but of great importance and consequence, obedience to it

[y] מדם propter sanguinem, Pagninus, Tigurine version.

[z] כפר propitiabitur, Pagninus, Montanus; expiabit, Vatablus; expiat, Junius & Tremellius.

being attended with rewards, and disobedience with punishment: *because it is your life*; if obeyed, the means of a comfortable and happy life, in the enjoyment of all good things, of the preservation and continuance of it to a length of time; and long life was always reckoned a great temporal mercy: *and through this thing ye shall prolong* your *days in the land whither you go over Jordan to possess it*: that is, through their obedience to the law they should live long in the land of Canaan, which they were just going to possess; which explains what is meant by its being their life; their comfortable living and continuance in the land depended on their obedience to the law; see Isa. i. 19, 20.

Ver. 48. *And the Lord spake unto Moses the selfsame day*, &c.] On which he finished the reading of the law, and the above song, which was the seventh of Adar or February; according to the Targum of Jonathan, the day he died on; according to the Egyptian Calendar[a], it was the 16th of that month, see ch. xxxiv. 5: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 49. *Get thee up into this mountain Abarim*, &c.] Which was near in sight, and pointed at; it was a range of mountains, of which see Numb. xxi. 11. and xxvii. 12. and xxxiii. 47. *unto Mount Nebo*; which was one of the mountains of Abarim, and had its name either from its height, or a city of this name, to which it was near, see Numb. xxxii. 38. Jerom says[b], in his days it was shewn six miles from Heshbon to the east; it should be read, to the west: *which is in the land of Moab*: it formerly belonged to it, but was taken from the Moabites by Sihon, and now possessed by Israel: *that is over-against Jericho*; which lay on the other side of Jordan, in the land of Canaan: *and behold the land of Canaan, which I give unto the children of Israel for a possession*; which he might take a view of from the high mountain of Nebo, especially his sight being strengthened by the Lord, as no doubt it was; and this would give him a pleasure to behold, though he might not go into it, and confirm his faith that Israel would possess it, as well as be an emblem to him of the heavenly Canaan he was going to inherit.

Ver. 50. *And die in the mount whither thou goest up*, &c.] Immediately after having taken a view of the land, expect to die, prepare for it, and willingly and cheerfully submit to it: *and be gathered unto thy people*; to the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven, his more immediate and more remote ancestors, the souls of good men; for otherwise there were none that died, and were buried here, before him, and therefore can have no respect to the burying-place of his people: *as Aaron thy brother died in Mount Hor, and was gathered unto his people*; of which Moses was an eye-witness; and which is observed, because there was a great likeness between the death of him, and what Moses was now called to, both as to the place and manner of it; and likewise the cause of it, after mentioned; as also to make death more easy and familiar, and less terrible to him, when he called to mind how calmly, cheerfully, and comfortably, his brother Aaron died; see Numb. xxvi. 25—29.

Ver. 51. *Because ye trespassed against me among the children of Israel*, &c.] By their unbelief, doubting whether God would give water or no to such a rebellious people, and by giving way to passion and wrathful expressions: and this was done *at the waters of Meribah-kadesh*; so called, to distinguish it from another Meribah, where also there was a contention on account of water: *in the wilderness of Zin*; where Kadesh was, and further describes and distinguishes the place; of the one we read in Exod. xvii. 7. and of the other, which is here referred to, in Numb. xx. 1, 13. *because ye sanctified me not in the midst of the children of Israel*; through their unbelief and disagreeable behaviour, they sanctified him not themselves, and gave no honour to him, nor were the cause of his being sanctified by the Israelites; and this was the reason why Moses and Aaron might not enter into the land of Canaan, Numb. xx. 12. and xxvii. 12, 13, 14.

Ver. 52. *Yet thou shalt see the land before* thee, &c.] Which Jarchi interprets, afar off; and so does Noldius[c]; he saw it at a distance, as the Old-Testament saints saw the things promised afar off, and were persuaded of them, though they did not enjoy them, Heb. xi. 13: *but thou shalt not go thither unto the land which I give the children of Israel*; the land of Canaan was a gift of God to Israel, into which they were not to be introduced by Moses, but by Joshua; signifying that eternal life, or the heavenly Canaan, is the gift of God through Christ, the antitype of Joshua, and not to be obtained by the works of the law.

CHAP. XXXIII.

THIS chapter relates the blessings Moses pronounced upon the people of Israel a little before his death; first, in general, on account of their having a law given them in so glorious a manner, ver. 1—5. then, in particular, the several tribes distinctly are blessed, Reuben, ver. 6. Judah, ver. 7. Levi, ver. 8—11. Benjamin, ver. 12. Joseph, ver. 13—17. Zebulun and Issachar, ver. 18, 19. Gad, ver. 20, 21. Dan, ver. 22. Naphtali, ver. 23. Asher, ver. 24, 25. and the chapter is concluded with some strong intimations of what God was unto the people of Israel in general, and of what he had done and would do for them; all which are expressive of their great happiness, ver. 26—29.

Ver. 1. *And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death.*] Namely, what is related in the following verses, this being the general title to the chapter: Moses is called *the man of God*, being raised up of God, and eminently qualified by him with gifts for the work he was called unto, and by whom he was in-

[a] Apud Ludolf. Lex. Ethiop. p. 537.
[b] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. N.
[c] Ebr. part. Concord. p. 626. so Ainsworth.

spired to say what is after expressed: it is a title given to prophets, 1 Sam. ix. 6, 7, 8. and so Onkelos here paraphrases it, "Moses the prophet of the Lord," and Aben Ezra observes, that this is said to shew that he blessed Israel by a spirit of prophecy, and which he did a little before his death, when very near it; and, as the same writer says, on the very day of his death.

Ver. 2. *And he said*, &c.] What follows, of which, in some things, he was an eye and ear witness, and in others was inspired by the spirit of God, to deliver his mind and will concerning the future case and state of the several tribes, after he had observed the common benefit and blessing they all enjoyed, by having such a law given them in the manner it was: *the Lord came from Sinai*; there he first appeared to Moses, and sent him to Egypt, and wrought miracles by him, and delivered his people Israel from thence, and when they were come to this mount he came down *on* it, as Aben Ezra, from Gaon, or he came *to* it; so to Zion, Isa. lix. 20. is *out of* or *from Zion*, Rom. xi. 26. here he appeared and gave the law, and from thence went with Israel through the wilderness, and conducted them to the land of Canaan: *and rose up from Seir unto them*; not to the Edomites which inhabited Seir, as say Jarchi, and the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, but to the Israelites when they compassed the land of Edom; and the Lord was with them, and gave them some signal proofs of his power and providence, kindness and goodness, to them; particularly, as some observe, by appointing a brazen serpent to be erected for the cure of those bitten by fiery ones, which was a type of the glorious Redeemer and Saviour, and this was done on the borders of Edom, see Numb. xxi. 4, 8. for the words here denote some illustrious appearance of the Lord, like that of the rising sun; so the Targum of Onkelos, "the brightness of his glory from Seir was shewn unto "us;" and that of Jonathan, "and the brightness of "the glory of his Shechinah went from Gebal:" *he shined forth from Mount Paran*; in which the metaphor of the sun rising is continued, and as expressive of its increasing light and splendour: near to this mount was a wilderness of the same name, through which the children of Israel travelled, and where the Lord appeared to them: here the cloud rested when they removed from Sinai; here, or near it, the spirit of the Lord was given to the seventy elders, and from hence the spies were sent into the land of Canaan, Numb. x. 12. and xi. 24. and xii. 16. and xiii. 3. in this wilderness Ishmael and his posterity dwelt, Gen. xxi. 21. but it was not to them the Lord shone forth here, as say the above Jewish writers, and others[d]; but to the Israelites, for here Moses repeated the law, or delivered to them what is contained in the book of Deuteronomy, see ch. i. 1. beside, in a literal sense, as these mountains were very near one another, as Saadiah Gaon observes, the great light which shone on Mount Sinai, when the Lord descended on it, might extend to the other mountains and illuminate them, see Hab. iii. 3. *and he came with ten thousands of saints*: or holy angels, as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan, and so Jarchi; which sense is confirmed by the authorities of Stephen the protomartyr, and the Apostle Paul, who speak of the law as given by the disposition of angels, they being present, attending and assisting on that solemn occasion, Acts vii. 57. Gal. iii. 19. Heb. ii. 2. see Psal. lxviii. 17. the appearance of those holy spirits in such great numbers added to the grandeur and solemnity of the giving of the holy law to the people of Israel, as the attendance of the same on Christ at his second coming will add to the lustre and glory of it, Luke ix. 26. 2 Thess. i. 7, 8. *from his right hand* went *a fiery law for them*: the Israelites; Aben Ezra thinks the phrase, *his right hand*, is in connexion with the preceding clause; and the sense is, that fire came from the law, thousands of saints were at the right hand of God to surround Israel, as the horses of fire and chariots of fire surrounded Elisha; and the meaning of the last words, *a law for them*, a law which stands or abides continually; and so the Septuagint version is, "at his "right hand angels with him:" no doubt that law is meant which came from God on Mount Sinai, by the ministration of angels, into the hand of Moses; called a fiery law, because it was given out of the midst of the fire, ch. v. 26. so the Targum of Onkelos, "the "writing of his right hand out of the midst of fire, "the law he gave unto us;" and because of its effects on the consciences of men, where it pierces and penetrates like fire, and works a sense of wrath and fiery indignation in them, by reason of the transgressions of it, it being the ministration of condemnation and death on that account; and, because of its use, it serves as a lantern to the feet, and a light to the path of good men: this law may include the judicial and ceremonial laws given at this time; but it chiefly respects the moral law, and which may be said to come from God, who, as Creator, has a right to be Governor of his creature, and to enact what laws he pleases, and from his right hand, in allusion to men's writing with their right hand, this being written by the finger of God; and because a peculiar gift of his to the Israelites, gifts being given by the right hand of men; and may denote the authority and power with which this law came enforced, and Christ seems to be the person from whose right hand it came: see Psal. lxviii. 17, 18. Acts vii. 38.

Ver. 3. *Yea, he loved the people*, &c.] The people of Israel, of which his giving the law to them in such a glorious manner was an instance, and was a distinguishing blessing which other nations were not favoured with, see ch. iv. 6, 8. Psal. cxlvii. 19, 20. Rom. ix. 4. how much more is the love of God shewn to his spiritual Israel and special people, by giving them his Gospel, the precious truths, promises, and ordinances of it, and, above all, in giving them his son to be the Redeemer and Saviour of them, as revealed therein! these he embraces in his arms and in his bosom, as the word here signifies; admitting them to great nearness and familiarity with him, to commune with Father, Son, and Spirit, to a participation of all the blessings of grace here, and to the enjoyment of glory hereafter: *all his saints are in thy hand*: not the sons of Levi, who were round about the ark, as Aben Ezra interprets it; rather all the people of Israel, who were chosen to be an holy people to the Lord above all people, and who were the care of his providence, pro-

[d] Vid. Pirke Eliezer, c. 41.

tected by his power, and guided with his right hand; and were in a wonderful manner kept and preserved by him, both at the time of the giving of the law, and in their passage through the wilderness; it is eminently true of the chosen people of God, who are given to Christ, and made his care and charge, as all such who are sanctified and set apart by God the father are, they are preserved in Christ, Jude ver. 1. and these are sanctified in and by Christ, and by the spirit of Christ, and so may be truly called his saints; and they are in the hands of Christ, as dear to him as his right hand, highly valued by him, held in his right hand; they are in his possession, are his peculiar people, portion, and inheritance, they are at his dispose, under his guidance and direction; and are in his custody and under his protection, and where they are safe from every enemy, and can never be snatched, taken, or removed from thence; see John x. 28, 29. here they are put by the Father, as an instance of his love to them, and care of them, though not without the consent and desire of the Son, and this was done in eternity, when they were chosen in him: *and they sat down at thy feet;* which may respect the position of the Israelites at the bottom of Mount Sinai, while the law was giving, which may be said to be the feet of the Lord, he being on the top of the mount, see Exod. xix. 17, 18. and xxiv. 10. all the Targums interpret it of the feet of the cloud of glory, they pitching their tents where that rested, Numb. ix. 17, 18. some think it an allusion to scholars sitting at the feet of their masters to receive instructions from them, see Acts xxii. 3. so the disciples and followers of Christ sit at his feet, attending on his word and ordinances with calmness and serenity of mind, with much spiritual pleasure and delight, and where they continue and abide; and which may denote their modesty and humility, their subjection to his ordinances, and readiness to receive his doctrines, and their perseverance in them, see Mark v. 11. Luke x. 39. Cant. ii. 3. the word signifies, in the Arabic language, to sit down at a table [*], and so the word is used in the Arabic version of Matthew, viii. 11. Luke xi. 37. and the ancient manner being reclining, the guests might be said to sit at the feet of each, especially at the feet of the master; so Christ sits at his table, and his people with him at his feet, Cant. i. 12. every one *shall receive of thy words;* of the words of the law, as the Israelites, who heard them and promised obedience to them, Exod. xxiv. 7. and would hear and receive them again, Josh. viii. 34, 35. and so Christ's disciples, every one of them that hath heard and learned of the father, and comes to him, and believes in him, receives the words or doctrines given him by the father, John xvii. 8. so as to understand them, approve of them, love them, believe them, and act according to them; these they receive into their hearts as well as into their heads, with all readiness, gladness, and meekness; even every one of the persons before described or loved by the Lord, are in the hands of Christ and sitting at his feet.

Ver. 4. *Moses commanded us a law,* &c.] The law was of God, it came forth from his right hand, ver. 2. it is of his enacting, a declaration of his will, and has his authority instamped upon it, who is the lawgiver, and which lays under obligation to regard it; but it was delivered to Moses, and by him to the children of Israel, on whom he urged obedience to it; and so it is said to come by him, and sometimes is called the law of Moses, see John i. 17. and vii. 19, 23. and viii. 5. *even the inheritance of the congregation of Jacob;* which either describes the persons who were commanded to keep the law, the tribes of Jacob or congregation of Israel, who were the Lord's people, portion, and inheritance, ch. xxxii. 9. or the law commanded, which was to be valued, not only as a peculiar treasure, but to be considered a possession, an estate, an inheritance, to be continued among them, and to be transmitted to their posterity, see Psal. cxix. 111. these are the words of the people of Israel, and therefore are thus prefaced in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, " the children of Israel said, Moses commanded, " *&c.*" they were personated by Moses.

Ver. 5. *And he was king in Jeshurun,* &c.] That is, in Israel, or over the people of Israel, of which name of theirs, see the note on ch. xxxii. 15. either God, as Jarchi; for the government of the Israelites was a theocracy, and their laws were immediately from God, and by him they were guided and directed in all things; wherefore, when they were so importunate for a change in their government, and to have a king over them, they are said to reject the Lord, that he should not reign over them, 1 Sam. viii. 7. or Moses, as Aben Ezra on the place, Maimonides [f], and others [g]; who, under God, had the civil government of the Hebrews; both may be received, God was the supreme Governor, and Moses the chief magistrate under him: *when the heads of Israel and the tribes of the people were gathered together;* at Mount Sinai, to hear the law there and then given, or to hear it repeated by Moses, as in this book of Deuteronomy, who were at different times convened together for that purpose, see ch. i. 1. and v. 1. next follow the particular blessings of the several tribes, beginning with Reuben the first-born.

Ver. 6. *Let Reuben live, and not die,* &c.] As a tribe, continue and not be extinct, though they should not excel, because of the sin of their progenitor; and it may have a special regard to the preservation of them, of their families on the other side Jordan, whilst they passed over it with their brethren into Canaan, and of them in that expedition to help the other tribes in the conquest of the country and the settlement of them in it; which Jacob by a spirit of prophecy foresaw, and in a prayer of faith petitioned for their safety: all the three Targums refer the words to a future state, as a wish for them, that they might live and enjoy an eternal life, and not die the death of the wicked in the world to come; and which they call the second death, and from whom the Apostle John seems to have borrowed the phrase, Rev. ii. 11. and xx. 6. and xxi. 8. Reuben signifies, *see the son;* and all that see the son of God in a spiritual manner, and believe in him with a true faith, as they live spiritually now, shall live eter-

[*] Hence מסבה, a table, with the Talmudists. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 42. 1. Pesach. fol. 110. 2. Kiddushin, fol. 81. 1.

[f] In Misn. Shebuot, c. 2. sect. 2.

[g] Philo de Vita Mosis, l. 3. p. 691.

nally hereafter, and never die the second or eternal death; on them that shall have no power, see John vi. 40. *and let* not *his men be few;* or, *though his men be few*, as Bishop Patrick chooses to render the words, and as they will bear, ו, *vau*, being sometimes so used, of which Noldius[h] gives instances; and the number of men in this tribe were but few in comparison of some others; and so those that see the son of God and believe in him are but a small number; for all men have not faith.

Ver. 7. *And this* is the blessing *of Judah*, &c.] Which follows; the same supplement of the words is made in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; but Aben Ezra thinks it refers to what goes before, that this, the same thing prayed for or prophesied of Reuben, belongs also to Judah, that he should live and not die; it may be in the wars in which that tribe would be and was engaged: *and he said, hear, Lord, the voice of Judah;* in prayer, as all the Targums paraphrase it, which was eminently fulfilled in David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and other kings, which were of this tribe; who, when in distress, lifted up their voice in prayer to God, and were heard and delivered, as the Lord's people in all ages are: Judah signifies professing, confessing, praising, *&c.* this tribe was both a praying and praising people, as all good men be; they profess the name of the Lord, and their faith in him; they confess their sins and unworthiness; they praise the Lord for his mercies, temporal and spiritual, and pray to him for what they want; and their voice is heard with pleasure, and answered: particularly Judah was a type of Christ, who was of this tribe, and whose voice in prayer for his people has been always heard: *and bring him unto his people;* in peace, often engaged in war, so all the Targums: and as it may refer to Christ his antitype, it may respect his incarnation, when he came to his own and was not received by them; and to his resurrection from the dead, when he appeared to his disciples, to their great joy; and to the ministry of the Gospel among the Gentiles, when to him was the gathering of the people; and will be further accomplished at the last day, when he shall return and appear to them that look for him, a second time, without sin unto salvation: *let his hands be sufficient for him;* both to work with, and provide for themselves all the necessaries of life, and to fight with their enemies, and defend themselves against them; so Christ's hands have been sufficient, or he has had a sufficiency of power and strength in his hands, to combat with and overcome all his and our enemies, to work out the salvation of his people, and to supply all their wants: *and be thou an help to him from his enemies;* which this tribe often experienced in their wars with their enemies, being very warlike and courageous, successful and victorious, both before they had kings and in the several kings of their tribe, as David, Jehoshaphat, and others; and was remarkably fulfilled in Christ, whose helper the Lord was as man and Mediator, see Isa. l. 7, 8, 9. and xlix. no mention is made of Simeon, because of the affair of Baal-peor, in which that tribe had a great concern, Numb. xxv. as Aben Ezra observes; or because, according to Jacob's prophecy, it was to be scattered in Israel; though the same is also said of Levi, who yet is here blessed; rather therefore the reason is, because Simeon had his inheritance in the midst of the tribe of Judah, and so was blessed in it, see Josh. xix. 1. thus the Targum of Jonathan expresses it here, "and he joined in his portion and in "his blessing, Simeon his brother;" some copies of the Septuagint version, as that in the king of Spain's Bible, make mention of him at the end of Reuben's blessing, "and let Simeon be much in number."

Ver. 8. *And of Levi he said*, &c.] That is, Moses said of the tribe of Levi, as both the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: let *thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one;* with Aaron, as the same Targums interpret it, who was of the tribe of Levi, and was a holy good man, a saint of the Lord, as he is called, Psal. cvi. 16. of the Urim and Thummim, which were with him and with every high-priest, see the note on Exod. xxviii. 30. and though they were not in use under the second temple, yet had their fulfilment in Christ the antitype of Aaron, who may be chiefly here intended; who is after called the Lord's holy One, as he is, both as God and man, holy in both his natures, divine and human, and in his life and actions; and with him are the true Urim and Thummim, lights and perfections, the light of nature, grace and glory, and all perfections, both divine and human: see the note on the above place[i]: *whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah;* which, as it may respect Aaron, may be understood either of the Lord's proving him and contending with him, by suffering the children of Israel to murmur against him and Moses, at the said places; when, according to the three Targums, he stood in the temptation, and was perfect and found faithful; or of Levi, who, with the rest of the tribes, tried him, and strove with him at the same places; though Jarchi says they did not murmur with the rest that murmured: as it may refer to Christ the antitype of Levi, the sense is, that the Urim and Thummim should be with the holy One, the Messiah, whom thou, O Levi, with the rest of the tribes, tempted and strove with at the places mentioned; for it is expressly said, they tempted the Lord, Exod. xvii. 7. and which is interpreted of Christ, 1 Cor. x. 9.

Ver. 9. *Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him*, &c.] Which some understand of the high-priests who were of this tribe, and according to the law were not to defile themselves, or mourn for a father or mother, Lev. xxi. 11. or rather, as others, of their having no respect to them in judgment, but determining all causes that came before them according to the law of God, and the rules of justice and equity, in the most impartial manner, without having any regard to the nearest relations to them: with this compare what Christ the antitype of Levi says, in Matt. xii. 49, 50. *neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children:* had no respect to persons in judgment, though ever so nearly related: many restrain this to the affair of the golden calf, when the tribe of Levi gathered together, girded their swords

[h] Concord. part. Ebr. p. 292.

[i] See a Sermon of mine on this text, called Levi's Urim and Thummim found with Christ.

on their thighs, and slew every man his brother, companion, and neighbour, guilty of that idolatry, Exod. xxxii. 26, 27. *for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant:* the law of God, spoken by him, and had the nature of a covenant with the people of Israel: this the tribe of Levi observed, not only what respects the worship of God, and the contrary to it, idolatry, but all other moral and religious duties; Christ fulfilled the whole law, and did always and all things what pleased the Lord, John viii. 29.

Ver. 10. *They shall teach Jacob thy statutes, and Israel thy law,* &c.] The priests and Levites, being dispersed among the several tribes, having cities in them allotted to them, taught the people the laws, statutes, and ordinances of the Lord, moral, civil, and ceremonial, see Mal. ii. 6, 7. *they shall put incense before thee:* upon the altar of incense, which none but a priest might do, as the case of Uzziah shews; and which, the Jews say[k], he might do but once: the same priest might not offer incense twice; a new priest was always employed: in this they were typical of Christ, the only Intercessor, who is always at the golden altar to offer up the prayers of all saints with his much incense, Rev. viii. 3, 4. *and whole burnt-offerings upon thine altar;* the altar of burnt-offering, typical of Christ, who is both altar, sacrifice, and priest.

Ver. 11. *Bless, Lord, his substance,* &c.] Which lay in tithes, first-fruits, &c. for the priests and Levites had no share in the division of the land; unless this can be understood of the cities and suburbs which were given them, or of houses and fields devoted, which fell unto them, or rather of their cattle, for the use of which they had suburbs appointed them; for otherwise in husbandry and merchandise they were not employed: some render it *an host* or army[l], their service being a militia or warfare, Numb. iv. 3. Jarchi refers this to the Hasmonæans or Maccabees, which were of this tribe: *and accept the work of his hands:* in offering incense and sacrifices, and all other administrations of the office of priests and Levites; thus the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ are of a sweet-smelling savour, and very acceptable to God; and all the spiritual sacrifices of the saints who are priests unto God, as of prayer and praise, are acceptable to him through Jesus Christ: *smite through the loins of them that rise against him;* such as were the companies of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; and in all ages faithful ministers of the word meet with many enemies, whom they would not be able to withstand were not the Lord to appear for them, and protect them from them, and smite them thoroughly: *and of them that hate them, that they rise not again;* destroying them with an utter destruction, so that they are not able to make any other efforts upon them; for such who are enemies to the priests of the Lord are enemies to him, and to true religion, enemies to God and Christ, to the law and to the Gospel, to the word of God and to the ordinances of it, and therefore to be severely handled and thoroughly punished: Christ's enemies shall all be subdued under him; see Psal. cx. 1, 5, 6.

Ver. 12. *And of Benjamin he said,* &c.] The tribe of Benjamin, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; which is taken notice of next to Levi, because, as the priesthood was in the tribe of Levi, the temple in which the priests officiated was in the tribe of Benjamin, or near it; and is observed next but one to Judah, and before his elder brother Joseph, because his tribe lay between Judah and Joseph, Josh. xviii. 11. and Levi having no inheritance in the land: *the beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by him;* this is commonly understood of the tribe of Benjamin, beloved by the Lord, as the head of the tribe was by his father Jacob; the first king of Israel being of that tribe, and the temple built in it, or on the edge of it, and its land the most fat and fertile of the land of Canaan, as Josephus[m] observes; and may be said to *dwell by him,* the Lord, because the tabernacle of the Lord was so near that tribe, and so to dwell *in safety* under his protection, and which was the means of preserving it from apostacy, when ten tribes revolted: though the Messiah may be intended, the son of God, and man of God's right hand, the antitype of Benjamin, the beloved of the Lord, and dear son of his love; his Benjamin, who is now in human nature exalted at his right hand: and this may denote his inhabitation in the flesh, and dwelling by or near Benjamin, being born at Bethlehem in the tribe of Judah, bordering on Benjamin, and frequently had his abode in Jerusalem, which was in the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 28. and where he was in safety amidst his enemies, they not having power to lay hold on him until his hour was come: and the Lord *shall cover him all the day long;* for ever, as Jarchi notes, because that, after Jerusalem was chosen, the divine Majesty dwelt in no other place: this may be understood either of the Messiah covering Benjamin and protecting him, as he is the covert of all his Benjamites and beloved ones, from all their enemies, from all evils and dangers, from all storms and tempests, and every thing troublesome and distressing, see Isa. xxxii. 2. or the Lord's covering his beloved One the Messiah; as he did in his infancy, from the designs of Herod upon his life, and from the attempts of others before his time was come; he hid him in the shadow of his hand, Isa. xlix. 2. *and he shall dwell between his shoulders;* either the Lord shall dwell between the shoulders of Benjamin; the temple in which the Lord dwelt was built on Mount Moriah, in the tribe of Benjamin, in the highest part of his land, as Jarchi notes; the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the words, "in "his border the Shechinah (or the glory of the Shechinah of the Lord) shall dwell," for if the temple was not within the tribe of Benjamin, yet it was certainly on the borders of it: or Benjamin shall dwell between the shoulders of the Lord, being bore up and supported by him: Christ dwells in the hearts of his people, and over them as an head, and they dwell upon his shoulders, on which the care and government of them lies, Isa. ix. 6. in the Talmud[n] this passage is applied to the days of the Messiah.

Ver. 13. *And of Joseph he said,* &c.] The tribe of

[k] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 26. 1.
[l] חילו copias ejus, Junius & Tremellius; vel exercitibus sine Pis-...

[m] ... 2.

Joseph, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: *blessed of the Lord* be *his land*: as the lands inherited by his sons were extremely fruitful, the countries of Gilead and Bashan by Manasseh, and the fields of Samaria by Ephraim: Jarchi says, "there was not in "the inheritance of the tribes a land so full of all "good things as the land of Joseph;" typical of the church of Christ, the antitypical Joseph, which abounds with all good things through him, or of the better country in heaven: *for the precious things of heaven*; that is, the pleasant, precious, and excellent fruits, produced by the influence of the heavens, particularly by showers of rain which descend from thence; emblems of the grace of God, and Gospel of Christ, which bring spiritual blessings to the sons of men on earth, and make them fruitful in every good word and work: *for the dew*: which descends also from heaven, and is of unspeakable use to the fruits of the earth, and is sometimes used as an emblem of the favour and goodness of God to his people, Hos. xiv. 5. *and for the deep that coucheth beneath*; that is, beneath the earth, and breaks out upon it, and waters it, and makes it fruitful, which happiness the land of Joseph had, as well as the rain and dew of heaven: this is to be understood of springs and fountains that flow out of the earth to the enriching of it; and so the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase the words, and may be applied to Christ and to his Gospel, Cant. iv. 15. Isa. xii. 3. Joel iii. 18.

Ver. 14. *And for the precious fruits* brought forth *by the sun*, &c.] Which has a wonderful influence upon many and most of the fruits of the earth, to produce them out of their seeds in it, to bring them forward, to ripen and perfect them, and to make them rich and excellent. Jarchi says, "the land of Joseph lay open "to the sun, and it sweetened the fruits of it;" it meliorated them, and made them more valuable; and this is spiritually true of Christ the sun of righteousness, to whose influence are owing the blessings of grace, redemption, peace, pardon, and justification, and the graces of the spirit, faith, hope, and love, and by what believers are filled with, the fruits of righteousness, see Mal. iv. 2. Phil. i. 11: *and for the precious things put forth by the moon*; the fruits which the moon helps forward by its coolness and moisture; and those the above Jewish writer says are cucumbers and gourds; and as various creatures are affected by the moon, it is observed by a naturalist[x], that onions, when the moon waxes old, increase, and flag when it is young; and Pliny says[y], that at the increase of the moon all sort of corn grows bigger and larger; but a late learned writer[z] remarks, that though upon the pressure of the moon on the globe many things depend, as the ebbing and flowing of the sea, epileptic and convulsive paroxysms, yet it does not appear that this pressure exerts its power on plants, so as to thrust them forth, and therefore thinks this respects the ejection or protrusion of monthly fruits; for the word here used is in the plural number, and signifies *months*: and so Onkelos paraphrases the words, "it produces precious "fruits at the beginning of every month;" or ripe fruit at the beginning of every month, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; for the spiritual meaning, see Rev. xxii. 2.

Ver. 15. *And for the chief things of the ancient mountains*, &c.] Which were from the beginning of the world, and for which the land, possessed by the children of Joseph, Manasseh, and Ephraim, were famous; as the mountains of Gilead and Bashan, inherited by the former, and Mount Ephraim, and the mountains of Samaria, by the latter; which produced, besides great quantities of grass and corn, also vines, figs, olives, &c. *and for the precious things of the lasting hills*: which will endure as long as the world, the same as before in other words; and which precious things may be emblems of the spiritual blessings of grace, provided in an everlasting covenant, and given to Christ for his people before the world began, or any mountains and hills were formed, and which are as lasting and as immovable as they are; see Prov. viii. 22, &c. Isa. liv. 10. 2 Tim. i. 9. Eph. i. 3.

Ver. 16. *And for the precious things of the earth, and fulness thereof*, &c.] Corn of all sorts produced out of the earth, and grass that grows out of it, and cattle that feed upon it; for all which some part of the land of Joseph, particularly Bashan, was famous; as for the oaks that grew on it, so for the pasturage of it, and the cattle it bred, ch. xxxii. 14. see Psal. xxii. 12. *and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush*: the angel of the Lord, the Word and Son of God, who appeared to Moses in the bush, and made himself known as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and expressed his good will to Israel, by sending Moses to deliver them out of their bondage: and the favour and good will of the same divine Person is here wished for, and which has appeared in his assumption of human nature, obedience, sufferings, and death, Luke ii. 14. The bush was an emblem of Israel, and the state they were then in, and of the church of Christ; of which see the note on Exod. iii. 2. and where Christ may be said to dwell, as he did among men, when he was made flesh, and does dwell in the midst of his churches, and in the hearts of his people by faith: *let* the blessing *come upon the head of Joseph*; that is, in all things, as Onkelos; or all these blessings, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem; all before mentioned, let them come openly and visibly, and in great plenty, upon the posterity of Joseph, who was a type of Christ, the head of the righteous, on whom all the blessings of grace are, and from whom they descend to all his spiritual offspring, Prov. x. 6. Eph. i. 3. *and upon the top of the head of him* that was *separated from his brethren*: when he was sold by them into Egypt; the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem are, "and "was shining in the glory of his brethren;" that is, when he was a ruler in Egypt, and had honour from his brethren there, and was beautiful and glorious among them, as a Nazarite, as the word here used signifies, see Lev. iv. 7. and may be applied to Christ, who was chosen from among the people, and separated from sinners, and called a Nazarene, Psal. lxxxix. 19. Heb. vii. 26. Matt. i. 23.

[x] Dalecamp. in Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 41.
[y] Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 30.
[z] Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 437.

Ver. 17. *His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, &c.*] Such as were in Bashan, a country possessed by the posterity of Joseph, see Psal. xxii. 12. Amos iv. 1. and so might be called *his*. A bullock, or a young bull, was reckoned both comely and majestic; so Menis or Mnevis, king of Egypt, preferred a bull above all animals to be worshipped, because the most beautiful of all, as Ælianus [w] relates; and Astarte, according to Sanchoniatho [x], put a bull's head upon her own, as a sign of royalty or kingly power. The Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem refer this to the birth-right which belonged to Reuben, and was taken from him, and given to Joseph, see 1 Chron. v. 2. Some will have Joshua intended by the firstling of his bullock, so Jarchi; who was of the tribe of Ephraim, and so famous for his strength and courage, his warlike exploits and victories, and the glory, honour, and renown he obtained; and who was a type of Christ, the first and only-begotten Son of God, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; this is applied to the Messiah in some ancient Jewish writings [y]: *and his horns* are like *the horns of unicorns*; of the monoceros or rhinoceros; and as the strength of these creatures, as of others, lies in their horns, these are figures of the power and strength of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, the sons of Joseph; see Numb. xxiii. 22. *with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth*; not to the ends of the world, as if the posterity of Joseph should carry their conquests and spread their dominion over all people to the ends of the world, as the Targum of Jonathan suggests; but to the ends of the land of Canaan, which was done by Joshua, when he smote one-and-thirty kings of that country. The word *push* is used in allusion to the horns of creatures, with which they push, drive away from them, or hurt and destroy those that annoy them: *and they* are *the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they* are *the thousands of Manasseh*; though Manasseh was the eldest son of Joseph, fewer are ascribed to him than to Ephraim the younger, according to Jacob's prediction, Gen. xlviii. 19. This has been in a spiritual sense verified in Christ, the antitype of Joseph, the horn of salvation, who by his great strength has vanquished all his, and the enemies of his people, and even spoiled principalities and powers.

Ver. 18. *And of Zebulun he said, &c.*] The tribe of Zebulun, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, with whom Issachar is joined, they being brethren, and of the same mother as well as father; though Zebulun the youngest is set before Issachar the elder, as in Jacob's blessing, Gen. xlix. 13, 14. *rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out*; in their going out to sea, to merchandise, to traffic in foreign parts, it being a maritime tribe, see Gen. xlix. 19. and so are called upon to rejoice and be thankful for their safe preservation on the seas, and success in trade; and to this sense are the paraphrases of Jonathan and Jerusalem: though Onkelos interprets it of their going out to war against their enemies; and certain it is that they were also a warlike as well as a seafaring tribe; see Judg. v. 18. *and Issachar, in thy tents*; being a tribe that stayed at home, and attended to husbandry, and dwelt in tents, to take care of and feed their cattle; in doing which they should be prosperous, and have occasion to rejoice, and be thankful to the Lord: though the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem carry it to a different sense, to their schools, in which they dwelt: this tribe being, as supposed, a learned tribe, studious in the law; which is gathered from 1 Chron. xii. 32.

Ver. 19. *They shall call the people unto the mountain, &c.*] To the mountain of the house of the sanctuary, as all the three Targums; to the temple built on a mountain, which Moses by a spirit of prophecy foresaw would be, to which the tribes of Zebulun and Issachar would not only come up themselves, though at the more distant parts of the land; but call and urge others, both Israelites and Gentiles, to do the same, partly by their example, and partly by persuasions and arguments; not the tribes of Israel that lay nearest them only, but the Heathens, the Tyrians and Sidonians, on whom they bordered, and the Gentiles in Galilee of the Gentiles, which were neighbours to them; a like instance see in Isa. ii. 2, 3. and perhaps this may have respect to the times of Christ and his apostles, and to their being in those parts where the Gospel was preached, and many people were called, Matt. iv. 13—16. *there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness*; or true sacrifices, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem, in opposition to illegitimate ones, which were not according to the law, that had blemishes and defects in them, and to such as were gotten by robbery, or in an unlawful way; and may signify all righteous actions and good works done in faith, and from right principles, though not to be depended upon for a justifying righteousness before God; and all spiritual sacrifices, especially the sacrifices of praise for all blessings, and particularly for the righteousness of Christ; and these are to be offered in the church of God, and upon the altar, which sanctifies every gift, and from whence they come up with acceptance to God: *for they shall suck of the abundance of the sea*; get a great deal of riches by trading at sea, and therefore under great obligations to offer sacrifices to the Lord, by whom they were prospered: *and of the treasure hid in the sand*; as gold and silver, pearls and corals, and the like, extracted from thence; or riches buried there through shipwrecks; or it may design the great wealth and riches they got by glass made of sand, taken out of the river Belus, which washed the coast of the tribe of Zebulun, as many historians relate [z].

Ver. 20. *And of Gad he said, &c.*] The tribe of Gad, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: *blessed* be *he that enlargeth Gad*; that is, the Lord, to whom the praise and glory were to be given, who had appointed to Gad a large inheritance on the other side Jordan, and had settled him in it, and which became larger by the conquest of the Hagarites, and others, 1 Chron. v. 18—22. *he dwelleth as a lion*: bold and courageous, secure, and without fear of any of his enemies, though near him, on his borders, as the Moabites and Ammonites were; of the same spirit and

[w] Hist. Animal. l. 11. c. 10.
[x] Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 1. p. 38.
[y] Zohar in Numb. fol. 103. 4. & in Deut. fol. 117. 3. & 118. 3. Bereshit Rabba, fol. 66. 2.
[z] Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 521. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. Tacit. Hist. l. 5. c. 7.

temper were the men of the tribe of Gad in the times of David, 1 Chron. xii. 8. *and teareth the arm with the crown of the head;* at once, just as a lion tears its prey; which figurative phrases are expressive of this tribe conquering and destroying strong and mighty men, signified by the *arm*, in which the strength of a man lies, and of kings and governors, pointed at by the *crown of the head:* as the Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan; which was done in the times of Joshua, when with and under him they subdued and destroyed the kings and princes of the land of Canaan.

Ver. 21. *And he provided a first part for himself*, &c.] That is, the portion of the land of Sihon and Og, as Jarchi rightly interprets it; which was the beginning or first-fruits of the subduing of the land that was promised; this he looked at, chose, and desired it as his inheritance, Numb. xxxii. 1, 2. *because there, in a portion of the lawgiver, was he seated;* or in the portion and part of the inheritance of Israel was he placed by Moses the lawgiver, according to the will of God; or because there were in it palaces and towers of great personages, lawgivers, kings, and princes, well covered and strongly fortified; or here he was *hid*, or *protected*, i. e. their families, wives, and children, whilst they assisted their brethren in subduing Canaan: *and he came with the heads of the people:* either *to* them, to Moses, Eleazar, and the seventy elders, and the heads of the tribes of Israel, to ask leave to have his part and portion on the other side Jordan, or *with* them, as we supply it; came with them over Jordan armed, to assist in the conquest and subduing of the land of Canaan: *he executed the justice of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel;* that is, either he justly and truly fulfilled all his promises and engagements, on condition of which he was placed on the other side; or he, together with the rest of the Israelites, executed the righteous judgment of God upon the Canaanites, in the expulsion and destruction of them.

Ver. 22. *And of Dan he said*, &c.] Of the tribe of Dan, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: *Dan is a lion's whelp;* or like one for boldness, strength, and courage; and was verified in Samson, who was of this tribe; who, when a young lion roared against him, the spirit of the Lord came on him, and he tore it to pieces, Judg. xiv. 5, 6. *he shall leap from Bashan:* not Dan, for he was seated far from that country; but the sense is, he was like to a young lion for its strength, when it leaps from Bashan, as Aben Ezra rightly explains it. Bashan was a mountain in which lions haunted, and from whence they might be said to leap, as they do when they seize on their prey: it may have some respect to the leap of the Danites from the north-west part of the land of Israel, where they were settled, but was not sufficient for them, to the north-east of it, when they went against Leshem, and took it, and called it Dan: see Josh. xix. 47.

Ver. 23. *And of Naphtali he said*, &c.] The tribe of Naphtali, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: *O Naphtali, satisfied with favour;* with the favour of men, which to have is a great blessing; and as he gave goodly words to others, he had the good word of others, Gen. xlix. 21. and with the favour of God, as the next clause shews; which is the greatest blessing of all, and is special and peculiar, free and sovereign, and the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; and to be full of this, and satisfied of an interest in it, is the highest of enjoyments; and nothing is of a more satisfying nature, it is a feast of itself; see Psal. lxiii. 3, 5. *and full with the blessing of the Lord;* as such must needs be who are full of and satisfied with the favour, good will, and love of God; for they are filled with all spiritual blessings, with all the blessings of grace, which spring from his free favour, as pardon of sin, a justifying righteousness, adoption, sanctifying grace, a right and title to eternal life. This may have respect to the temporal happiness of this tribe, which had a remarkable share in the favour and good will of God, and in the blessings of his goodness. Strabo [a], an Heathen writer, speaking of this part of the land of Judea, says it was a happy and fruitful country, bearing all manner of fruit; in this tribe was the fruitful country of Genesaret, full of delightful gardens and fields, which lay along by a lake of that name, frequently mentioned in the New Testament; which country, Josephus says [b], one may call the ambition of nature; and the Targum of Jonathan has it, "ye shall be full of the "fruits of the valley of Genesaret;" and particularly this country was favoured with the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ; see Matt. iv. 13, 14. and ix. 1. and xi. 23. *possess thou the west and the south;* not the west and south of the land of Israel; for, according to Josephus [c], this tribe lay to the east and north of it, just the reverse; and it is plain from Josh. xix. 34. that it had Asher on the west, and Zebulun on the south; wherefore some understand this of the commodities this tribe was supplied with, as through the tribe of Asher on the west, on which those trading cities Tyre and Sidon bordered; and through Zebulun on the south, which was near the sea, and was given to navigation and trade: though it should be observed that the word for *west* signifies the *sea* [d]; and intends not the Mediterranean sea, which this tribe did not reach; but the sea of Tiberias and Genesaret, as all the Targums explain it; and Bochart [e] observes, that the portion of Naphtali reached from the south of the city of Dan to the sea of Tiberias; so that the south is observed with respect to Dan last mentioned, and the west or sea to the sea of Tiberias.

Ver. 24. *And of Asher he said*, &c.] The tribe of Asher, as the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem: *let Asher be blessed with children;* with large numbers, as it appears this tribe was, having in it 53,400 men of war, Numb. xxvi. 47. It was esteemed a great blessing to have many children, Psal. cxxviii. 3, 4. or *above the children;* above or more than the rest of the children of Jacob; see Luke ii. 36, 38. Jarchi observes, that he had seen, in a book called Siphri, that there was none in all the tribes blessed with children as Asher, but not known how: *let him be acceptable to his brethren;* either for his excellent bread, and royal dainties, Gen. xlix. 20. or for the goodness of his olives and oil, and for the brass and iron found in

[a] Geograph. l. 16. p. 519.
[b] De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 9. sect. 8.
[c] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.

[d] ים mare, Montanus, V. L. Cocceius.
[e] Heirozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 15. col. 698.

this tribe, as follows; or, as some say, because of his children, his daughters being very beautiful: *and let him dip his foot in oil;* have such plenty of it, that if he would he might dip or wash his feet in it; and it was usual not only to anoint the head, but the feet[f] also, with oil, Luke vii. 46.

Ver. 25. *Thy shoes* shall be *iron and brass*, &c.] Either they should have such an abundance of these metals, that they could if they would have made their shoes of them; but that is not usual; though it is said of Empedocles[g] the philosopher, that he wore shoes of brass, which was very singular; and some think that this tribe, because of the abundance of these metals, used to stick their shoes with iron and brass nails at the bottom of them, as country people, soldiers, and travellers in various nations do; but the true sense seems to be, that the land that fell to this tribe, and on which they trod, should yield much iron and brass; as in Carmel, a mountain on the borders of it, brass was taken, as says Hesychius; and Zidon is by Homer[i] said to abound with brass, which belonged to this tribe; and Sarepta, another city in it, had its name from צרף, which signifies to melt, from the melting of these metals in it; see Deut. viii. 9. though some Jewish writers take the sense to be, that the land of Asher was so strongly fortified as if it had been enclosed with walls of brass and iron, or the gates of its cities were shut up with bolts and bars of iron and brass, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech observe; so the Arabic: *and as thy days*, so shall *thy strength* be; the same in old age as in youth; which is the sense of the Latin Vulgate version, and all the Targums: such were the vigour and strength of Moses himself, ch. xxxiv. 7. and so may denote a renewal of youth, like that of eagles; and, in a spiritual sense, a revival of the graces of the spirit of God, as to the exercise of them, and an increase of spiritual strength, so that the inward man is renewed day by day; and may also denote such a measure of strength given, as is proportioned to the events that daily befall, or to the services and sufferings men are called unto; see 1 Cor. x. 13. 2 Cor. iv. 16. and xii. 9, 10.

Ver. 26. There is *none like unto the God of Jeshurun*, &c.] Or Israel, as all the three Targums; for this is one of the names of the people of Israel; see the note on ch. xxxii. 15. and the Lord was their God in a special sense, having chosen, redeemed them, and made a covenant with them; and there is no God like him for the perfections of his nature, his purity and holiness, his goodness, wisdom, power, faithfulness, &c. and for the wonderful works of nature, providence, and grace, done by him; and for the blessings of goodness, temporal and spiritual, he bestows on men. The tribes being particularly blessed, the whole body of the people are pronounced happy, and whose happiness is enlarged on in this and the following verses: who *rideth upon the heaven* in *thy help, and in his excellency on the sky;* which he has the sovereign rule and disposal of, and can and does dispose of all the artillery therein, as illustrious proofs of his glory and excellency, and for the help of his people, and the destruction of their enemies; as when he sent forth hail, thunderings, and lightnings, upon the Egyptians, and frightened them; and cast down hail-stones upon the Canaanites, and slew many of them; and when the stars in their course fought against Sisera; see Psal. lxviii. 4, 33, 34.

Ver. 27. *The eternal God* is thy *refuge*, &c.] God is eternal, from everlasting to everlasting; the Ancient of days, before all things, and all time; which is, and was, and is to come: the same is true of Christ, who is the everlasting Father, or Father of eternity, the true God, and eternal life; as appears from his nature, having the whole fulness, all the perfections of deity in him; from his office, as Mediator, in which he was set up from everlasting; from his concern in eternal election, in the everlasting covenant, and in the creation of all things out of nothing: and he is the refuge of his people, the antitype of the cities of refuge, to whom sinners, under a sense of sin, flee for refuge; and where they are safe from avenging justice, the wrath of God, the condemnation of the law, everlasting ruin and destruction, or the second death; or their *mansion*, or *dwelling-place*[k]; which he has been in all generations, as Moses also says, Psal. xc. 1, 2. Such is Christ to his people, who dwelt secretly in him from everlasting, being chosen in him, and given to him; and openly in conversion, where they dwell as in a strong hold, safely, quietly, comfortably, and pleasantly: *and underneath* are *the everlasting arms;* that is, of God, which are the support of his people, and their protection, safety, and security; such as the arms of his everlasting love, which encircle them, and compass them about as a shield; his everlasting covenant, which is immovable, and in which they ever remain; eternal redemption and salvation, wrought out by Christ, which secures them from destruction; and everlasting power, by which they are kept and preserved as in a garrison; and everlasting consolation, which flows from all this: and so the arms of Christ, or his almighty power, are under the world, to uphold it in being; and under his church, to support it, on whose shoulders the government of it is; and under particular believers, whom he carries in his arms, embraces in his bosom, bears them up under all their afflictions and temptations, trials and exercises; nor will he ever suffer them to drop out of his arms, or to be plucked from thence: *and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee;* the Canaanites out of the land of Canaan, to make room for Israel, which he was just about to do, and quickly did. In like manner Christ thrusts out Satan and the spiritual enemies of his people, whom to dispossess is a work of mighty power; and not only so, but gives orders to destroy them, and does destroy them, and makes his people more than conquerors over them: *and shall say, destroy them;* the Canaanites: to do which the people of Israel had an order from the Lord, Deut. vii. 1, 2.

Ver. 28. *Israel then shall dwell in safety alone*, &c.]

[f] Vidimus etiam vestigia pedum tingi, Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 13. c. 3. Vid. Dalecamp. Not. in ib.

[g] Laert. in Vit. Empedocl. l. 8. p. 612. Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 32.

[i] Odyss. 15. l. 424.

[k] מענה habitaculum, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator, Cocceius.

The Canaanites being thrust out of their land, and Israel put into the possession of it, should dwell in safety, or *confidently*[l]; without fear of enemies, though surrounded with them on all hands; and though alone, a separate people, distinct from all others their neighbours round about them; see Numb. xxiii. 9. So the spiritual Israel dwell in the eternal God, their mansion, or dwelling-place; in Christ, their rock; and in a strong city, the church, where they are in the utmost safety. God is all around them; Christ is their refuge, strong hold, and tower; the Holy Spirit in the midst of them is mighty; angels are their guardians, and the church their strong city, whose walls and bulwarks are salvation: here they dwell confidently and securely; though they have sometimes their fears, they have no just reason for them; and when faith is in exercise, are free from them, casting all their care on the Lord, and having confidence in him; where they are alone, not solitary; all the three divine Persons dwell with them, and also angels and saints their fellow-citizens; but independent of others, having large provisions in Christ, in the covenant, and in the house of God; and are a separate and distinct people now, and will be to all eternity; see the note on Numb. xxiii. 9. *the fountain of Jacob* shall be *upon a land of corn and wine;* that is, the Israelites that spring from Jacob, as streams of water from a fountain; see Isa. xlviii. 1. these shall be or dwell upon the land of Canaan, a land abounding with corn and wine, and all good things, ch. viii. 7, 8, 9. or *in* or *by the fountain of Jacob*[m]; in a well-watered land, there they should dwell. So the spiritual Israel of God dwell in and by Christ, the fountain of gardens, the well of living waters, of life and salvation, in whom all fulness of grace dwells for their supply: or *the eye of Jacob*[n] is or shall be on a land, &c. that is, the Israelites had their eye on the good land of Canaan, and would quickly not only be in sight, but in possession of it. Every true Israelite has a spiritual eye, which is the eye of faith, the evidence of things not seen, which looks to and upon that better country, the land afar off, heaven and eternal happiness, and expects and waits for the full enjoyment of it: *also his heavens shall drop down dew;* the heavens over the land of Canaan should drop down dew upon it, and make it fruitful to bring forth corn and wine, which was Jacob's blessing, Gen. xxvii. 28. Thus the Lord in the heavens drops down the dew of grace, and the blessings of it, upon his people, which make them revive as the corn, and grow as the vine; and Christ's heavenly ministers drop the dew of Gospel doctrine upon them, to the great refreshment of them, ch. xxxii. 3. Hos. xiv. 5, 6, 7.

Ver. 29. *Happy* art *thou, O Israel,* &c.] This is the conclusion of the blessing on Israel summed up in a few words; they having God to be their God, and having so many good things promised them, and in sight of them; being now got through the wilderness, and on the borders of the land of Canaan; as all such must be happy, whose covenant-God is the Lord; since they must be beloved of him, chosen by him, and blessed with all spiritual blessings; and in the faith, hope, and view of eternal happiness: *who is like unto thee?* for an interest in the favour of God, for a share in the blessings of goodness, for a good God, a good land, and good laws; for wisdom and knowledge, for riches and honour, for holiness and happiness: *a people saved by the Lord;* redeemed by him out of Egypt, preserved in the wilderness, saved from many dangers and enemies, and now brought near to the land of Canaan. The Targum of Jonathan is, "saved or redeemed in the name of the word of the Lord:" by whom the spiritual Israel of God are redeemed from all their sins, from the curses of the law, and out of the hand of all their enemies; and are and will be completely saved in soul and body, with an everlasting salvation: *the shield of thy help;* that is, the Lord, by whom they are saved; he is the shield that protects them; the shield of faith and of salvation, which faith lays hold on and makes use of for its defence, and who is the help of his people in all times of trouble: *and who is the sword of thy excellency;* to destroy their enemies, and whereby they would be raised to that excellency and glory they were in the land of Canaan: *and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee;* who threatened what they would do unto unto them, but were not able: or *shall lie unto thee*[o], be in such dread and fear as to tell lies to save themselves, and pretend to be what they were not, as the Gibeonites did, of whom Jarchi interprets this passage: *and thou shalt tread upon their high places;* be possessed of their cities and fortresses, built on an eminence; see ch. xxxii. 13. all the three Targums, and so Jarchi, interpret it of treading on the necks of their kings, which was fulfilled, Josh. x. 24.

CHAP. XXXIV.

THIS chapter informs us of Moses going up to the top of Pisgah, where he was shewn the whole land of Canaan, ver. 1—4. of his death, burial, and age, ver. 5, 6, 7. of Israel's mourning for him, and the time of it, ver. 8. of his successor Joshua, ver. 9. and of the character of Moses, to whom no prophet was to be compared, ver. 10—12.

Ver. 1. *And Moses went up from the plains of Moab,* &c.] Where the Israelites had lain encamped for some time, and where Moses had repeated to them the law, and all that is contained in this book of Deuteronomy; and after he had read to them the song in ch. 32. and had blessed the several tribes, as in the preceding chapter: at the command of God he went up from hence, *unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over-against Jericho;* Nebo was one

[l] בטח confidenter, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; securè, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Cocceius.
[m] Fonte Jahakobi, Junius & Tremellius, apud fontem Jacobi, Cocceius.

[n] עין יעקב oculus Jahakob, V. L. Tigurine version, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster.
[o] יכחשו mentientur, Montanus, Tigurine version; mentiuntur, Cocceius.

of the mountains of Abarim, which formed a ridge of them, and Pisgah was the highest point of Nebo, and this was over-against Jericho on the other side Jordan, see ch. xxxiii. 49. hither Moses went, to the top of this high mountain, for aught appears, without any support or help, his natural force not being abated, though 120 years old; and hither he seems to have gone alone, though Josephus [p] and the Samaritan Chronicle [q] say, Eleazar, Joshua, and the elders of Israel accompanied him: *and the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan:* the Word of the Lord, as the Targum of Jonathan, who appeared to him in the bush, sent him to Egypt, wrought miracles by him there, led him and the people of Israel through the Red sea and wilderness, and brought them to the place where they now were: and though the eye of Moses was not become dim, as was usual at such an age he was of, yet it can hardly be thought it should be so strong as to take a distinct view of the whole land of Canaan, to the utmost borders of it: no doubt but his natural sight was wonderfully strengthened and increased by the Lord, by whom he was directed first to behold the land of Gilead on that side of Jordan where he was, and which was the possession of the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; and then he was directed to look forward to the land of Canaan beyond Jordan, to the northern part of it; for Dan is not the tribe of Dan, but a city of that name, formerly Leshem, which the Danites took, and lay the furthest north of the land, hence the phrase from *Dan to Beersheba*, see Josh. xix. 47. this city is so called by anticipation: Aben Ezra thinks Joshua wrote this verse by a spirit of prophecy; and it is very likely the whole chapter was written by him, and not the eight last verses only, as say the Jewish writers: this view Moses had of the good land a little before his death may be an emblem of that sight believers have, by faith, of the heavenly glory, and which sometimes is the clearest when near to death; this sight they have not in the plains of Moab, in the low estate of nature, but in an exalted state of grace, upon and from off the rock of Christ, in the mountain of the church of God, the word and ordinances being often the means of it; it is a sight by faith, and is of the Lord, which he gives, strengthens, and increases, and sometimes grants more fully a little before death.

Ver. 2. *And all Naphtali*, &c.] Which lay in the northern part of the land, and where was Galilee of the Gentiles, and so he had a sight of all that country most frequented by the Messiah when come, see Matt. iv. 13, 14, 15. *and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh:* which lay in the midland part of the country: *and all the land of Judah;* which lay to the south: *unto the utmost sea;* the Mediterranean sea, which was the western boundary of the land, called the hinder sea, Zech. xiv. 8. and might as well be so rendered here, for the same word is used: Jarchi would have it read, not the *hinder sea*, but the *latter day*: for, he says, the Lord shewed to Moses all that should happen to Israel until the resurrection of the dead; and so the Targum of Jonathan paraphrases the above passages, and observes that the Lord shewed Moses the mighty deeds of Jephtha of Gilead, and the victories of Samson, who was of the tribe of Dan; the idolatries of that tribe, and Samson the saviour that should spring from them; Deborah and Barak, and the princes of the house of Naphtali; Joshua the son of Nun, of the tribe of Ephraim, that should fight with and slay the kings of Canaan; and Gideon the son of Joash, of the tribe of Manasseh, that should fight with Midian and Amalek, and all the kings of Israel, and the kingdom of the house of Judah; the king of the south, that should join the king of the north to destroy the inhabitants of the earth; and even the destruction of Armillus or antichrist, and the war of Gog and Magog, and the great affliction Michael shall save from.

Ver. 3. *And the south*, &c.] The southern part of the land, even all of it; and having shewn him that, he is directed eastward to take a view of *the plain of the valley of Jericho;* which lay before him, a delightful plain; see Josh. v. 10. *the city of palm-trees;* so Jericho was called, because of the multitude of palm-trees which grew there, and which Josephus not only testifies [r], who speaks of it as a plain planted with palm-trees, and from whence balsam comes; but several Heathen writers: Pliny says [s] Jericho was set with palm-trees; Diodorus Siculus [t] speaks of the country about Jericho as abounding with palm-trees, and in a certain valley, meaning the vale or plains of Jericho, is produced that which is called balsam; so Strabo says [u], Jericho is a plain surrounded with mountains abounding with palm-trees, where there is a plantation of palm-trees, with other fruit-trees, the space of a hundred furlongs: *unto Zoar;* near the salt sea; see Gen. xix. 22.

Ver. 4. *And the Lord said unto him*, &c.] The Word of the Lord, as the Jerusalem Targum, having shewn him all the land of Canaan: *this is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed:* to Abraham, Gen. xv. 18. to Isaac, Gen. xxvi. 3. to Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 13. *I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes;* not only had indulged him with a general view of it, but had strengthened his eye-sight, that he had a full, clear, and distinct sight of it: *but thou shalt not go over thither;* which he had said more than once before, and abides by it, and this because of the behaviour of Moses at the waters of Meribah, Numb. xx. 12. see Deut. iii. 25, 26, 27.

Ver. 5. *So Moses the servant of the Lord died there, in the land of Moab*, &c.] Which formerly belonged to Moab, and was taken from them by Sihon king of the Amorites, and now in the possession of Israel: here on a mountain in this land Moses died; and yet, contrary to the express words of this text, some Jewish writers affirm [w] that he died not, but was translated to heaven, where he ministers; yea, that he was an angel, and could not die: but it is clear he did die, even though a

[p] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 48.
[q] Apud Hottinger. Smegma, l. 1. c. 8. p. 456.
[r] De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 18. sect. 5. & l. 4. c. 8. sect. 2.
[s] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14.
[t] Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 132.
[u] Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.
[w] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 13. 2. Yalkut & R. Abraham Seba in Tzeror Hammor in loc.

servant of the Lord, as he was, and a faithful one; but such die as well as others, Zech. i. 5. there is a saying of some [x] Jews, "Moses died, and who shall not die?" no man can promise himself immortality here, when such great and good men die: the Targum of Jonathan says, he died on the seventh of Adar or February, on which day he was born; and it is the general opinion of the Jewish writers [y], that he died on the seventh of that month, in the middle of the day, and that it was a sabbath-day: though, as Aben Ezra observes [z], some say he died on the first of Adar; and Josephus [a] is express for it, that it was at the new moon, or first day of the month; and with this agrees the calculation of Bishop Usher [b]: *according to the word of the Lord*; according to the prophecy of the Lord, and according to a command of his, that he should go up to the abovesaid mountain and die, Numb. xxvii. 12, 13. Deut. xxxii. 49, 50. or, as the Targum of Jerusalem, according to the decree of the Lord; as the death of every man is, both with respect to time and place, and manner of it: it is appointed for men once to die, Heb. ix. 27. because it is in the original text, *according to the mouth of the Lord* [c]; hence some Jewish writers, as Jarchi particularly, interpet it of his dying by a kiss of his mouth, with strong expressions and intimations of his love to him, Cant. i. 2. and no doubt but he did die satisfied of the love of God to him, enjoying his presence, and having faith and hope of everlasting life and salvation; but the true sense is, he died according to the will of God, not of any disease, or through the infirmities of age, but by the immediate order and call of God out of this life.

Ver. 6. *And he buried him*, &c.] Aben Ezra says he buried himself, going into a cave on the top of the mount, where he expired, and so where he died his grave was; but though he died on the mount, he was buried in a valley: Jarchi and so other Jewish writers [d] say, the Lord buried him: it may be by the ministry of angels: an Arabic writer says [e], he was buried by angels: it is very probable he was buried by Michael, and who is no other than the archangel or head of principalities and powers, our Lord Jesus Christ, for a reason that will be hereafter suggested, see Jud. ver. 9. *in a valley in the land of Moab, over-against Baal-peor*: where stood a temple dedicated to the idol Peor, see ch. iii. 29. *but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day*: to the time when Joshua wrote this, or, as others think, Samuel: if Moses is the same with the Osiris of the Egyptians, as some think [f], it may be observed, that his grave is said to be unknown to the Egyptians, as Diodorus Siculus [g] and Strabo [h] both affirm; and the grave of Moses is unknown, even unto this our day: for though no longer ago than in the year 1655, in the month of October, it was pretended to be found by some Maronite shepherds on Mount Nebo, with this inscription on it in Hebrew letters, *Moses the servant of the Lord*: but this story was confuted by Jecomas, a learned Jew, who proved it to be the grave of another Moses [i], whom Wagenseil conjectures was Moses Maimonides [k]; but some think the whole story is an imposition: the reason why the grave of Moses was kept a secret was, as Ben Gersom suggests, lest, because of his miracles, succeeding generations should make a god of him and worship him, as it seems a sort of heretics called Melchisedecians did [l]: the death and burial of Moses were an emblem of the weakness and insufficiency of the law of Moses, and the works of it, to bring any into the heavenly Canaan; and of the law being dead, and believers dead to that through the body of Christ, and of the entire abrogation and abolition of it by Christ, according to the will of God, as a covenant of works, as to the curse and condemnation of it, and justification by it; who is Michael the archangel, and is the end of the law for righteousness; he abolished it in his flesh, nailed it to his cross, carried it to his grave, and left it there; the rites and ceremonies of it are to be no more received, nor is it to be sought after for righteousness and life, being dead and buried, Rom. vii. 6.

Ver. 7. *And Moses was 120 years old when he died*, &c.] Which age of his may be divided into three equal periods, forty years in Pharaoh's court, forty years in Midian, and forty in the care and government of Israel, in Egypt and in the wilderness; so long he lived, though the common age of man in his time was but threescore years and ten, Psal. xc. 10. and what is most extraordinary is, *his eyes were not dim*; as Isaac's were, and men at such an age, and under, generally be: *nor his natural force abated*; neither the vigour of his mind nor the strength of his body; his intellectuals were not decayed, his memory and judgment; nor was his body feeble, and his countenance wan; his *moisture* was not *fled* [m], as it may be rendered, his radical moisture; he did not look withered and wrinkled, but plump and sleek, as if he was a young man in the prime of his days: this may denote the continued use of the ceremonial law then to direct to Christ, and the force of the moral law as in the hands of Christ, requiring obedience and conformity to it, as a rule of walk and conversation, 1 Cor. ix. 21.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Israel wept for Moses in the plains of Moab 30 days*, &c.] According both to Josephus [n] and the Samaritan Chronicle [o], they cried and wept in a very vehement manner, when he signified to them his approaching death, and took his leave of them; and when he was dead they mourned for him, in a public manner, the space of time here mentioned, the time of mourning for his brother Aaron, Numb. xx. 29. *so the days of weeping and mourning for Moses were ended*; on the eighth of Nisan or March,

[x] Seder Tephillot, fol. 213. 1. Ed. Basil.
[y] T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 38. 1. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 10. p. 29. Juchasin, fol. 10. 1. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2. so Patricides apud Hottinger, p. 457.
[z] Pirush in Deut. i. 2. so Midrash Esther, fol. 93. 2.
[a] Ut supra, sect. 49.
[b] Annales Vet. Test. p. 37.
[c] פי על super os, Montanus; juxta os, Tigurine version.
[d] Misn. Sotah, c. 1. sect. 9. Pirke Eliezer, c. 17.
[e] Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 22.
[f] See Gale's Court of the Gentiles, B. 2. c. 7. p. 94.
[g] Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 18.
[h] Geograph. l. 17. p. 552.
[i] See Calmet's Dictionary, in voce *Sepulchre*.
[k] Not. in Sotah, p. 327.
[l] Epiphan. contr. Haeres. l. 2. Haeres. 55.
[m] So Ainsworth.
[n] Ut supra.
[o] Apud Hottinger, p. 426.

as says the Targum of Jonathan, and on the *ninth* they prepared their vessels and their cattle for a march, and on the tenth passed over Jordan, and on the *sixteenth* the manna ceased, according to the said paraphrase.

Ver. 9. *And Joshua the son of Nun* was *full of the spirit of wisdom*, &c.] The successor of Moses, and who, by the spirit of wisdom on him, was abundantly qualified for the government of the people of Israel; in which he was a type of Christ, on whom the spirit of wisdom and understanding is said to rest, Isa. xi. 2. *for Moses had laid his hands upon him;* which was a symbol of the government being committed to him, and devolving upon him after his death, and expressive of prayer for him, that he might be fitted for it, of which action see Numb. xxvii. 23. *and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses;* or by the hand of Moses; they received him and owned him as their supreme governor under God, and yielded a cheerful obedience to his commands, as the Lord by Moses commanded them to do, and as they promised; see Josh. i. 16, 17, 18.

Ver. 10. *And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses*, &c.] Not in the times of Joshua, who wrote this chapter, at least the last eight verses, as say the Jews[p]; nor to the times of Samuel, whom others take to be the writer of them; nor to the times of Ezra, as others; nor even throughout the whole Old-Testament dispensation to the times of Christ, the great Prophet, like to Moses, that was to arise; and the Messiah is by the Jews owned, as by Maimonides[q], to be equal to him, and by others to be above him: it is a well-known saying of theirs[r], that "the Messiah shall be exalted "above Abraham, and extolled above Moses, and made "higher than the ministering angels;" but as to all other prophets he excels them, and therefore they call him the prince, master, and father of the prophets, and say, that all prophesied from the fountain of his prophecy[s]: the difference between him and them is observed, by Maimonides[t] to lie in many things; as that they prophesied by a dream or vision, but he awake and seeing; they prophesied by the means of an angel, and saw what they did in parables and dark sayings; but Moses not by means of an angel, but the Lord spake to him face to face; they trembled and astonished, but not so Moses; they could not prophesy when they would, but he at any time, nor did he need to dispose and prepare his mind for it; some of which will not hold good, especially the last; the instances in which he really exceeded them follow: *whom the Lord knew face to face;* owned, took notice of, and familiarly conversed with face to face, as a man with his friend; none were permitted to such familiarity with God as he; see Numb. xii. 6, 7, 8. Exod. xxxiii. 11. the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem paraphrase it, "whom the Word of the Lord knew."

Ver. 11. *In all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do*, &c.] The same Targums also paraphrase here, "which the Word of the Lord sent him "to do;" for he it was that appeared to him in the bush, and sent him to Egypt to work miracles, which he did by him: *in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land;* to whom they were visible, and who were all affected by them more or less: this respects chiefly the ten plagues inflicted on the Egyptians: the Jews observe that the super-excellency of Moses to the rest of the prophets lay chiefly in his superior degree of prophecy rather than in miracles, and not so much in the nature or the quality of the miracles; the stopping of the sun by Joshua, and the raising of the dead to life by Elijah and Elisha, being greater than his; but either in the duration of them, as the manna which continued near forty years; or especially in the quantity of them, he working more than all the rest put together: Manasseh Ben Israel[u] has collected all that the prophets wrought or were wrought for their sakes, and they came to 74; but those that were wrought by Moses or on his account make 76; but whether this is a just account I will not say.

Ver. 12. *And in all that mighty hand*, &c.] In all done by his hand, which he stretched out over the sea and divided, to make a passage through it for the Israelites, and with his rod in it smote the rocks, and waters gushed out for them: *and in all that great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of all Israel;* meaning either the terror the Egyptians were struck with by him, in the sight of all Israel, when he publicly and before them wrought the wonders he did in the land of Ham, which often threw them into a panic, especially the thunders and lightning, the three-days' darkness, and the slaying of their first-born; see Psal. lxxviii. 12, 49, 50, 51. and cv. 38. or the terror the Israelites were in at the giving and receiving of the law, Exod. xix. 16. and xx. 18, 19, 20.

[p] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1.
[q] Hilchot Teshuvah, c. 9. sect. 2.
[r] Tanchuma in Yalkut in Isa. lii. 13.
[s] Maimon. Yesode Hatorah, c. 7. sect. 6. & Vorst. in ib.
[t] Ib. sect. 6, 7, 8, 9.
[u] Conciliator in Deut. Qu. 11. sect. 4. p. 238, 239, 240.

THE BOOK OF JOSHUA.

THE Jews distinguish the prophets into former and latter; the first of the former prophets is Joshua, or Sepher Joshua, the book of Joshua, as it is commonly called in the Hebrew copies; the Syriac inscription is, "the book of Joshua, the son of Nun, the disciple of "Moses:" in the Arabic version it is reckoned a book of the judges, which adds, "the first among the "judges of the children of Israel was Joshua, the son "of Nun, the 28th from Adam, who reigned over "Israel after the Prophet Moses." This book bears the name of Joshua, either because it is concerning him, his actions and exploits in the land of Canaan, or because it was written by him, or both; though some ascribe it to Ezra, and others to Isaiah; but it must have been written before the times of Ahab, as appears from 1 Kings xvi. 34. and even before the times of David, as is clear from ch. xv. 69, compared with 2 Sam. v. 6. for though mention is made in it of the mountains of Judah and of Israel, from whence some have concluded, that the writer must have lived after the times of Rehoboam, in whose days the kingdom was divided; yet we find the distinction of Israel and Judah took place before, even in the times of David and Asaph, Psal. lxxvi. 1. It is most likely that this book was written by Joshua himself, as the Jews in their Talmud [a] assert; and, indeed, who more fit for it than himself? and if written or put together by another, it is most probable that it was taken out of his diary, annals, or memoirs; and though there are some things recorded in it, which were done after his death, these might be inserted under a divine direction and influence by Eleazar, or Phinehas, or Samuel, to each of whom some ascribe the writing of this book, just as Joshua is supposed to add some verses concerning Moses at the end of the Pentateuch: however, be it wrote by whom it may, there is no doubt to be made of the divine inspiration and authenticity of it by us Christians, since some histories recorded in it are taken from it, or referred to, in Heb. xi. 30, 31. and the promise made to Joshua is quoted, and applied to every believer, ch. xiii. 6. and the Apostle James refers to the case of Rahab, her character and conduct in it, Jam. ii. 25. The subject-matter of this book is Joshua's taking upon him the government of the children of Israel, after the death of Moses, by a divine commission, exhortation, and encouragement given him to engage in war with the Canaanites; his conquests of them, the division of the land of Canaan to the children of Israel, and their settlement in it. It is of great use not only to give us the geography of the land of Canaan, and the history of the church of God, from the death of Moses to the times of the judges; but shews the exact fulfilment of prophecy, and the faithfulness of God to his promises in giving the land of Canaan to Israel, according to those made to their fathers, and the justice of God in punishing the Canaanites for their abominable sins, as had been foretold; and the wonderful care of God, and his love to the people of Israel in preserving and protecting them, and in settling them in such a good land, notwithstanding all their murmurings, ingratitude, and unbelief, in the wilderness; and may serve to lead us to Christ, whose type Joshua was in the whole affair here related: his name has the signification of the salvation of the Lord in it; and he is by the Greek writers, and so in the New Testament, called Jesus, a Saviour, Acts vii. 45. Heb. iv. 8. and as they agree in their name, so they do in their state, condition, and character; Joshua was a servant of Moses, Christ was made under the law, and became subject to it, both moral and ceremonial; and also in their office, Joshua was the governor of Israel, and the commander of their forces, for which he was well qualified with wisdom, courage, and integrity; Christ is King of saints, the Leader and Commander of the people, who has fought their battles for them, being abundantly qualified, having the spirit of wisdom, counsel, might, and of the fear of the Lord, resting on him. Joshua was a type of Christ in various actions of his: in leading the people through the river Jordan, an emblem either of baptism, or of afflictions, or of death itself, in which Christ is with his people, and carries them through; in saving Rahab and her family, so Christ saves the worst and chief of sinners; in receiving the Gibeonites, who submitted to him, as Christ does all that come to him; in his conquest of the several kings of the Canaanites, so Christ has conquered all the spiritual enemies of his people, sin, Satan, and the world; in bringing and settling the people of Israel in the land of Canaan, their rest, and dividing it to them by lot, which Moses might not do; so Christ only brings souls into the true rest, into spiritual rest here, and eternal rest hereafter; in whom they obtain the inheritance of the heavenly glory by lot, and by whom only they enjoy salvation and eternal life, and not by the works of the law. This book contains an history of Joshua, of his government, his acts and deeds, from the death of Moses to his own; how long that was is not certain; the Jewish chronologers [b] observe, that the time of his principality we find not in the text; though they [c] say he succeeded Moses when he was 82 years of age, and governed Israel 28 years; Eupolemus [d], an Heathen writer, says

[a] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.
[b] Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 7. 2.

[c] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 33. Juchasin, fol. 10. 1.
[d] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30.

30 years. Christian writers commonly make his reign to be 27 years [e]; but an Arabic writer [f] stretches it further to 31 years; he says, he took the government of the people in the 79th year of his age, and reigned 31: but it seems more probable that he was 93 years of age when Moses died, who lived to be 110, so that only 17 years intervened between the death of the one and of the other; seven years Joshua was in subduing the land, and 10 years more were taken up in dividing it to the people, and settling them in it, and in the government of them; after which Eleazar might rule ten years more, whose death is mentioned in it; so indeed the book may be reckoned an history of 27 years, though Joshua lived only 17 of them. The Chronicle, to which the Samaritans give the name of the book of Joshua, is a spurious work; an epitome of which Hottinger [g] has compiled, and translated out of the Arabic exemplar into Latin.

CHAP. I.

MOSES being dead, the Lord directs and encourages Joshua to take the command of the children of Israel, and go over Jordan with them, and take possession of the land of Canaan, and divide it to them; giving him gracious promises and strong assurances of his presence, and some good advice with respect to his conduct, ver. 1—9. upon which Joshua orders the people to be ready in three days to go along with him, ver. 10, 11. and particularly addresses the Reubenites and Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh, and puts them in mind of what Moses had ordered, and they had promised, to go along with their brethren, and assist them in conquering the land, ver. 12—15. which they readily agreed to do, and promised obedience to him in all things, ver. 16—18.

Ver. 1. *Now after the death of Moses*, &c.] Or *and after* [h]; the book begins as if something went before, it is connected with; and indeed it seems to be the last chapter of the book of Deuteronomy, which treats of the death of Moses; and Joshua being the penman of the last eight verses of that chapter, as say the Talmudists [i], and of this book, as has been seen, having wrote them, he goes on with the history of his own affairs in strict connexion with that account, beginning where that ended; namely, at the death of Moses, whose character here given is *the servant of the Lord*; and a faithful one he was in all things belonging to it, and in whatsoever was enjoined him by the Lord, see Deut. xxxiv. 5. *and it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses's minister*; either in a dream, or vision, or by an articulate voice out of the sanctuary: of Joshua's descent and relation, see Exod. xxxiii. 11. and of his office under Moses, not as a menial servant, but a minister of state, see Exod. xxiv. 13. *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 2. *Moses my servant is dead*, &c.] Which was said not for the information of Joshua, but to lead on to, and shew the cause and reason of what he was about to say to him: *now therefore arise, go over this Jordan*; near to which the whole body of the people of Israel were, and very probably were in sight of it: *thou, and all this people*; which were very numerous, 600,000 men or more, besides a great number of women and children, and no boats to carry them over, or pontoons to put across the river: *unto the land which I give unto them*, even *to the children of Israel*; and therefore it could be no case of conscience with Joshua, to go and take it out of the hands of the present inhabitants, since the Lord, who had a right to dispose of it, gave it to them. As this land was a type of heaven, and eternal life, which is the free gift of God through Christ, passing over the river of Jordan to it may be an emblem of the passage through death to the heavenly state; both of the death of Christ, the antitypical Joshua, who passed through it, as a surety to make satisfaction for sin, and as a forerunner to set an example, to sanctify death, to open a way into the holiest of holies, and prepare a place for his people; and of the death of the saints, which is necessary to their enjoyment of perfect rest and happiness.

Ver. 3. *Every place that the sole of your feet shall tread upon*, &c.] That is, in the land of Canaan: *that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses*: in Deut. xi. 24. see the note there; though the Jews extend this to all without the land subdued by them, and even to all the countries they now tread on, and are exiles in; but the limits of what the Lord gave them are fixed in the next verse.

Ver. 4. *From the wilderness*, &c.] The wilderness of Kadesh and Sin, on the border of Edom; in the south-east corner, as Jarchi says, see Numb. xxxiv. 3. *and this Lebanon*: which though on the other side Jordan, and at a considerable distance, being the northern border of the land towards Syria, might be seen afar off; or it is expressed, because it was a well-known place, as Kimchi remarks: *even unto the great river, the river Euphrates*; which was the eastern border of the land, and to which it reached in the times of Solomon, whose dominion extended thither, 1 Kings iv. 21. according to Jarchi, this was its breadth from south to north: *all the land of the Hittites*; who, though only one of the seven nations of Canaan, are put for the rest, and the rather mentioned, because, as their name signifies, they were very formidable and terrible; among them dwelt the Anakim, and they themselves were very warlike and populous; or they are taken notice of particularly here, because they dwelt in the western part of the land described by them, so Kimchi thinks; according to Jarchi, this was its length from east to west: *and unto the great sea*; the Mediterranean

[e] Tertullian, Lactantius, Eusebius, Augustin. apud Hottinger. Thesaur. Philolog. l. 2. c. 1. sect. 2. p. 960. so Ben Gersom in Jud. 11. 26. & Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 25.
[f] Elmacinus apud Hottinger. p. 524.
[g] Ad Calcem Exercitat. Antimorin.
[h] ויהי & factum est, V. L. & fuit, Paguinus, Montanus, Vatablus.
[i] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.

sea, which was the western border of the land of Canaan, called great, in comparison of the sea of Tiberias, and the salt sea, which were in it: *toward the going down of the sun, shall be your coast*; the western coast, see the note on Deut. xi. 24. this will be more fully verified in Christ, when his kingdom is from sea to sea, Psal. lxxii. 8.

Ver. 5. *There shall not any man be able to stand before thee*, &c.] What is promised to the people in common, Deut. xi. 25. is here particularly promised to Joshua their general; and which was fulfilled in him, and still more in Christ his antitype, who made an end of sin, destroyed the devil, spoiled principalities and powers, abolished death, and overcame the world: *as I was with Moses, so will I be with thee*; to counsel and advise, guide and direct, protect and defend, prosper and succeed; the Targum of Jonathan is, "as my Word "was for the help of Moses, so will I be with thee:" *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*; but grant him his presence, communicate strength unto him, make good his promises, and leave him not till he had made an entire conquest of the land of Canaan, and even not till the end of his days; and was true of Christ in his state of humiliation, in his sufferings and death, and even in the grave, where he was not left so long as to see corruption; this is applied to particular believers in Heb. xiii. 5. see the note there.

Ver. 6. *Be strong, and of good courage*, &c.] The same exhortation Moses gave him, Deut. xxxi. 7. and is afterwards repeated in this chapter, as being of great moment and importance, as it is in the general of an army to shew greatness and strength of mind, valour and courage, and not be dismayed at the number and strength of the enemy. As Joshua's work in fighting with the Canaanites, and conquering their land, so Christ's work in the redemption of his people, and subduing their enemies, required strength and courage, and both were very eminent in him: *for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land which I sware unto their fathers to give them*; and this promise included and ensured the conquest of it, and the putting the people into the possession of it; for if he was to divide it to them, he must first take it out of the hands of the present inhabitants, and deliver it into the hands of the children of Israel, to be possessed by them, dividing to each tribe and family their part and portion.

Ver. 7. *Only be thou strong, and very courageous*, &c.] For though Joshua was a man of valour and courage, as appears by his war with Amalek, yet there was need of this exhortation, and of repeating it, since he was to engage with a people more and mightier than those with him, and who dwelt in strong and fortified places, and had been preparing for some time, having had notice, and were in expectation of the Israelites' attempt upon them: *that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee*; not only as a private man obliged to observe the whole law, and act according to it in all things; though no mere man is capable of it, only Joshua's antitype, who is the end of it for righteousness to all that believe, having fulfilled it in all respects; but as the supreme magistrate under God, who was to see that the law was obeyed by the people in all things, and particularly as the general of the army, who was to observe to do what had been ordered, with respect to the Canaanites, see Deut. vii. 1—5. *turn not from it to the right hand or to the left*; from the law, by adding to it, or taking from it; so Ben Gersom explains it, "turning to the right hand is, when any adds to its "words; and turning to the left hand, when he di-"minishes from them;" or *from him*[k], that is, from Moses; from his good way, as Kimchi; though he adds, or else from the book of the law; for though he does not mention the book, he does the law; so Ben Melech: *that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest*; succeed in every battle he engaged in; it would be well if generals of armies would observe this; the way to obtain victory over enemies being to be observant of the laws of God themselves, and to take care that they be observed by the soldiers under their command: or *that thou mayest act wisely*[l]; the word of God furnishing out instruction to men in every station of life, see Luke iii. 10—14.

Ver. 8. *This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth*, &c.] He was often to read it, frequently repeat it, and speak of it, to refresh his own memory with it, and the memory of those about him. Jarchi restrains it to the book of Deuteronomy now before him: *but thou shalt meditate therein day and night*; whenever he had any leisure from the important business of his office, whether by day or night, see Psal. i. 2. *that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein*; which frequent speaking of it, and constant meditation on it, would lead unto: *for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success*; in his wars with the Canaanites.

Ver. 9. *Have not I commanded thee?* &c.] The above things, to go over Jordan with the people into the land of Canaan, and to observe the law of Moses in all things, and to be of good courage, which is again repeated; consider who it is that has given these orders and instructions, the great Jehovah, the everlasting I AM, who is faithful to his promises, and able to perform. The consideration of which would serve to animate him to the work he was called unto, to encourage his faith in God, to engage in his service cheerfully and readily: *be strong, and of a good courage*; see the note on ver. 6, 7. *be not afraid, nor be thou dismayed*: at his enemies, numerous and powerful, nor discouraged at any thing in himself, any unfitness for such service, as he might think, or at any difficulties he might fear from the people he had the government of, and was to lead on; it was enough that the divine Presence was promised him, and which is repeated: *for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest*; or, as the Targum of Jonathan, "for thy help is the "Word of the Lord thy God;" see the note on ver. 5.

Ver. 10. *Then Joshua commanded the officers of the people*, &c.] The same word is used in Deut. xvi. 18. where it seems to design such officers that attended on the judges, and executed their orders; but one would

[k] ממנו ab eo, Montanus, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.

[l] למען תשכיל ἵνα συνῇς, Sept. ut intelligas, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; ut prudenter agas, Tigurine version.

think it should here rather signify officers in the army, as captains, and the like; unless it should design a sort of heralds, who were to make proclamation throughout the camp, of the several orders issued out by Joshua, immediately upon his having the above directions and instructions from the Lord: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 11. *Pass through the host,* &c.] The whole camp of Israel, consisting of 600,000 fighting men: *and command the people;* even all the people of Israel; this includes women as well as men, for the one, as well as the other, were to do what follows, and especially it may seem the business of the former: *saying, prepare ye victuals;* this must be understood, as Kimchi observes, of other sorts of food besides bread; for they had manna, the bread of heaven, which fell about their tents every morning, so that they were sufficiently provided with that always, and which did not cease until they had entered the land, even until the sixteenth of Nisan, ch. v. 12. though indeed, as Abendana observes, that might be said to be prepared, it being ground in mills, and beat in mortars, and made cakes of, Numb. xi. 8. but rather this designs meat and other provisions, which being upon the borders of Moab and Midian, they could furnish themselves with for their money; and besides, they were in the possession of a fine country, of Bashan and Gilead, they had taken from Sihon and Og. Jarchi interprets it of every thing fit for journeying, and arms for war, with which they were supplied from the spoils of their enemies, the Egyptians at the Red sea, Amalek at Rephidim, and the Amorites and Midianites lately smitten by them; and to this sense Josephus[m] seems to agree: *for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan:* or at the end of three days, as the Targum of Jonathan; and so Jarchi, while there are yet three days, after that ye shall pass over: but here arises a difficulty to be reconciled, how this could be done three days after, when the spies, which Joshua is afterward said to send into the land, stayed three days in the mountains, besides the time of their going, and returning, and stay at Rahab's house; and it was not till after their return that the camp began to move; to which it may be observed, that though the affair of the spies is afterward related, they might have been sent by Joshua before this order was given to prepare for the journey, and of this opinion are several of the Jewish writers[n]: this being the case, they might return before the expiration of these three days, at the end of which Joshua, with the whole host, removed, agreeably to these orders: *to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it;* which must be a great inducement and encouragement to them to observe his instructions, and go over with him.

Ver. 12. *And to the Reubenites, and to the Gadites, and to half the tribe of Manasseh,* &c.] Who were settled on that side Jordan where Israel now were: *spake Joshua, saying;* as follows.

Ver. 13. *Remember the word which Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you,* &c.] In Numb. xxxii. 29, 30. and to which they had solemnly agreed; and, now the time was come to put it into execution, Joshua reminds them of it: *saying, the Lord your God hath given you rest;* from their travels, and a settlement in a country agreeably to their own desire: *and hath given you this land;* where they now were, and which they had taken from Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and joined to Moab, on the borders of which Israel lay encamped; and by this it appears, that the settlement of these tribes, on the other side Jordan, was according to the will of God; he gave it to them.

Ver. 14. *Your wives, your little ones, and your cattle, shall remain in the land which Moses gave you on this side Jordan,* &c.] This was what they themselves proposed, agreed unto, and confirmed, Numb. xxxii. 16, 17, 26, 27. *but ye shall pass over before your brethren armed;* bearing arms, to fight for them; for none but such that were fit to bear arms were obliged to go; and these were to go *harnessed* *, as some render the word, or in a military order, in rank and file, by fives, five in a row; not at the front of the army, for the standard of Judah went first, but along with them; for *before them* signifies no other than in the presence of them, and in company with them: *all the mighty men of valour, and help them;* to obtain a conquest over the Canaanites; all, according to the order of Moses, and by their agreement, were to go, all that were able to bear arms; but Joshua did not take them all, only a select company of strong and valiant men; for, out of 130,000, but 40,000 went with him, ch. iv. 13.

Ver. 15. *Until the Lord hath given your brethren rest, as he hath given you,* &c.] Rest from their travels, as they had: *and they also have possessed the land which the Lord your God giveth them;* are settled in the land of Canaan, as they were on that side Jordan: *then ye shall return unto the land of your possession, and enjoy it;* the countries of Sihon and Og, they were put into the possession of: *which Moses the Lord's servant gave you on this side Jordan, toward the sun-rising;* the land given to them lay to the east of Jordan.

Ver. 16. *And they answered Joshua,* &c.] The two tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, the heads of them, such as were deputed for that purpose, and were their mouths to him: *saying, all that thou commandest we will do;* with respect to this affair of going over Jordan with their brethren, to assist them in the conquest of the land of Canaan: *and whithersoever thou sendest us we will go;* in what position he would have them be in the army, and to whatsoever part of the country he should send them to subdue, and to whatsoever city he should order them to besiege.

Ver. 17. *According as we have hearkened unto Moses in all things, so will we hearken unto thee,* &c.] Not right or wrong, but in all things that were according to the laws and will of God made known to them; and particularly it may refer to the above affair, which was settled between Moses and them, to whom they then hearkened, and now promise to confirm the same, and hearken to whatsoever orders and instructions Joshua should give them relative to it, according to the plan

[m] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 1.
[n] Jarchi, Ben Gersom, & Abarbinel in loc.

* חמשים ordine militari, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; quintati, Montanus.

agreed upon: *only the Lord thy God be with thee, as he was with Moses;* which is not mentioned as a condition of their obedience to him, but rather as a reason of it, and as an encouraging motive to it; for, according to Kimchi, the true sense and meaning is, "for the "Lord thy God will be with thee, as he was with "Moses;" so Noldius renders it, "seeing the Lord "thy God is with thee."

Ver. 18. *Whosoever he be that doth rebel against thy commandment,* &c.] Refuses to go over Jordan with his brethren the children of Israel, when commanded by Joshua so to do: and *will not hearken to thy words in all that thou commandest him;* or, if he does go over, yet will not obey orders to take such a post, or go against such a city, or march into such a part of the country: *he shall be put to death;* this part of military discipline they agree to, and hereby declare their entire submission to him as their general; some understand this as spoken by all Israel, and of their promise of obedience to Joshua, as their governor, in all things: *only be strong, and of a good courage;* which also is not to be understood as a condition of their submission and obedience, but as a hearty wish and prayer for him, that he might have strength and courage necessary to the great work he was engaging in, and which to see would be no small encouragement to follow and obey him.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter gives an account of the spies sent by Joshua to Jericho, and of their entrance into the house of Rahab, who hid them from the king's messengers, ver. 1—7. of the relation she gave them of the fear and dread of Israel, which were fallen upon the Canaanites, ver. 8—11. and of the request she made to them, to save her and her father's house, when the city should be taken, and to have a sure sign of it given her, ver. 12, 13. which the spies solemnly promised, and gave her a sign of it, with a charge not to discover the matter to any, ver. 14—20. and being let down by a cord through the window of her house, they made their escape to a mountain, where they lay three days, and then returned to Joshua, and made their report, ver. 21—24.

Ver. 1. *And Joshua the son of Nun sent out of Shittim two men,* &c.] Or *had sent*[p]; for this was done before the above order to depart: it is a tradition of the Jews[q], that they were Caleb and Phinehas; but they were not young men, as in ch. vi. 23. especially the former; nor is it probable that men of such rank and figure should be sent, but rather meaner persons; yet such as were men of good sense and abilities, and capable of conducting such an affair they were sent about, as well as men of probity and faithfulness; two good men, Kimchi says they were, and not as they that went on the mission of Moses; these were sent from Shittim, the same with Abel-shittim, in the plains of Moab, where Israel now lay encamped, Numb. xxxiii. 49. which Josephus[r] calls Abila, and says it was 60 furlongs, or seven miles and better, from Jordan: *and spy secretly;* or *silently*[s]; not so much with respect to the inhabitants of the land, for it is supposed in all spies, that they do their business in the most private and secret manner, so as not to be discovered by the inhabitants, whose land they are sent to spy; but with respect to the children of Israel, that they might know nothing of it, lest they should be discouraged, thinking that Joshua was in some fear of the Canaanites, and under some distrust of the promise of God to give the land to them: the word for smiths, and also for persons deaf and dumb, coming from the same root, have furnished the Jewish writers with various conceits, as that these spies went in the habit of smiths with the instruments of their business in their hands; or acted as deaf and dumb persons, and so as incapable of giving an account of themselves, or of answering to any questions put to them, should they be taken up and examined; their commentators in general take notice of this: *saying, go view the land, even Jericho;* especially Jericho, so Noldius[t]; the land in general, and Jericho in particular, because it was a great city, as Kimchi notes; of this city, see the note on Luke xix. 4. Whether it had its name from the sweet-smelling balsam which grew in plenty about it, or from the form of it, being that of an half-moon, is not certain. Strabo[u] says of it, that here was a paradise of balsam, an aromatic, and that it was surrounded with hills in a plain, which bent to it like an amphitheatre. They were not sent to spy the land, as the spies in the times of Moses, to see what sort of land it was, and what sort of people dwelt in it; but to reconnoitre it, to know where it was best to lead the people at first, and encamp; and particularly to observe the passes and avenues leading to Jericho, the first city in it, nearest to them, of importance. Ben Gersom thinks it was to spy or pick out the thoughts of the inhabitants of the land, what apprehensions they had of the people of Israel, whether disheartened and dispirited at their near approach, and what were their intentions, resolutions, and preparations to act against them, offensively, or defensively; and which seems not amiss, since this was the chief information they got, and which they reported to Joshua upon their return; though Abarbinel objects to it as a thing impossible: *and they went, and came into a harlot's house, named Rahab;* they went from Shittim, and crossed the river Jordan, by swimming or fording, and came to Jericho; which, as Josephus[w] says, was 50 furlongs, or seven miles and a half, from Jordan; and they went into a harlot's house, not purposely for that reason, because it was such an one, but so it proved eventually; though

[p] וישלח miserat, Vatablus, Masius, Drusius.
[q] Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 7. 2.
[r] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 1. De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 2.
[s] חרש silentio, Montanus, Munster; so Kimchi and Ben Melech.

[t] P. 277.
[u] Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.
[w] Ut supra, sect. 4.

the Targum of Jonathan says it was the house of a woman, an innkeeper or victualler; for Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech, interpret the word it uses of a seller of food [x]; and if so, it furnishes out a reason why they turned in thither, where they might expect to have food and lodging; though the Jews commonly take her to be a harlot; and generally speaking, in those times and countries, such as kept public houses were prostitutes; and there are some circumstances which seem to confirm this in the context; and so the Greek version calls her, and is the character given of her in the New Testament: her name was Rahab, of whom the Jews have this tradition [y], that she was ten years of age when Israel came out of Egypt; that she played the harlot the forty years they were in the wilderness, became the wife of Joshua, who had daughters by her, from whom came eight prophets, Jeremiah, Hilkiah, Maasia, Hanameel, Shallum, Baruch, the son of Neriah, Ezekiel, the son of Buzi, and some say Huldah the prophetess; but the truth is, she married Salmon, a prince of the tribe of Judah, Matt. i. 5. see the note there: *and lodged there*; that is, they went thither in order to lodge.

Ver. 2. *And it was told the king of Jericho, saying,* &c.] Who being alarmed at the near approach of the Israelites, and knowing their claim to the land of Canaan, and their design upon it, employed men to watch and observe what passed in the city, and parts adjacent, and inform him of it; or some persons of themselves, and for their own safety, and the good of their fellow-citizens, gave notice to the king of it: *behold, there came men hither to-night of the children of Israel;* who were known by their habit and language; or at least, being strangers, were suspected to be of that people, the terror of whom had fallen on all the inhabitants, so that every strange man they took for an Israelite; from hence it appears, that the spies came to Jericho at night, that they might not be observed; but with all their precaution they were taken notice of, and their design suspected, namely, *to search out the country*; which were the proper places to attack first, and where there was the greatest probability of succeeding, as well as to find out the disposition of the inhabitants, whether fearful or fearless of them.

Ver. 3. *And the king of Jericho sent unto Rahab,* &c.] Not merely because she kept a public house, or being a prostitute had often strangers in it, and so conjectured that the men he had notice of might be there; but he sent upon certain information that they were seen to go in there, as it follows: *saying, bring forth the men that are come to thee;* not to commit lewdness with her, though this is the sense some Jewish commentators give; but this neither agrees with the character of the men Joshua had chosen for this purpose, nor answers any end of the king to suggest; nor can it be thought that Rahab would so openly and freely own this, as in the next verse: but what is meant by the phrase is explained in the following clause, *which are entered into thine house;* in order to lodge there that night: *for they be come to search out all the country;* so it was suspected, nor was the suspicion groundless.

Ver. 4. *And the woman took the two men,* &c.] Or *she had taken* them [z] before the messengers came, upon a rumour she understood was gone abroad, that she had got Israelitish spies in her house, and so might expect to be visited and searched by the king's officers, and therefore took this precaution: *and hid them;* the Hebrew word is singular, *him* [a]: hence the Jews, who take these two spies to be Caleb and Phinehas, say, that only Caleb was hid, and Phinehas, though he was before them, was not seen, being an angel, Mal. ii. 7. but the sense is, that she hid each of them, and very probably singly and apart, that if one was found, the other might escape, as Ben Gersom observes; and Abarbinel is of opinion that she hid them twice, now in the middle of her house, one in one place, and the other in another, for the reason before given, and after this hid them in the roof of her house, as afterwards related: *and said thus, there came men unto me;* that is, into her house, this she owned: *but I wist not whence they were;* of what country they were, whether Israelites or not; which whether she knew or not is not certain; it is probable she did, and told an untruth, as she also did in the next verse.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass,* about the time *of the shutting of the gate,* &c.] Of the city, which was done every night, and at a certain time: *when it was dark;* the sun set, and night come on: *the men went out;* out of her house, and out of the city too, as she said, though it was a downright lie, as well as what follows: *whither the men went I wot not;* though she knew they were not gone, but were now in her house; she might not scruple telling a lie, being brought up a Heathen, and being done with a design to save the lives of persons that belonged to a people she was persuaded were the people of God, and to whom he had given the land; though her lies are not to be justified; evil is not to be done that good may come; nor are men to tell lies one to another upon any account; but these sins, with others, the Lord forgave her: *pursue after them quickly, and ye shall overtake them;* this she encouraged them to do, to get rid of them the sooner, and to remove all suspicion of her having any respect for them, and of being concerned in concealing them.

Ver. 6. *But she had brought them up to the roof of the house,* &c.] Before the messengers came; though Abarbinel thinks it was after they were gone, when she took them from the place of their concealment, and had them to the roof of the house, where she thought they would be safe and secure, should the messengers return, or others come in search of them, who would not, as she imagined, look for them there: *and hid them with the stalks of flax;* that is, under them, or *in flax of wood,* or *a tree* [b]; which may with as much propriety, or more, be called a tree than hyssop, 1 Kings iv. 33. as it is in the Misnah [c]. Moreover, there was a sort of flax which grew in the upper part of Egypt towards Arabia, as Pliny says [d], which they

[x] And so R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 24. 1.
[y] Shalshalet Hakabala, ut supra.
[z] ותקח duxerat, tulerat; so Syr. Ar. Kimchi, & Ben Melech.
[a] ותצפנו & abscondit eum, Montanus; abdiderat eum, Vatablus.

[b] בפשתי העץ in linis ligni, Montanus; vel arboris, Vatablus.
[c] Sabbat, c. 8. sect. 3. & Bartenora in ib.
[d] Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 1.

called *xylon*, or wood, of which were made *lina xylina*: though the words may be rightly transposed, as by us, *stalks of flax*, which are large and strong before the flax is stripped or beaten off of them; the Targum renders it bundles of flax, or handfuls and sheaves of them, as they were when cut down and gathered: *which she had laid in order upon the roof*; to be dried, as Kimchi observes; and Pliny [e] speaks of flax being bound up in bundles, and hung up and dried in the sun; which was done that it might be more easily stripped and beaten off; and the roofs of houses in those countries being flat, were very fit for such a purpose; see the note on Deut. xxii. 8. and these being now laid there were very suitable and convenient to conceal the men under them. This seems to be in favour of Rahab, as being a virtuous and industrious woman; see Prov. xxxi. 13, 19, 24.

Ver. 7. *And the men pursued after them*, &c.] As they thought: *the way to Jordan*; on the other side of which the people of Israel lay encamped, to which they supposed, according to Rahab's account, these two men directed their course: *unto the fords*; the fords of Jordan, the passages through it; for in some places, and at some times, it was fordable; which accounts for the way in which these spies could get over Jordan, see Gen. xxxii. 10. it was most reasonable to conclude they would return the same way; and so far the king's messengers went, but further they did not choose to go, because it would be to no purpose, and they might expose themselves to the camp of Israel, which lay on the other side: *and as soon as they which pursued after them were gone out, they shut the gate*; that is, either as soon as the king's messengers were gone out of Rahab's house, either the spies, or rather the men of the house, Rahab's servants, shut the door of it to prevent their return, or others coming in; or rather, when they were got out of the city, the watchmen of the city, the porters of the city-gates, shut them, that if they were not got out of the city, to prevent their escape, or however to keep out others from entering, that might be on some such design, or worse.

Ver. 8. *And before they were laid down*, &c.] Under the stalks of the flax; or rather, since they are said to be hid in them, before they were fallen asleep, so Kimchi and Abarbinel: *she came up unto them upon the roof*; to acquaint them how things were, and to converse with them on the following subjects.

Ver. 9. *And she said unto the men*, &c.] The two spies: *I know that the Lord hath given you the land*; the land of Canaan, of which she was an inhabitant, and in which they now were; this she knew either by some tradition that was among them; or by divine revelation, a supernatural impulse upon her mind; or by observing what the Lord had done already, in putting the land of the Amorites into their hands, which were one of the seven nations of Canaan; and by this it also appears, and more clearly by what follows, that she had knowledge of the Lord God, the God of Israel: *and that your terror is fallen upon us*; which was another token or sign by which she knew the land would be delivered to them; that they who were a formidable people, and struck terror into others, now were terrified themselves, at the rumour of Israel being come to invade them; this was what the Lord said should be the case, ch. xi. 25. *and that all the inhabitants of the land faint because of you*; or *melt* [f], like wax before the fire, as Moses had predicted, Exod. xv. 15.

Ver. 10. *For we have heard how the Lord dried up the waters of the Red sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt*, &c.] To make a passage for them through it, to walk in as on dry land; this they had heard of and remembered, though it was forty years ago: *and what you did unto the kings of the Amorites that were on the other side Jordan*; which were things more recent, done but a few months ago: *Sihon and Og, whom ye destroyed*; the history of which see in Numb. xxi. 21—35. who were destroyed by them under Moses and Joshua their commanders; and Hercules, who is thought to be the same with Joshua, is by Lucian [g] called Ogmius, from slaying Og, as is supposed [h].

Ver. 11. *And as soon as we had heard* these things, *our hearts did melt*, &c.] Particularly what were done to the two kings of the Amorites, who, and their people, were utterly destroyed, their goods made a prey of, and their countries seized upon and possessed: *neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you*; they looked dejected in their countenances, had no heart to go about any business, trembled at the shaking of a leaf, or at the least rumour and report made that the Israelites were coming on and were at hand; they had no spirit to prepare to go out and meet them, or to defend themselves: *for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above, and in earth beneath*; the Maker and Possessor of both; is the Governor of the whole universe, and does what he pleases in it; and disposes of all countries, persons, and things, as he thinks fit: this is a proof of her knowledge of the true God, and faith in him, and shews her to be a believer, and hence she is reckoned in the catalogue of believers, Heb. xi. 31. and her faith is proved to be of the right kind by the works she did, Jam. ii. 25.

Ver. 12. *Now therefore, I pray you, swear unto me by the Lord*, &c.] Which being a religious action, and done by men that feared the Lord, she knew it would be binding upon them: the Targum is, "swear to me "by the Word of the Lord:" *since I have shewed you kindness*; by receiving them with peace into her house, and hiding them when inquired for and demanded of her; in doing which she risked her own life, had this treachery to her country, as it would have been deemed, been discovered: *that you will also shew kindness unto my father's house*; she mentions not herself and household, for if this was granted that would be implied and included; and this she presses for by the law of retaliation and friendship, for since she had shewn kindness to them, it was but reasonable it should be returned: *and give me a true token*; that she and her father's house would be saved by them when the city should be taken and the inhabitants destroyed; a token that would not deceive her, on which she might depend, and would be firm and sure.

[e] Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 1.
[f] נמגו liquefacti sunt, Montanus, Piscator.
[g] In Hercule.
[h] Dickinson. Delph. Phœnic. c. 4. p. 44.

Ver. 13. *And that ye will save alive my father, and my mother, and my brethren, and my sisters*, &c.] She makes no mention of any husband or children she had, as harlots seldom have, and which seems to confirm her character as such; and so Abarbinel observes, that her father's house is only mentioned to tell us that she had no husband, for she was an harlot and had no children, and puts her father and mother in the room of an husband, and her brethren and sisters in the room of children: *and all that they have*: not their substance only, but their children more especially, the children of her brethren and sisters: *and deliver our lives from death*: here she manifestly includes herself, and requests the saving of her life, and the lives of all her relations, when she knew the inhabitants of the city would be all put to death upon the taking of it: thus she provided for the safety of her family, as Noah in another case and manner did, Heb. xi. 7. and indeed seemed more concerned for them than for herself; and thus souls sensible of their own estate and condition, by nature and grace, are very solicitous for the salvation of their relations and friends, Rom. ix. 2.

Ver. 14. *And the men answered her*, &c.] The two spies: *our life for yours*; or *our souls in your stead to die*[i]; that is, we engage for the security of your lives, should they be in danger; we promise to die in your room and stead rather than you should: this they said not as though their lives would be required of them for them, but to assure her of the safety of her and her father's house, on the following condition: *if ye utter not this our business*; not their business in searching the land, for the discovery of that would be of little avail after they were gone; for it was known already that there were persons come to search the land; but *this our word*[k], what they were going to say to her and bid her do, as a sign of safety to her and hers; which, if she discovered, others would give out the same sign, and then they could not promise her safety; or if she did not take care to bring in her father, mother, brethren, and sisters, and theirs into her house, they could not engage to protect them: *and it shall be, when the Lord hath given us the land*; not the whole land, but Jericho and the land about it, that when that part of it should be delivered into their hands: *we will deal kindly and truly with thee; kindly*, by sparing her and her father's house; *truly*, by faithfully performing the promise and oath they made to her.

Ver. 15. *Then she let them down by a cord through the window*, &c.] Which must be large, and the cord strong, as well as she herself a masculine woman, to let down two men by it, unless she employed any of her servants in the affair; though this being so great a secrecy, it is probable she trusted none of her domestics with it as little as possible: in like manner the Apostle Paul was let down by the wall of Damascus in a basket, Acts ix. 25. Jarchi supposes it was the same cord and window, by means of and in at which her gallants used to come and go: *for her house was upon the town-wall*; in a suitable and convenient place to receive her guests and gallants: and it is observed, that harlots have had their houses on or under walls: Martial speaks of harlots whom he calls[l] Summœnianæ, whores that plied under the walls and in the suburbs of cities: *and she dwelt upon the wall*; that part of the house in which she particularly dwelt was built on or over the wall, and the rest towards the city was for the entertainment of persons that resorted to her house.

Ver. 16. *And she said unto them, get ye unto the mountain*, &c.] Which was near to the city, and is supposed to be the same which is now called Quarantania: Dr. Shaw, a late traveller in those parts, says[m], from the mountain Quarantania, the very same perhaps where the two spies concealed themselves, Josh. ii. 16. we have a distinct view of the land of the Amorites, of Gilead, and of Bashan, the inheritance of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and of the half-tribe of Manasseh—to it joins the mountain of Adummim, and through it the road is cut that leads from Jerusalem to Jericho, where probably it was from the very nature of the situation that the man fell among thieves, Luke x. 30. which very probably is the same mountain which Josephus[n] says hung over the city, and was a very barren one; though the singular may be put for the plural, since, as Strabo says[o], it was surrounded with mountains: *lest the pursuers meet you*; on their return from the fords of Jordan, being disappointed: *and hide yourselves there three days*: some of the Jewish Rabbins, as Jarchi and Kimchi, observe that she had this by the revelation of the Holy Ghost, that the pursuers would return at the end of three days; but the latter more truly remarks, that this was said by conjecture; that Jericho being, as he says, one day from Jordan, and a little more, by going, returning, and searching for the spies, they would be three days in doing it: *until the pursuers be returned*: into the city; for until they were they could not be in safety, but must be in danger of being met by them and taken up: *and afterward may ye go your way*; to Jordan, and so to the camp of Israel, and that without fear.

Ver. 17. *And the men said unto her*, &c.] Some think that this discourse, which passed between the spies and her, was whilst in the house before she let them down, or otherwise they would have been in danger of being overheard, and so the whole affair discovered; but as it was on the other side of the house, and under the wall of the city, and without it, they might with the greater safety converse together: *we will be blameless of this thine oath which thou hast made us swear*; that is, they would most faithfully and punctually keep it, it should be sacred to them, and she should have no occasion to lay any blame upon them in the least.

Ver. 18. *Behold, when we come into the land*, &c.] The land of Canaan, and into this city, into that part of it, as the Septuagint, where her house was, meaning not themselves only, but the people of Israel they belonged to: *thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by*, the word *by* refers either to the scarlet thread they were let

[i] נפשנו תחתיכם למות anima nostra pro vobis ad moriendum, Pagninus, Montanus.
[k] את דברנו זה verbum nostrum hoc, Pagninus, Montanus; sermonem nostrum hunc, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.

[l] Epigram. l. 3. Ep. 69.
[m] Travels, p. 276. Ed. 2.
[n] De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 2.
[o] Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.

down by, said to be a cord, ver. 15. and therefore must be a line twisted with various scarlet threads, as Kimchi, who observes, that according to the Targum, it was the border of a red garment; or to the window through which they were let down, as the Septuagint version; it may refer to both, and the sense be, that the same twisted cord of scarlet thread they were let down by should be bound to the same window they were let down through; only this objection there is to the same window, that it was not towards the city, and so not to be seen when they came into it, but looked over the wall without the city: now as Rahab was an instance of the salvation of sinners by the grace of God, for she was a sinner by birth, by practice, and a notorious one; she was an instance of distinguishing grace, of free and efficacious grace, a singular instance of it; and became a true penitent, a real believer, was a justified person, and saved: so the scarlet thread was an emblem of the blood of Christ, by which salvation is; redemption and all the blessings of grace are through it; justification, remission of sin, reconciliation, and atonement, and safety, and protection from avenging justice, and wrath to come, are only by it: likewise the spies, who are also called *messengers*, Jam. ii. 25. may represent the ministers of the Gospel, who are the messengers of Christ, and the churches, are sent out by him the antitypical Joshua, men of wisdom, courage, and valour, and are sent as spies to bring to light men and things, who direct to the way of salvation and give the same token of it, Mark xvi. 16. *and thou shalt bring thy father, and thy mother, and thy brethren, and all thy father's household home unto thee;* into her house, where the scarlet thread was bound, and where only they would be safe, as the Israelites were in the houses where the blood of the paschal lamb was sprinkled, Exod. xii. 23. and so they are safe, and they only, who are under the blood of sprinkling, and partake of the virtue of it.

Ver. 19. *And it shall be, that whosoever shall go out of the door of thy house into the street,* &c.] After they have been taken in, and when the Israelites were come into the city: *his blood* shall be *upon his head, and we will be guiltless;* if he is killed by any person, his death will be owing to himself, and no blame to be laid on us; nor shall we reckon ourselves guilty of the breach of the oath taken: *and whosoever shall be with thee in the house, his blood* shall be *on our head, if* any *hand be upon him;* if any one within-doors is killed by an Israelite entering in, the guilt of the blood shall lie upon us, and we will be answerable, according to the tenour of the oath, *our life for yours,* ver. 14.

Ver. 20. *And if thou utter this our business,* &c.] So that others would either hang out scarlet threads or get into her house for shelter, see the note on ver. 14. *then we will be quit of thine oath which thou hast made us to swear;* be under no obligation to make it good, by saving her and her father's house.

Ver. 21. *And she said, according to your words, so be it,* &c.] She agreed, that if the conditions required were not performed, they would be quit of their oath, but if they were, she expected it would be fulfilled: *and she sent them away, and they departed;* took their leave of each other: *and she bound the scarlet line in the window;* immediately, as Abarbinel thinks, and in the sight of the spies, that they might see that she conformed to their direction, and that they might take notice where she fastened it; and that she herself might, at the sight of it, be put in mind of the design of it, and be an encouragement to her faith as to the safety of her and her father's house; and it being a thing so trifling and insignificant in itself, would not be taken notice of by the inhabitants, or be thought to be done with any design; though, according to the instruction of the spies, it seems as if it was to be done when they came into the land, and into the city, and which seems most likely that it was then done.

Ver. 22. *And they went, and came unto the mountain,* &c.] Rahab had directed them to, the mountain Quarantania, see the note on ver. 16. *and abode there three days;* being, no doubt, supplied with food by Rahab; and it might not be three wholly, but one whole day and part of the other two: *until the pursuers were returned;* to the city of Jericho, as might reasonably be supposed: *and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way;* from Jericho to the fords of Jordan, searching every hedge, field, and village as they went and returned: *but found* them *not;* Rahab having hid them in her house, and then sent them to the mountain, there to remain till the return of the pursuers.

Ver. 23. *So the two men returned, and descended from the mountain,* &c.] Or came down from it again, by which, it seems, they went to the top of it, and hid themselves in some cave there: this descent, Kimchi says, was, "on the third day of their being sent, which "was the second day of the three days Joshua made "mention of when he said, *within three days:*" see the note on ch. i. 11. *and passed over;* that is, the river Jordan, at the fords of it: *and came to Joshua the son of Nun;* at Shittim, where he still continued, and from whence he sent them, ver. 1. *and told him all things that befel them;* what house they went into when come to Jericho, what reception they met with, the report of them to the king of Jericho, how messengers were sent by him to demand them, and by what means they were preserved and made their escape.

Ver. 24. *And they said unto Joshua,* &c.] Made a report of what they had got knowledge of, which answered the end of their mission: *truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land;* which they concluded by the terror the inhabitants of it were in, and so in no condition to make resistance and defend themselves; and they not only judged of the whole land by the case of the inhabitants of Jericho, but were assured by Rahab that all the inhabitants of the land were in the same plight and condition, ver. 9. *for even the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us;* this was the temper and disposition they appeared in, and seems to be what Joshua was chiefly desirous of knowing; since nothing else is told by the spies nor inquired of by him, but immediately upon this report began his march towards Canaan, as in the next chapter is related.

CHAP. III.

JOSHUA removed from Shittim to Jordan, where he stayed three days, ver. 1, 2. the people are directed to move when they saw the ark bore by the priests, and what distance they should keep from it, ver. 3, 4. are bid to sanctify themselves against the morrow, when wonders would be wrought, ver. 5. and the priests are ordered to take up the ark, ver. 6. Joshua is encouraged by the Lord, and instructed to command the priests when they come to Jordan to stand still in it, ver. 7, 8. and he declares to all the people, as a token that God would drive the Canaanites from before them, that as soon as the feet of the priests bearing the ark should rest in the waters of Jordan, they should be parted, and make way for them to pass through, ver. 9—13. which accordingly came to pass, so that all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, ver. 14—17.

Ver. 1. *And Joshua rose early in the morning*, &c.] The morning after the spies had returned and made their report; which, as Kimchi rightly observes, was the 9th of Nisan; for on the morrow, which was the 10th, the people passed over Jordan, see ver. 5. and iv. 19. Moses, according to the Jewish writers, died on the 7th of Adar or February; the 30 days of his mourning ended the 7th of Nisan or March; two days before they were ended the spies were sent, who returned on the eighth day of the month; and the morning following Joshua rose betimes, which shews his readiness and alacrity to proceed in the expedition he was directed and encouraged to: *and they removed from Shittim, and came to Jordan;* from Shittim in the plains of Moab, to the river Jordan: *he and all the children of Israel;* he as their general, and they an army of 600,000 fighting men under him, besides women and children, and others that came along with them: *and lodged there before they passed over;* lay there encamped a night before they passed over the river Jordan.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass after three days*, &c.] At the end of the three days they were bid to prepare food for their expedition, and to go over Jordan, ch. i. 11. *that the officers went through the host;* the camp of Israel; very probably the same as in ch. i. 10. this was, no doubt, by the order of Joshua, and who was directed to it by the Lord.

Ver. 3. *And they commanded the people*, &c.] In the name of Joshua, by whom they were sent: *saying, when ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it;* the Targum reads, the priests and Levites; so the Septuagint: it was the business of the Levites, particularly the Kohathites, to bear the ark in journeying, but here the priests, who also were Levites, were to carry it: it is remarked in the Talmud[p], that there are three places in which the priests are said to bear the ark; here, and when they surrounded Jericho, ch. vi. 6. and when it was returned to its place in the times of David, 2 Sam. xv. 29. and Kimchi and Abarbinel observe a fourth, when it was brought into Solomon's temple, 1 Kings viii. 6. *then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it;* their usual signal for marching was the cloud, when that was taken up, Numb. ix. 17. &c. but now the ark, the clouds of glory having removed at the death of Moses, and were seen no more, as Abarbinel and other Jewish writers observe; and therefore it was proper the Israelites should be made acquainted with this signal; for, as Jarchi says, this journey was different from all the journeys, (though that of the three-days' journey from Sinai must be excepted, Numb. x. 33.) for all the time Moses was in being, the pillar of cloud marched first and shewed them the way, and the ark moved after two of the standards (Judah and Reuben), and now the ark went first: the cloud was a figure of the dark and cloudy dispensation of the law, particularly the ceremonial law, the shadow of good things to come, and which continued only during the former state, and discontinued to be of any use when the Mosaic dispensation ceased, and when Joshua or Jesus was come: the ark was a type of Christ, the forerunner for us entered, and whom we are to follow whithersoever he goes or directs to, in the exercise of grace and performance of duty; and the ark being carried now by different persons, may denote that Christ was held forth in a weaker manner under the legal dispensation, and by his apostles and ministers under the Gospel dispensation in a clearer and stronger manner, and who are to be followed no further or longer than as they bear the ark or direct to Christ.

Ver. 4. *Yet there shall be a space between you and it*, &c.] The ark; the Keri or marginal reading is, *between you and them;* the priests that bear it: hence sprung a fiction among the Jews, that there were two arks, the ark of the Shechinah or divine Majesty, and the ark of Joseph, in which his bones were put, which went together[q]; which Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel take notice of, but has no foundation in the text: *about 2,000 cubits by measure;* by a certain well-known measure, that of a common cubit; for the *caph* we render *about* is a note of truth, reality, and certainty, and designs the exact precise measure here given: this difference was to be observed, partly in reverence to the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence: Christ is to be reverenced by his people, and so his word and ordinances; and there is a reverence and respect due to his ministers and priests that bear the ark; as also that they might the better see the ark and go after it, as Ben Gersom; or the way in which they should go, as is suggested in the following clause; and likewise have the better view of the greatness of the miracle, as Abarbinel; the dividing of the waters of Jordan as soon as the ark came to it, and while it was in it: the Jews conclude from hence that this was the measure of ground they may go on a sabbath-day.

[p] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 33. 2.

[q] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 13. 1.

and no further, called a sabbath-day's journey, Acts i. 12. *come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go;* over Jordan into Canaan's land; for being at some distance from them they could better discern that and the way he directed them to walk in: Christ the antitype of the ark is the way to the heavenly Canaan, and his ministers point out the right way of salvation by him, in the ministration of the word, by attending to which the way is seen and known in which men must go: *for ye have not passed this way heretofore;* a path indeed untrodden by any; neither they nor any other ever went into Canaan the way they were now going, through the river Jordan as on dry land: the way to heaven by Christ is only revealed in the Gospel, and only trodden by believers in him, and especially the way to glory through Jordan's river; or death is an untrodden path, which, though the way of all flesh, is a trackless path, and gone through but once, and those who pass it have never before gone that way.

Ver. 5. *And Joshua said unto the people,* &c.] On the 3d day; and the 30th day of the mourning for Moses, Jarchi says, was the first of the three days, and that being the 7th day of the month, this must be the 9th, as it is most clear the morrow was the 10th: *sanctify yourselves;* in a ceremonial sense, by washing their bodies and their clothes, and abstaining from their wives; and in a moral sense, by acts of religion and devotion, by prayer and meditation, and the exercise of repentance and good works: it may denote that sanctification is necessary to our passage over Jordan, or through death to the heavenly Canaan, for without holiness no man shall see the Lord: *for to-morrow the Lord will do wonders among you;* in their sight and presence, and for them, by dividing the waters of Jordan, that they might pass through it as on dry land; this, as Kimchi says, was the tenth of Nisan, as is plain from ch. iv. 19.

Ver. 6. *And Joshua spoke unto the priests,* &c.] On the morrow, that is, on the tenth day of the month, the day on which they went over Jordan: *take up the ark of the covenant;* in which the law was put, which was the covenant between God and the people, from whence the ark had this name; and in which it was typical of Christ, in whom both the law, the covenant of works, was fulfilled, and with whom the covenant of grace was made; who is the Mediator, surety, and messenger of it, and in whom all the blessings and promises of it are, and with whom it is, and will be kept for evermore: the ark, the priests were ordered to take up and bear on their shoulders; for no other way might they carry it; these typified the ministers of Christ who bear his name, his Gospel in the world, see Acts ix. 15. *and pass over before the people;* over the river Jordan, to direct them in the way through it, and encourage them to follow them: *and they took up the ark of the covenant, and went before the people;* from the place where they had lodged the night before to the brink of the river.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord said unto Joshua,* &c.] Out of the tabernacle: *this day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel;* by working the miracle afterwards related; dividing the waters, which was done on this day, and was but the beginning of wonders; for other great and marvellous things were done for him and by him, by which it appeared he was high in the favour of God, greatly esteemed and honoured by him, and so would be great and honourable in the account of the people: *that they may know that as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee;* by dividing the waters of Jordan for him, as he had divided the waters of the Red sea for Moses; which, as it was a token of his powerful presence with him, this would be a like token of it with Joshua. The Targum is, "as "my Word was for the help of Moses, so shall my "Word be for thy help."

Ver. 8. *And thou shalt command the priests that bear the ark of the Lord,* &c.] Who were subject to Joshua, the chief governor of the nation, and general of the army, as well as the common people; and whose commands they were to obey, and especially when they appeared to be from the Lord: *saying, when ye come to the brink of the water of Jordan;* not of the bank of it, but of the water, which had now overflowed its bank; that is, the brink or extremity of it, which was nearest to them, and to which they first came; though it is a notion of some Jewish commentators[r], and which some Christian interpreters[s] have given into, and both of considerable note, that this was the further extremity, or the brink on the other side of the river; but, according to this notion, they must pass the river to the other side before the waters were divided, which is not credible; and must return again into the midst of the river, which is not probable; and besides, it is expressly said, that as soon as their feet dipped in the brim, or extremity of the water, the waters parted, which must be the first brim or extremity they came at, ver. 15. *ye shall stand still in Jordan;* after the waters were parted; upon their coming to, and touching, the brink of them, they proceeded, and went into the middle of the river, where they were ordered to stop and stand still.

Ver. 9. *And Joshua said unto the children of Israel, come hither,* &c.] Very probably to the door of the tabernacle: *and hear the words of the Lord your God;* which he was about to deliver to them as from him, and in his name.

Ver. 10. *And Joshua said,* &c.] To the people as follows: *hereby ye shall know that the living God is among you;* who has life in and of himself, and is the author of life to all his creatures; and is so called in opposition to the lifeless idols of the Gentiles: and it may be, as Abarbinel observes, to suggest to them, that though Moses was dead, the Lord lived, and lives for evermore; and by the following miracle of dividing the waters of Jordan, it would be a plain case that the Lord was yet among them, to protect and defend them, deliver and save them: *and that he will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites;* all the seven nations are mentioned, even the Girgashites, who are sometimes omitted, to assure them of the expulsion of them all, to make way for their en-

[r] Kimchi, Abarbinel.

[s] Masius, Drusius.

tire possession of the land of Canaan, as had been promised them.

Ver. 11. *Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth,* &c.] Some both Jewish and Christian interpreters, because there is a distinguishing accent on the word *covenant*, read the words *the ark of the covenant, even the Lord of all the earth*; so in some copies of our English Bible, as if the ark was called the Lord of all the earth, because of his presence and dwelling there; but, as Kimchi observes, either the word *ark* is wanting, or the word *covenant*, and may be supplied either thus, "the ark of the covenant, the "ark (I say) of the Lord of all the earth:" or thus, "the ark of the covenant, which is the covenant of "the Lord of all the earth:" the true meaning is what Abarbinel gives, "the ark of the covenant of the "Lord, who is the Lord of the whole earth;" the Maker and possessor of the whole earth, the whole terraqueous globe; and can do what he pleases in the earth, or in the water; and can control the powers of nature, and do what is beyond them, things miraculous and astonishing: *passeth before you into Jordan;* not only unto it, but into it, into the river itself; and, by the power of him whose presence was with it, the waters of Jordan were to be divided, to give them a passage through it as on dry land, and so it came to pass.

Ver. 12. *Now therefore take ye twelve men,* &c.] For what end and purpose is not mentioned. Abarbinel is of opinion, that they were chosen and appointed, that every man might pitch upon and take a place for his tribe to encamp in, when they came on the other side Jordan: whether this was Joshua's view or no is not certain; however, the use he made of these, thus provided by divine direction, is related ch. iv. 2, 3, 4. and these were to be taken *out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man;* Levi not reckoned, having no part in the land; and so we find that tribe left out in other accounts, when there was a choice of twelve men out of the several tribes, Numb. xiii. 4. and xxxiv. 19.

Ver. 13. *And it shall come to pass, as soon as the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord,* &c.] Which they were bid to take up and carry, ver. 6. *the Lord of all the earth;* this shews that not the ark, but the Lord, is called the Lord of all the earth, ver. 11. see the note there: *shall rest in the waters of Jordan;* the meaning is, as soon as their feet should touch them, or they should set their feet in them, when they came to the brink of them: *that the waters of Jordan shall be cut off from the waters that come down from above;* from above the place where the priests came, and the children of Israel after passed over: *and they shall stand upon an heap;* or one heap; stop and rise up high, as if piled up one upon another, and stand unmoved. This had been made known to Joshua by divine revelation, and is what he hints at, ver. 5. and now plainly speaks out, and foretels before it came to pass; and which must serve to magnify Joshua, as in ver. 7. and give him great credit and honour among the people.

Ver. 14. *And it came to pass, when the people removed from their tents to pass over Jordan,* &c.] Which they had pitched very near it, upon their removal from Shittim, and in which they had lodged the night past: *and the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people;* at the distance of two thousand cubits.

Ver. 15. *And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan,* &c.] Not to the bank, which was overflowed, but to the extremity of the water overflowing: *and the feet of the priests that bare the ark were dipped in the brim of the water;* which was doubtless the first they came to, and not the brim or extremity of it on the other side: *for Jordan overfloweth all its banks all the time of harvest;* that is, of barley-harvest, as appears from the time of year: for it was in the first month, the month Nisan, or Abib, which answers to part of March and April, it used to overflow, 1 Chron. xii. 15. and it was now the tenth day of that month, ch. iv. 19. on the sixteenth of which, at the time of the passover, the sheaf of the first-fruits of barley-harvest was offered up, Lev. xxiii. 10, 11. the inundation continued all the time of harvest; and so Aristeas [w] testifies, that "the river being filled, it overflows as the Nile in the "time of harvest, and waters much of the country:" it overflows its banks both on the one side and on the other, the eastern and western shores. This overflow is supposed to be occasioned either by the latter rains, which fell about this time; or rather by the snow on Mount Lebanon melting at this time of the year, when the sun has great strength in those parts, and which poured down in great quantities into this river, that took its rise from thence. Josephus [x] speaks of Mount Lebanon and of the fountains of Jordan together; and says they have their rise from the mountain; and of the snow of Lebanon see Jer. xviii. 14. This river continued to overflow at this season in the times of David, 1 Chron. xii. 15. and in the times of Aristeas, who lived in the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, as before observed; and some late travellers [y] observe, "it generally happens in the month Nisan; "that is, from the middle of March to the middle of "April, the time of the first harvest;" but Mr. Maundrell [z], who was upon the spot in 1697, and at the proper time of its overflowing, perceived nothing of it. He says, "there is a small descent, which you "may fitly call the first and outermost bank of Jordan, "as far as which it may be supposed the river does, "or at least did anciently, overflow: but at present "(whether it be because the river has by its rapidity "of current worn its channel deeper than it was formerly, or whether because its waters are diverted "some other way) it seems to have forgot its ancient "greatness; for we could discern no sign or probability of such overflowings when we were there, "which was the 30th of March, being the proper time "for these inundations; nay, so far was the river from "overflowing, that it ran at least two yards below the "brink of the channel." However, at this time of the passage of the children of Israel through it, it was overflowing; which made the miracle the greater.

[w] Hist. de 72 Interpret. p. 41.
[x] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.
[y] Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 335, 336.
[z] Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, p. 81, 82.

Ver. 16. *That the waters which came down from above,* &c.] Above where the priests' feet rested, and which came down from Mount Lebanon, and the fountains of Jordan northward: *stood and rose up upon an heap;* they stopped their current, and as the water came down they rose up on high, and made one vast heap of waters: *very far from the city of Adam, that is, beside Zaretan;* the Cetib, or textual reading, is, *in Adam the city;* we follow the marginal reading, *from Adam:* both readings, as is usually, if not always the case, are to be received; and the meaning is, that this heap of waters, though the river was at a considerable distance from Adam; yet through the overflow of it, it reached to, and was *in Adam:* this city was in Perea, on the other side Jordan, that side on which the Israelites were before their passage; and Zareton, which is supposed to be the same with Zartanah, and Zarthan, 1 Kings iv. 12. and vii. 46. was on this side, in the tribe of Manasseh; and the sense is, not that Adam was on the side of Zaretan, or near it, for it was on the other side of the river; and according to the Talmudists [a] was twelve miles from it; but the construction is with the word *heap, which* heap was *on the side of Zaretan;* it was there where the waters were heaped up: it seems as if they reached on the one side to Adam, and on the other side to Zaretan: *and those that came down towards the sea of the plain,* even *the salt sea, failed, and were cut off:* those waters, which were below where the priests' feet rested, ran down into the lake Asphaltites, where Sodom and Gomorrah formerly stood, the sea of the plain, or vale of Siddim, Gen. xiv. 3. sometimes called the dead sea, and here the salt sea, its water being exceeding salt; so the above-mentioned traveller [b] testifies on his own knowledge; "the water of the lake (the lake Asphaltites, or "dead sea, says he) was very limpid, and salt to the "highest degree; and not only salt, but also extreme "bitter and nauseous;" so that these waters running down thither, and those above stopped, made a dry channel for 16 or 18 miles: *and the people passed over right against Jericho;* which was the city Joshua had in view to attack first, and had sent spies thither to get intelligence of it, and the disposition of the people in it: see the note on ch. ii. 1.

Ver. 17. *And the priests that bare the ark of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan,* &c.] Which for its breadth the above-mentioned traveller says [c] might be about 20 yards over, and its depth exceeded his height; but Dr. Shaw [d], a later traveller still, says, "the river Jordan is by far the most considerable river, excepting the Nile, either of the coast "of Syria, or of Barbary. I computed it to be about "thirty yards broad, but the depth I could not measure, "except at the brink, where I found it to be three "yards." Now in the midst of this river the priests bearing the ark stood firm on dry ground, the waters above being stopped and those below cut off. This perhaps might give rise to the fables among the Heathens of the river Scamander being swelled for the destruction of Achilles, and dried up by Vulcan, of which Homer [e] makes mention; and of the river Inachus, dried up by Neptune, as the Grecians fable; however, if Heathens can credit these accounts, surely we Christians ought to believe this, attested by divine revelation. And this may denote the presence of Christ with his people in afflictions, who will not suffer those waters to overflow them, and in death itself, when the swellings of Jordan shall not come near them to distress them; and when the covenant of grace will appear firm and sure, and be their great support; and when also the feet of the ministers of Christ stand firm, and their faith fails not; which is of great use, and very encouraging to the spiritual Israel of God: *and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground;* the waters being divided to a space large enough for such a body of people to pass over, and which continued *until all the people were clean passed over Jordan;* perfectly and completely, not one being left behind, or lost in the passage through it; in the midst of which the priests stood until all were passed over. So the spiritual Israel of God must all go over Jordan's river, or must all go through the valley of the shadow of death; and they'll all go over safe to Canaan's land, to the heavenly glory; their souls go immediately to heaven at death, and their bodies will be raised at the last day, and be reunited to them, and partake of happiness with them; nor will any one of them be lost; they all clean pass over, and arrive safe; for they are the chosen of God, the care and charge of Christ, the purchase of his blood, partake of his grace, and have the earnest of his spirit.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter relates an order, that 12 men should take 12 stones out of the midst of Jordan, and carry them to the first place they lodged at as a memorial of their passage over it, ver. 1—8. and how Joshua set up twelve other stones in the river itself, ver. 9. and how many of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, went before the Israelites when they passed over, ver. 10—14. which being done, the priests were ordered to come out of Jordan, when the waters returned to their place, ver. 15—18. The time when this miracle was wrought is obsesved, ver. 19. and an account is given of Joshua's pitching the twelve stones taken out of Jordan in Gilgal, and the use they were to be of in future time, ver. 20—24.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan,* &c.] As related ch. iii. 17. *that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying;* as follows.

Ver. 2. *Take you twelve men out of the people,* &c.]

[a] T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 21. 4.
[b] Maundrel, ut supra, p. 84. Ed. 7.
[c] Ib. p. 83.
[d] Travels, p. 346.
[e] Iliad. 21.

Joshua had before this ordered twelve men to be taken from among them, which seems to have been done of himself; and now he has a direction from God for it, and what to employ them in: *out of every tribe a man*: so that what they did was in the name of the several tribes, and as representing them.

Ver. 3. *And command you them, saying*, &c.] As follows: *take you hence out of the midst of Jordan*; so that they were obliged to go back into the midst of Jordan, having already passed over it, as appears from ver. 1. *out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm*; where being stones, they chose to stand upon them, and which were a firm standing for them; and which secured them from the slime and mud at the bottom of the river the waters left behind; though it is not absolutely necessary to understand it that they were to take, and did take, the stones from under their feet, but those that lay about the place where they stood: *twelve stones*; each man a stone; and, according to the Samaritan Chronicle[f], every man inscribed his name on the stone: *and ye shall carry them over with you*: from the place they took them up, to the place they should next stop at: *and leave them in the lodging-place where you shall lodge this night*; which was in the place afterwards called Gilgal, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 4. *Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had prepared of the children of Israel*, &c.] It may be for some other purpose, ch. iii. 12. but this was the destination of them eventually, and as by divine direction: *out of every tribe a man*; as he had before ordered, and was now directed to.

Ver. 5. *And Joshua said unto them*, &c.] The twelve men: *pass ye over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan*; that is, they were to go back to Jordan again, which they had passed over, and go into the midst of it, where were the priests bearing the ark; for it is not to be imagined that the ark went along with them, or followed them, they going before it; but they went where that was, just before it, from whence they were to take the stones, as next directed: *and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder*; by which it appears they were large stones they were to take, not what they could carry in their hands, but what they were obliged to take upon their shoulders: *according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel*; who had that day passed over Jordan, of which these stones were to be a memorial.

Ver. 6. *That this may be a sign among you*, &c.] A commemorative one: that *when your children ask* their fathers *in time to come*; or *to-morrow*[g]; and so in all time, or any time hereafter: *saying, what mean you by these stones?* what is the reason of setting them up, and in this place, and being just of such a number?

Ver. 7. *Then ye shall answer them*, &c.] By informing them of the design and use of them: *that the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord when it passed over Jordan*; the waters below from those that were above, which stood up on an heap; so that they were divided and separated from each other, and made dry land for a passage of the children of Israel; and this was done before, and in the presence of the ark of the covenant, to shew that is was owing to the power of God, of whose presence the ark was a symbol: *the waters of Jordan were cut off*; which is repeated for the confirmation of it, and that it might be taken notice of as a very marvellous event, and to be ascribed to the divine omnipotence and goodness: *and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever*; which, whenever seen and observed by them, would put them in mind of this wonderful appearance of God for them; and Jerom[h] speaks of them as if seen by Paula in his time, whose life and travels in those parts are written by him.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded*, &c.] That is, the twelve men taken out of the twelve tribes of Israel, and who were the representatives of them in this action: *and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel*; they took the exact number, and out of the very place Joshua was ordered to direct them to do: *and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged*; which, as Josephus says[i], was 50 furlongs from Jordan, which was above six miles; so far they carried these stones on their shoulders: *and laid them down there*; which afterwards were put in proper order by Joshua, or at least by his direction.

Ver. 9. *And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan*, &c.] Twelve other stones, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and so Jarchi; which he set one upon another, so that they might be seen above the water; or however the water of Jordan being clear, they might easily be discerned by those who either passed over the river, or walked by the side of it, where they were; and perhaps may be the very stones John the Baptist pointed at in Matt. iii. 9. since it was at Bethabara he was baptizing, supposed to be the very place of the passage of the children of Israel over Jordan, and had its name from thence, John i. 28. *in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood*; and which was done in commemoration of it: the words will bear to be read *under the station* of the feet of the priests; hence Jarchi fancies these were set, that their feet might not sink in the mud at the bottom of the river; but this, though here recorded, might be done by Joshua immediately after the priests were come out of Jordan, or as they were coming up: hence some think Joshua was the last that came up from it; but Abarbinel observes, that the word signifies *in the room* or *stead of*, as in Exod. xxi. 24. so that these stones were placed in the room and stead of the station of the priests, in the midst of the river, and in memory of it: *and they are there unto this day*; to the time of the writing of this book, which is no objection to Joshua being the writer of it, though it is by some made one; since it might be wrote by him, as doubtless it was, when such an observation could not be impertinent; and if what has been before observed is true, these stones were in the same place in the times of John the

[f] Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. p. 500, 502.
[g] מחר αυριον, Sept. cras, Pagninus, Montanus.

[h] Epitaph. Paulæ in tom. 1. Oper. fol. 59. K.
[i] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 4.

Baptist; and that they were in the order in which they were first set; for that they were in the waters of Jordan, there could scarce be any question of it. This was done to perpetuate the memory of this remarkable event: so Alexander the great set up twelve altars on the borders of India, by the river Oraxes, in commemoration of his exploits[k].

Ver. 10. *For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan,* &c.] Though on dry ground, the waters being divided: *until every thing was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua;* that is, until all the people had passed over Jordan, as the Lord had ordered Joshua, to encourage them unto, and go over with them, ch. i. 2. and which Moses, by divine direction, had given Joshua in charge to do, Deut. xxxi. 7. Kimchi interprets this of the setting up of the stones in Jordan, and the removal of the other to Gilgal, of which Moses said nothing to Joshua; and though it may be true of the former, that the priests stood in Jordan till that was done, which is not certain, yet not of the latter; for it is plain, and it is most reasonable to conclude, that the priests were come up from the midst of Jordan before Israel marched to Gilgal, or even began their march, see ver. 18, 20. and much less is this to be understood of the stones at Ebal, as others, and so referred to Deut. xxvii. 2. which was not done until after Ai was taken, ch. viii. 42. And it is not reasonable to imagine that the priests should continue in Jordan to that time; Abarbinel thinks it refers to the words in ch. i. 3. which had been spoken by the Lord to Joshua, and had been expressed by Moses, Deut. xi. 24, 25. and which he supposes were now repeated by Joshua, and the priests continued in their station until he had made an end of rehearsing them; the last clause relating to Moses is left out in the Septuagint version: *and the people hasted and passed over;* not stood in fear of the waters of the river returning upon them; rather through an eager desire of setting their feet on the land of Canaan, and it may be to relieve the priests from their station as soon as might be.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, when the people were clean passed over,* &c.] Every one of them, as in ch. iii. 17. and iv. 1. *that the ark of the Lord passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people:* that is, the priests bearing the ark came out of the midst of Jordan in the sight of all the people, who were on the banks of it, on the other side, where they had been stationed during the passage of the people; though this motion of them was not until they received an order for it, of which there is an after-mention. The Septuagint version reads, *and the stones before them;* see ver. 8.

Ver. 12. *And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh,* &c.] Who were settled on the other side Jordan, in the countries taken from Sihon and Og: *passed over armed before the children of Israel;* the rest of the tribes: *as Moses spake unto them;* or ordered them, and as they promised they would, Numb. xxxii. 17, 20, 21, 27, 29, 32.

Ver. 13. *About 40,000 prepared for war,* &c.] Accoutred with proper armour to defend themselves, and their brethren, and annoy their enemies: this is to be understood of such a number of the above-mentioned tribes; otherwise the number of all Israel that went over Jordan, even armed or fighting men, besides women and children, were 500,000 or more. Now though the number of men fit for war, of these tribes, were 130,000, who were all, according to the original agreement, under obligation to go with their brethren over Jordan into Canaan's land, and continue with them until it was subdued, and they had rest in it; yet Joshua took no more than about 40,000 of them, who we may suppose were select men, and fit for his purpose; the rest were left to look after their flocks, their families, and their lands: *these passed over before the Lord unto battle;* over Jordan, before the ark of the Lord, as that stood in Jordan, bore by the priests there, being ready to engage in battle whenever it was necessary: and they went on with their brethren *to the plains of Jericho;* to a place afterwards called Gilgal; see ver. 19. The Septuagint version is, to the city Jericho.

Ver. 14. *On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of Israel,* &c.] Made him great and honourable in their esteem, by doing what he foretold would be done, dividing the waters of Jordan, drying up the river to make a passage for them through it, as on dry land: *and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life:* had a reverend esteem of him, and affection for him, and yielded obedience to him all his days; see Exod. xiv. 31.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord spake unto Joshua,* &c.] When all the people had passed over Jordan: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 16. *Command the priests that bear the ark of the testimony,* &c.] In all places before, in this history, the ark is called the ark of the covenant, here the ark of the testimony, which signifies the same thing, the law; which was both the covenant between God and the people, and a testimony of his will unto them; the Septuagint version has both words: *that they come up out of Jordan;* where they stayed until all the people passed over, for the encouragement of them, and until they received this order.

Ver. 17. *Joshua therefore commanded the priests,* &c.] In obedience to the Lord, and sent them an order: *saying;* as follows: *come ye up out of Jordan;* from the midst of the river to the bank of it, which was properly an ascent.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, when the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord were come up out of the midst of Jordan,* &c.] According to the command of Joshua in the name of the Lord: and *the soles of the priests' feet were lift up upon the dry land;* and set upon it, on the bank of Jordan, and shores of the land of Canaan: *that the waters of Jordan returned unto their place;* those that came from above, and had stood on an heap, gradually came down into the channel, and those below that were cut off returned: *and flowed over all his banks, as they did before;* and usually did at this time of the year, see ch. iii. 15. so that there was no decrease or loss of the waters by their failing, and being cut off.

[k] Arrian. Expedit. Alex. l. 5. Curtius, l. 9. sect. 3.

Ver. 19. *And the people came up out of Jordan*, &c.] The channel of it, to the shore: *on the tenth day of the first month*; the month Nisan or Abib, which from the time of Israel's coming out of Egypt was appointed the first month of the year, Exod. xii. 2. on the 15th of which month they came out of Egypt, having kept the passover on the 14th at even; so that their coming out of Egypt, to their entrance into Canaan, was just 40 years, wanting five days. This tenth day was the day in which the passover was taken from the flock, and kept till the fourteenth, on which day the children of Israel kept their first passover in Canaan, in the plains of Jericho, ch. v. 10. *and encamped in Gilgal, in the east border of Jericho*; it has its name here by anticipation, for it was so named after this for a reason given, ch. v. 9. It was, according to Josephus [l], ten furlongs, or a mile and a quarter, from Jericho. Jerom says [m], there was shewn in his time a desert place two miles from Jericho, had in wonderful esteem by men of that country, which he suggests was this place; as it was had in great veneration, both by the worshippers of the true God, and by idolaters, for many ages.

Ver. 20. *And those twelve stones which they took out of Jordan*, &c.] The twelve men who were sent there for that purpose, and took them from thence, and brought them hither, ver. 3, 5, 8. *did Joshua pitch in Gilgal*: set them in rows, or one upon another, and made a pillar of them commemorative of their passage over Jordan into the land of Canaan: according to Josephus [n], he made an altar of these stones; and Ben Gersom is of opinion, that they were placed in the sanctuary by the ark, though not in it; which yet was the sentiment of Tertullian [o], but very improbable; since that ark was not capable of such a number of large stones; and it must be a very large ark or chest, if one could be supposed to be made on purpose for them; but it is most likely they were erected in form of a pillar or statue, in memory of this wonderful event, the passage of Israel over Jordan, see ver. 7. they may be considered as emblems of the twelve apostles of Christ, and their ministrations and writings; their number agrees, and so does the time of their appointment to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel, which was after the resurrection of Christ, typified by the passage of Joshua over Jordan, and out of it; the name of one of them, and he a principal one, was Peter or Cephas, which signifies a stone; and all of them in a spiritual sense were lively stones, chosen and selected from others, and called by grace, and were very probably most, if not all of them, baptized in this very place, Bethabara, from whence these stones were taken; and were like them unpolished, as to external qualifications, not having an education, and being illiterate, but wonderfully fitted by Christ for his service; and were not only pillars, as James, Cephas, and John, but in some sense foundation-stones; as they were the instruments of laying Christ ministerially, as the foundation of salvation, and of preaching the fundamental truths of the Gospel, in which they were constant and immovable; and their ministry and writings, their Gospels and epistles, are so many memorials of what Christ, our antitypical Joshua, has done for us in passing over Jordan's river, or through death; finishing thereby transgression and sin, obtaining peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation, opening the way to the heavenly Canaan, abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light.

Ver. 21. *And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying*, &c.] At the same time he set up the stones: *when your children shall ask their fathers*, &c. as in ver. 6. see the note there.

Ver. 22. *Then ye shall let your children know*, &c.] The meaning of the erection of these stones, acquaint them with the whole history, the meaning of which they are designed to perpetuate: *saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land*; and if they should ask how that could possiby be done, or if they did not, they were to inform them by what means it was brought about, as follows.

Ver. 23. *For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over*, &c.] As this is supposed to be said in future time, and to persons who were not upon the spot when this was done, and so entirely ignorant of the affair; it is not to be understood of them personally, but of the same people they were of, the people of Israel in former times, of their ancestors, and of them in them; the benefits of which they enjoyed by possessing the land of Canaan their fathers were at this time introduced into: *as the Lord your God did to the Red sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over*; for though the generation of men, for the most part, was dead, that passed through the Red sea; yet as Joshua himself, and Caleb and Eleazar, and it may be some others that were not among the murmurers, were still living, for whom that miracle was wrought, this way of speaking is very properly made use of; and especially when it is observed, that there were many of the present generation then young, which passed over, and even those unborn were in and represented by their ancestors, and who enjoyed the advantages of that wonderful mercy; so these two strange events are joined together, as instances of divine power and goodness, in Psal. cxiv. 3, 5.

Ver. 24. *That all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty*, &c.] Even almighty, and can do that which is marvellous and surprising, and above the power of nature to effect; things unsearchable and past finding out, which can't be expressed, or conceived how and by what means they are brought about; this the very Heathens would own and acknowledge when they should see these stones, and be told the meaning of them, or should hear of this amazing event: *that ye might fear the Lord your God for ever*; as the above-mentioned end was to be answered among the people of the earth by these stones, this among the people of Israel; who upon sight of them would call to mind the power and goodness of God, which would serve to keep an awe of his majesty on their mind, a due reverence of him and his greatness, and engage them to fear, serve, and worship

[l] Ut supra.
[m] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. M.
[n] Ut supra.
[o] Contr. Marcion. l. 4. c. 13.

him; who by such acts as these had abundantly shewed himself to be the only true and living God, and the covenant-God of them his people Israel; the Septuagint version is, "that ye may worship the Lord your "God in every work."

CHAP. V.

THE Canaanites being dispirited on the passage of the children of Israel through Jordan, ver. 1. Joshua is ordered to circumcise such of the people of Israel that were uncircumcised, ver. 2—9. in order to their eating of the passover, which was now to be kept, ver. 11. and they being now provided with corn sufficient, the manna ceased, ver. 11, 12. and there appeared to Joshua a divine Person, in an human form, to encourage and direct him what to do in the conquest of the land, and particularly Jericho, ver. 13—15.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites, which were on the side of Jordan westward,* &c.] On the side the Israelites were now on; and this is observed, to distinguish them from the other kings of the Amorites beyond Jordan, on the eastern side, who were already conquered by the Israelites, Sihon and Og, who seem to be a colony that went over from the Amorites in Canaan, and possessed themselves of that part of the land of Moab. These seem to be put for several others of the nations of the land not mentioned, who doubtless were as much dispirited as they; and they are the rather mentioned, because they were a principal nation, and a very powerful and warlike one, see Amos ii. 9. *and all the kings of the Canaanites which were by the sea:* the Mediterranean sea; the Septuagint version calls them the kings of Phœnicia; and that which was strictly and properly so lay on that coast, in which were the cities of Tyre and Sidon, though the whole land of Canaan was sometimes so called; unless this is to be understood, either of the dead sea, or of the sea of Galilee; of which Canaanites, see Numb. xiii. 29. however, be they the one or the other, or both, as most likely, when they *heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of Jordan from before the children of Israel, until we were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel;* they lost all their courage, and never recovered it any more; concluding it was all over with them, since such wonderful things were done for them by the Lord: the word *we* shews that the writer of this history was one that passed over Jordan, and who can be supposed but Joshua himself? this circumstance, I think, strongly corroborates that opinion.

Ver. 2. *At that time the Lord said unto Joshua,* &c.] When the people had passed over Jordan, and had pitched in Gilgal, and Joshua had set up the stones there; and particularly when the dread of them had seized the inhabitants of Canaan, and deprived them of all their courage; and so was a fit time for the execution of what is next ordered, and seems designed in the providence of God among other things particularly for that: *make them sharp knives;* not that Joshua was to make them himself, but to order them to be made; for a considerable number would be wanted for the use to be made of them: the Targum calls them sharp razors; and Ben Gersom says they were made of brass, more likely of iron or steel, which perhaps he means; but the Hebrew text is, *knives of rocks, flints* or *stones;* and so Maimonides[p] interprets the words, and as they are rendered in various versions[q]: with such an instrument Zipporah circumcised her son; and like them were the *samia testa*[r], with which the priests of the mother of the gods were castrated; and the *saxum acutum* of Ovid[s]; and such the Americans used in slaying beasts, and the Egyptians[t] in the dissecting of their dead bodies; and which the Talmudists allow of as lawful; and in the east the Jews to this day use knives of stone in circumcision[u]; see the note on Exod. iv. 25. *and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time:* not that circumcision was to be repeated on them that had been circumcised already, who had found out ways and means to draw over the foreskin again, as some in after-times did; or who had been imperfectly circumcised according to the rite enjoined by Abraham, which some Jewish writers say was not perfect; neither of which was the case. Kimchi, and so Ben Melech, interpret the word, *oftentimes,* frequently, one time after another; as if the sense was, Joshua was to circumcise them, or take care they were circumcised, some at one time, and some at another, until the whole was finished; but this is not what is meant, it refers to a former general circumcision; not to the circumcision, as first administered in Abraham's time, for there had been a multitude of instances of it since that time; but to the circumcision of the Israelites at, about, or quickly after their coming out of Egypt; either before their eating of their first passover, the night they went out of Egypt, as Jarchi[w]; or rather some time in the three-days' darkness of the Egyptians, as Dr. Lightfoot[x] thinks; or else when they were about Sinai, just before the celebration of the passover there, Numb. ix. 1, 2. from which time it had been neglected; not because unnecessary, whilst they were in the wilderness, to distinguish them from others, which was not the principal, at least not the only use of it; nor because forbidden the Israelites for their disobedience, murmurings, and rebellion, it not being probable that God should prohibit the observance of a command of his on that account; nor so much through criminal neglect, at least contempt of it, as because of their fre-

[p] Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 16.
[q] חרבות צרים μαχαιρας πετρινας, Sept. cultros lapideos, V. L. cultros petrarum, Munster, Montanus, Piscator.
[r] Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 12. Arnob. adv. Gentes, l. 5. p. 189.
[s] Fast. l. 4. ver. 237.
[t] Herod. Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 86.
[u] Vid. Pfeiffer. Dubia Vexata, cent. 2. loc. 46.
[w] So in Pirke Eliezer, c. 29.
[x] Works, vol. 1. p. 40.

quent journeying, and the inconvenience of performing it, being always uncertain, when they had pitched their tents, how long they should stay, and when they should remove, since this depended upon the taking up of the cloud; wherefore, unless they could have been sure of a continuance for a proper time, it was not safe to administer it; and now it was enjoined, partly because they were about to celebrate the passover, which required circumcision in all that partook of it, Exod. xii. 43, 44. and partly because they had now entered into the land of Canaan, which was given them in the covenant of circumcision, Gen. xvii. 8, 9, 10. wherefore it became them now to observe it, and as typical of spiritual circumcision, necessary to the heavenly Canaan, as well as to distinguish them from the uncircumcised Canaanites they were coming among; and they did not think themselves under obligation to observe it till they came to settle in that land, as some think, who hereby account for their long neglect of it.

Ver. 3. *And Joshua made him sharp knives, and circumcised the children of Israel*, &c.] Not that Joshua circumcised them himself, any more than he made the knives himself, but he ordered both to be done, and took care that they were done. And as any that had skill might make the knives, so might any circumcise; circumcision was not restrained to any order of men, not to the priests and Levites, but any might perform it; so that though the number to be circumcised was great, it might soon be finished: and this was done *at the hill of the foreskins*; as the place was afterward called from hence; these being heaped up one upon another, made a hill of them, as the Jews say [y], being covered with dust. This circumcision performed by Joshua, or his orders, was typical of the spiritual circumcision without hands, which those that believe in Jesus, the antitype of Joshua, partake of.

Ver. 4. *And this is the cause why Joshua did circumcise*, &c.] Or the reason of the command given him to circumcise the children of Israel at this time, namely, what follows: *all the people that came out of Egypt that* were *males*, even *all the men of war*; meaning such that were twenty years old, and upwards: *died in the wilderness, by the way, after they came out of Egypt*: not directly, but in a course of forty years, as they journeyed through the wilderness; this is to be understood with an exception of Joshua, Caleb, Eleazar, &c. but then there was a large number who were under twenty years of age, that came out of Egypt, and were now living.

Ver. 5. *Now all the people that came out were circumcised*, &c.] All that came out of Egypt, and males, were circumcised, whether under or above twenty years of age; for though it is possible all were circumcised before they came out of Egypt, which favours the opinion of Dr. Lightfoot, that they might be circumcised during the three-nights' darkness of the Egyptians, when they could take no advantage of it, as Levi and Simeon did of the Shechemites; and which seems more probable than that it should be on the night they came out of Egypt, when many must have been unfit for travelling, and seems preferable to that of their being circumcised at Mount Sinai, which was a year after their coming out of Egypt: *but all the people that were born in the wilderness by the way, as they came forth out of Egypt*, them *they had not circumcised*: the reasons of which neglect see in the note on ver. 2. The phrase, *by the way*, seems to point at the true reason of it, at least to countenance the reason there given, which was on account of their journey; that is, their stay at any place being uncertain and precarious; so the Jews say [z], because of the affliction or trouble of journeying, the Israelites did not circumcise their children. This is to be understood of all males only born in the wilderness, they only being the subjects of circumcision.

Ver. 6. *For the children of Israel walked forty years in the wilderness*, &c.] Wanting a few days, the round number is given: not forty-two, as the Septuagint version: *till all the people* that were *men of war, which came out of Egypt, were consumed*; all that were above twenty years of age, excepting Joshua and Caleb: *because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord*; but murmured against him, and against his servants, and particularly against Aaron, being the high-priest; and chiefly because of the report of the spies, and their murmurs then, which so incensed the Lord against them, that he threatened them with an entire consumption of their carcasses, and which accordingly was fulfilled, to which the following clause refers: *unto whom the Lord sware, that he would not shew them the land which the Lord sware unto their fathers that he would give us, a land that floweth with milk and honey*; see Numb. xiv. 23, 24.

Ver. 7. *And the children*, whom *he raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised*, &c.] Who were born to them in the wilderness, and succeeded them, some of which might be near forty years of age; as for those that were born before, of which there might be many now living, they had been circumcised already, but others were not: *for they were circumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way*; or whilst journeying the forty years in the wilderness; which, as before observed, seems to be the true reason of the omission of circumcision.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass, when they had done circumcising all the people*, &c.] Which seems as if it was done in one day, even on the same day they passed over Jordan, and came to Gilgal; though Bishop Usher [a] thinks it was the day following; and so the Jews [b] say it was on the eleventh of Nisan: *that they abode in their places in the camp till they were whole*: till the wound made by circumcision was healed; now as it was on the 10th day they passed over Jordan, and came to Gilgal, where they were circumcised, there were three entire days between that and the 14th, when they kept the passover; during which time they kept within their tents in the camp, being unfit to move from thence, for on the third day of circumcision they were usually sore, Gen. xxxiv. 25. but being well on the fourth, were able to attend the passover. As the providence of God greatly appeared in favour of Israel, by

[y] Pirke Eliezer ut supra. Jarchi in loc.
[z] Pirke Eliezer, ut supra.

[a] Annales Vet. Test. p. 38.
[b] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31.

causing a dread to fall on their enemies, that they durst not sally out of the city and attack them: so it shewed great faith in Joshua, and the Israelites, to administer circumcision at this time, just as they were landed in an enemy's country; and when the waters of Jordan were returned, and there was no going back, and if they could, as they were not in a condition to fight, so not to flee.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord said unto Joshua, &c.*] Out of the tabernacle: *this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you:* either the reproach of being reckoned of the same religion with the Egyptians, they now having observed the command of the Lord, and thereby declared themselves to be his servants and worshippers, which sense Ben Gersom mentions; or else the reproach with which the Egyptians reproached them, that they were brought out from them into the wilderness for evil, to be destroyed there, they now being safe arrived in the land of Canaan; which sense he seems to approve of, and so Abarbinel: or rather by it is meant the reproach of being bondmen, and slaves, as they were in Egypt, having now entered upon their inheritance, they as free men, the sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were heirs unto; and perhaps it was this sense of the phrase led Josephus[c] to give a wrong interpretation of the word *Gilgal*, which he says signifies *liberty;* and adds, "for, having passed "the river, they knew they were free from the Egyp- "tians, and from troubles in the wilderness;" though the more commonly received sense is, that this reproach is to be understood of uncircumcision, which was the reproach of the Egyptians, they at this time not using circumcision they afterwards did, when some of the nations thereabout used it, who descended, from Abraham, as the Midianites, Ishmaelites, Arabians, and Edomites: *wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal unto this day;* which signifies *rolling*[d]; so that when it is met with before, it is so called by anticipation.

Ver. 10. *And the children of Israel encamped in Gilgal, &c.*] Not after their circumcision, but before, and where they continued encamped during that, and until the passover had been kept by them: this was little more than a mile from Jericho, see the note on ch. iv. 19. *and kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at even;* exactly as it was ordered to be observed, and was observed when first kept, Exod. xii. 6. *in the plains of Jericho;* a proper place both for their encampment, and the celebration of the passover, and where very likely they met with lambs enough for their purpose, which belonged to the inhabitants of Jericho; or however being now got into the good land, they needed not, and were under no temptation of sparing their own: historians agree, as Strabo[e], Josephus[f], and others, that Jericho was seated in a plain.

Ver. 11. *And they did eat the old corn of the land, &c.*] That of the last year, as some versions[g], which agree with ours; in which they seem to follow the Jewish writers, who, as particularly Kimchi, Gersom, and Ben Melech, interpret it of the old corn, for this reason, because they might not eat of the new until the wave-sheaf was offered up, Lev. xxiii. 10, 11, 14. of which old corn they suppose the unleavened cakes were made, and was also parched corn, though that word the Septuagint version translates *new;* and indeed were it not for the above law, there does not seem to be any reason for rendering it old corn, only corn of the land, as the Septuagint does; and there is some difficulty how they should get at the old corn, which it may be supposed was laid up in the granaries, when Jericho was close shut up, and none went in or out; unless they met with it in some of the villages near at hand, or it was brought them by the traders in corn, of whom they bought it, or found it in some out-houses and barns without the city: *on the morrow after the passover;* which Kimchi and Ben Gersom say was on the 15th of Nisan, the passover being on the 14th: but if the morrow after the passover is the same with the morrow after the sabbath, Lev. xxiii. 11. that was the 16th of Nisan; and so Jarchi here says, this is the day of waving the sheaf, which was always done on the 16th: it is difficult to say which day is meant; if it was the 16th, then it may refer to what they ate on that day, after the sheaf was offered[h]; if it was the 15th, it seems necessary to understand it of the old corn; and such they must have to make their unleavened cakes of, both for the passover on the 14th, and the Chagigah, or feast of unleavened bread, which began the 15th, as it follows: *unleavened bread, and parched corn in the self-same day:* unleavened bread, for the uses before mentioned, they were obliged to, and parched corn for their pleasure; but new corn, as the Septuagint render it, was expressly forbidden before the waving of the sheaf, Lev. xxiii. 14. and therefore old corn seems to be meant; this was just forty years to a day from their coming out of Egypt.

Ver. 12. *And the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the old corn of the land, &c.*] There being now no further need of it; miracles are not wrought or continued when unnecessary; for the ceasing of the manna shews, that it was not a common but an extraordinary provision. The ceasing of the manna, which was a type of Christ, may signify the cessation of Gospel ordinances, in which Christ is held forth as food for his people. These are to continue till all the spiritual Israel of God have passed over the river Jordan, or death, even until the end of the world, and then to cease, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. 1 Cor. xi. 26. Rev. xxi. 22, 23. the eating of the old corn may signify the glories of the future state, the joys and happiness of the heavenly Canaan, prepared for those that love the Lord from the foundation of the world; it may denote those ancient things the saints will feed and live upon to all eternity; the eternal love of the three divine Persons, electing grace, the ancient settlements of grace, the everlasting covenant of grace, and the blessings of it; the glorious Mediator of it, that was set up from everlasting, and the grace given to them in him

[c] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 11.
[d] A גלל volvit, devolvit, Buxtorf.
[e] Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.
[f] De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 2.

[g] מעבור de frumento præteriti anni, Montanus; sic, Munster, Tigurine version, Vatablus.
[h] So in Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31.

before the world began: *neither had the children of Israel manna any more;* having no more need of it, as the saints in heaven will stand in no more need of Gospel ordinances: *but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year;* the increase of the land, not only of the fields, but of the vineyards and oliveyards, which they had neither sown nor planted, see Deut. vi. 10, 11. which may denote the plenty and variety of the joys of heaven, and glories of the future state; the various fruits which grow on Christ, the tree of life, brought forth every month, or continually; all which will be enjoyed through the free grace of God, without the works or merits of men.

Ver. 13. *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho,* &c.] Or *in Jericho*[a]; not in the city itself, but in the border of it, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; or on the side of it, as Jarchi; on one side of which he was reconnoitring by himself, very probably seeking for a proper place where to make his first attack; or if he could find out some avenue to the city, whereby he could enter more easily; or it may be he was meditating a scheme how to subdue the city; and it is very likely praying to God that he would direct him, and succeed him. Ben Gersom interprets it, his thoughts were in Jericho; and both he, and Abarbinel, suppose, that what follows was in a vision of prophecy, that it seemed to him that he was in Jericho, and saw a person, as after described, and was only a dream or night-vision; but, no doubt, whether this was in the day or in the night, which is not certain, it was a real sight that Joshua had, or one really appeared to him as a man, as after related: *that he lifted up his eyes, and looked:* his eyes before looked downwards, as the eyes of a person in deep study and meditation usually do: *and, behold, there stood a man over-against him;* not a mere man, nor a created angel in an human form, but a divine Person in such a form, even the son of God, who frequently appeared in this manner to the patriarchs; as is clear from the worship paid unto him by Joshua, by his calling him Lord, and owning himself to be his servant; and by the ground on which he stood, being holy through his presence, as well as by his title, the Captain of the Lord's host. Jarchi says, this is Michael, which, if understood of Michael the increated angel, the head of all principality and power, is right, who is always meant by Michael, whenever he is spoken of in Scripture; and so this is interpreted by the ancient Jews[b] of the Angel the Redeemer: *with his sword drawn in his hand;* who sometimes is said to have a two-edged one come out of his mouth, and sometimes one girt on his thigh, and here with one drawn out of the scabbard, to justify the war with the Canaanites, and to encourage Joshua to proceed in it. His sword has been drawn against his enemies, and those of his people from the beginning, ever since the fall of man, when enmity commenced between him and the seed of the serpent; it appeared drawn when here on earth combating with all our spiritual enemies, and will never be put up until all enemies are put under his feet: *and Joshua went with him;* which shewed great courage, presence of mind, and magnanimity: *and said unto him, art thou for us, or for our adversaries?* by his appearing in this warlike posture, he concluded it was to take on one side or the other, either on the side of Israel, or of the Canaanites; and he seemed to suspect that it was on the side of the latter, and that he was one that was come to defy the armies of Israel, as Goliah afterwards did, and to engage in a single combat with Joshua their general, and so decide the war; in which, had this been the case, Joshua was ready to join issue with him.

Ver. 14. *And he said, nay,* &c.] Not for or on the side of their adversaries was he come, as Joshua suspected at the first sight of him; the Septuagint version is, *he said unto him,* taking לא for לו, as it sometimes is: *but as Captain of the host of the Lord am I now come;* of the host of the Lord both in heaven and in earth, angels and men, and particularly of the people of Israel, called the armies and host of the Lord, Exod. vii. 4. and xii. 41. so that though Joshua was general, Christ was Generalissimo; and so Joshua understood him, and therefore shewed a readiness to do whatsoever he should command him; the spiritual Israel of God, the church, is in a militant state, and has many enemies to combat with, sin, Satan, the world, and false teachers; Christ is their Leader and Commander, the Captain of their salvation, and has all necessary qualifications of wisdom, courage, and might, for such an office; see Isa. lv. 4. and xi. 2, 3. Heb. ii. 10. Rev. xix. 11, 14: *and Joshua fell on his face to the earth;* in reverence of this divine and illustrious Person, whom he perceived to be what he was: *and did worship;* gave him religious worship and adoration, which had he been a created angel he would not have given to him, nor would such an one have received it, Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 8, 9: *and said unto him, what saith my Lord unto his servant?* that is, what commands had he to lay upon him, and he was ready to execute them? he was heartily willing to be subject to him as the chief general of the Israelitish forces, and to consider himself, and behave, as an officer under him, and to obey all orders that should be given.

Ver. 15. *And the Captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua,* &c.] As a trial and proof of his obedience to him: *loose thy shoe from off thy foot;* which is to be understood literally, as when the like was commanded Moses at Horeb, Exod. iii. 5. though some interpret it figuratively, as Abarbinel, "remove from thee such "thoughts that thou shalt take this city by strength:" *for the place whereon thou standest is holy;* because of the presence of this Person, and as long as he was there, though afterwards was as another place; the Jewish commentator, last mentioned, thinks this intimates that the city, and all in it (and all round about it), should be *cherem*, devoted, and so be holy to the Lord: *and Joshua did so;* loosed his shoe from his foot, in obedience to the Captain of the Lord's host, thereby giving proof of his readiness, willingness, and alacrity to serve under him.

[a] ביריחו ἐν Ἰεριχῳ, Sept. in Jericho, Pagninus, Montanus.

[b] Bereshit Rabba, sect. 97. fol. 84. 2. Nachmanides in loc.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

CHAP. VI.

IN this chapter Joshua is assured, though Jericho was closely shut up, it should be delivered into his hands, ver. 1, 2. and he is directed, with the army, to go round the city six days together, seven priests bearing the ark of the Lord, with seven trumpets sounding; and on the seventh day to go round it seven times in like manner, when its wall should fall, ver. 3, 4, 5. which order Joshua communicated to the priests, and to the people, and which was put into execution by them, with some other instructions he gave them, ver. 6—16. particularly that the city, and all in it, should be devoted to the Lord, and none spared, but Rahab and her family, ver. 17—19. the success was according to the assurance given by the Lord, ver. 20. when all in the city were destroyed, and that was burnt with fire, and the gold, silver, brass, and iron, brought into the house of the Lord, and Rahab and her father's household were saved alive, ver. 21—25. and the chapter is closed with an adjuration of Joshua, cursing the man that should rebuild the city; and with this observation, that the fame of Joshua upon this was spread abroad throughout the country, ver. 26, 27.

Ver. 1. *Now Jericho was straitly shut up, because of the children of Israel,* &c.] Or *it shut up, or was shutting, and was shut up* [s]; that is, the king and the inhabitants shut it up within; the Targum says with iron doors, and bars of brass, and it was blocked up without by the children of Israel: *none went out and none came in*; none of their forces went out to make a sally on the Israelites, or to seek to make peace with them; nor any of their neighbours went in to them, to carry them any provision, or to assist them, or to be sheltered by them, not being able to do it because of the camp of Israel.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said unto Joshua,* &c.] The same divine Person called in the preceding chapter the Captain of the Lord's host, now with him, and who gave him the following orders, instructions, and assurances: *see, I have given into thy hand Jericho, and the king thereof*: which might be concluded from the fear that was fallen upon the inhabitants of the city and their king, and from their shutting themselves up so closely, not daring to come out against Israel; and especially from this declaration and promise of the Lord; and which should be done in such a manner, as that it would clearly appear to be of the Lord, and not men: and *the mighty men of valour*; the military men, the soldiers, or army that were under the command of the king of Jericho; or, as Kimchi reads it, *though* mighty men, yet they should not be able to defend the city, or hinder its falling into their hands; for what were they to the mighty God of Israel?

Ver. 3. *And ye shall compass the city, all ye men of war,* &c.] Joshua their chief commander under the Lord, and all that were able to make war, even all above twenty years of age; these were to compass the city, not in the form of a siege, but by a procession around it: *and go round about the city once*; or one time, for the first once in a day, and no more: *thus shalt thou do six days*; one after another; that is, go round it, once every day, for such a time. This order was given, according to the Jews [t], the twenty-second of Nisan, after the feast of unleavened bread was over.

Ver. 4. *And seven priests shall bear before the ark seven trumpets of rams' horns,* &c.] The ark was to be taken up and carried by priests round the city. Ben Gersom observes, that this was to direct the Israelites to keep and do according to all that was written in it; that is, in the law, which was contained in it; but no doubt the design of it was to shew, that the subduing of Jericho, and the miracle that would be wrought, were owing to the power and presence of God, of which the ark was a symbol: and before it were to go seven other priests, with trumpets in their hands; which, according to our version, were made of rams' horns: in the original it is *jobelim*, or *jubilee* trumpets. Some think it means only such as they were to use in the year of jubilee; so Abarbinel and others, as Masius and Noldius [u]; that they had their name from Jubal, the first inventor of musical instruments, Gen. iv. 21. for rams' horns are objected to because they are solid, and not hollow; as if they could not be bored and made hollow, and fit for such a purpose. The Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, interpret the word by rams' horns, as we do [w]; and observe what R. Akiba said, "when (says he) I went into Arabia, I heard them call "a ram *jobel*: and the trumpet itself is called *jobel*, "because made of a ram's horn [x]:" *and the seventh day ye shall compass the city seven times*; in the same manner as on the other days: *and the priests shall blow with the trumpets*: which they were to do, and did every day.

Ver. 5. *And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long* blast *with the ram's horn,* &c.] Continue blowing, and protracting, and drawing out the sound a long time; which they did only on the seventh day; on the other days it was but a short blast they made at a time; so that this being different, it would be a good sign and token to the people to do what they are next directed to: *and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet*; drawn out to a great length: *all the people shall shout with a great shout*; at once, as when an onset is made in battle, or a victory is obtained: *and the wall of the city shall fall down flat*; or *under itself* [y]; which Jarchi interprets, in its place; that is, where it stood, and he swallowed up in it: so the Targum, "and it shall be swallowed up under it;" yet so that somewhat of it should be seen, as an attestation and proof of the miracle, as Kimchi; who says, "it means "that it should be swallowed up in its place under the

[s] סגרת ומסגרת claudens & clausa, Montanus, Vatablus.
[t] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31.
[u] P. 160. No. 1315.
[w] So Joseph. Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 5.

[x] Kimchi, Sepher Shorash. rad. יבל R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 39. 2.
[y] תחתיה sub se, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; subtus se, Tigurine version; subter se, Masius.

" earth, and a little of it appear above ground for a " memorial of the miracle:" *and the people shall ascend up, every man straight before him;* just as they were in the order of procession; for the wall being fallen everywhere, they would have no occasion to make up to one certain place, as when a breach is only made in one place, and the besiegers are obliged to go so many a breast to enter at it; but in this case they might go straight up from whence they were, and enter the city without any obstruction and difficulty.

Ver. 6. *And Joshua the son of Nun called the priests,* &c.] Not the Levites and Kohathites, whose business it was in common to bear the ark, but upon this occasion the priests; not all of them, but as many as were sufficient for the purpose: *and said unto them, take up the ark of the covenant;* by putting the staves into the rings of it, and so carry it, Exod. xxv. 14. see Numb. vii. 9. *and let seven priests bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord;* see the note on ver. 4.

Ver. 7. *And he said unto the people, pass on, and compass the city,* &c.] The women and children, the young men under twenty years of age, the unarmed part of the camp, as distinguished from the armed men: *and let him that is armed pass on before the ark of the Lord;* to guard the ark, protect the priests, and defend the people, should any sally be made by the enemy upon them. These seem to design all the males that were above twenty years of age able to bear arms, and fit for war; though some restrain it to the 40,000 of the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, ch. i. 14. and iv. 13.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass, when Joshua had spoken to the people,* &c.] Both armed and unarmed; had finished the orders and directions he gave them before mentioned: *that the seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns passed on before the Lord;* in his sight, and by his direction, and at his command given by Joshua, and before the ark, the symbol of his presence: *and blew with the trumpets;* a short blast as they went along; this they did on every of the six days: *and the ark of the covenant of the Lord followed them;* being borne by priests, ver. 6.

Ver. 9. *And the armed men went before the priests that blew with the trumpets,* &c.] Whom Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel, interpret of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; that is, as many of them as Joshua took with him over Jordan; though rather all the armed men in the camp are meant; at least along with those mentioned went the standards of Judah and Ephraim: *and the rere-ward came after the ark;* because the tribe of Dan was the rere-ward in journeying, Numb. ii. 31. hence the Targum paraphrases the words, " and the tribe of the house of Dan " went after the ark;" and so both Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it: but rather the body of the people unarmed are designed; at least these were brought up by the standard of Dan; or otherwise no place in this procession is appointed for them, whose business it was to make the great shout on the seventh day with the rest: the priests *going on and blowing with the trumpets;* the word *priests* is not in the text, but is rightly supplied; for, as Kimchi and Abarbinel observe, this is not said of the rere-ward, but of the priests, for they only bore and blew the trumpets; and so the Targum reads, " the priests going on, &c."

Ver. 10. *And Joshua had commanded the people,* &c.] When he gave them their orders to pass on, and compass the city, ver. 7. *saying, ye shall not shout;* that is, on any of the six days as they went round the city, only on the seventh; for this being a sign of victory, it was not to be made until the day when it should be obtained; otherwise, had they shouted, and nothing followed on it, it would have exposed them to the contempt of the inhabitants of Jericho, and would have put them in spirit, and hardened them: *nor make any noise with your voice;* as laughing, singing, &c. This profound silence was to be observed, to add to the gravity and solemnity of the procession; and on account of the surprising miracle that was to be wrought, and particularly because of the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence, borne before them; and when God in his providence was about to speak in so awful a manner, and to do such a surprising work, it was very fit and decent that they should be silent before him; see Hab. ii. 20. Zech. ii. 13. *neither shall any word proceed out of your mouth;* no conversation or discourse were to be had with each other as they passed along; for this is only to be restrained to the procession; when they returned, and in their camp, they might talk and discourse as at other times: *until the day I bid you shout, then shall ye shout;* for as yet it seems Joshua had not told them how many days they should surround the city in this manner, and on what day the shout should be made by them.

Ver. 11. *So the ark of the Lord compassed the city,* &c.] Being bore by the priests, who carried it round the city; it may as well be rendered and interpreted as it is by Kimchi, " he, *i. e.* Joshua, caused the ark of " the Lord to compass the city;" that is, he gave orders to the priests to take it up, and go round with it on the first day: *going about it once;* on that day, and no more; keeping at such a distance, as to be out of the reach of stones or arrows cast from the walls of the city: *and they came into the camp, and lodged in the camp;* the night following; not only the priests that bare the ark, but those that blew with the trumpets, and all the armed men, and the people.

Ver. 12. *And Joshua rose early in the morning,* &c.] Of the second day; to take care of, direct, and prepare every thing for another procession on that day; so active and diligent was he to do the will and work of God, exactly and punctually: *and the priests took up the ark of the Lord;* and carried it about as they had done the day before.

Ver. 13. *And seven priests bearing seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark of the Lord,* &c.] See the note on ver. 4. *went on continually;* or, *going they went*[b]: kept on going, making no stop at all, until they had compassed the city: *and blew with the trumpets;* as they went along: *and the armed men went before them, but the rere-ward came after the ark of the Lord;* which the Targum paraphrases as on ver. 9. the priests *going on, and blowing with the trumpets;* see the note on ver. 9.

[b] הלכים הלוך euntes eundo, Montanus.

Ver. 14. *And the second day they compassed the city once*, &c.] Went round it one time only, as on the first: *and returned into the camp*: which was at Gilgal, ch. v. 10. *so they did six days*: four more after these two successively, and proceeded in the same order and manner as on those two days.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass on the seventh day*, &c.] Which Jarchi says was the sabbath-day, and which is a common notion of the Jews[c]; but whether it was or not, it is certain that one of these seven days must be a sabbath, in which the several things ordered were done, and the procession made. Kimchi observes, that their Rabbins say this was the sabbath-day; and he adds, what is pretty remarkable, "though they slew and "burnt on the sabbath-day, he that commanded the "sabbath commanded to profane the sabbath in the "subduing of Jericho;" with which compare what our Lord says, Matt. xii. 3—8. *that they rose early, about the dawning of the day*: having seven times the work to do they did on the other six days: *and compassed the city after the same manner seven times*; after the same manner as they had done the six preceding days: *only on that day they compassed the city seven times*; whereas on the other days they only went round it once, which distinguished this day from the rest.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass at the seventh time*, &c.] Of their going round the city on the seventh day: and at the seventh time, *when the priests blew with the trumpets*; as they did every time they compassed the city: *Joshua said unto the people, shout*; both those that were armed, and those that were not; they were to make one grand and general shout at once, as when victory is obtained, or is sure, and so it follows: *for the Lord hath given you the city*; intimating that it would be presently delivered into their hands, and in such manner, that it would plainly shew it was of the Lord, and no other.

Ver. 17. *And the city shall be accursed*, &c.] Or, be a *cherem*, devoted to the Lord, as it follows: even *it and all that are therein, to the Lord*; the city and the inhabitants of it should be devoted to destruction, and the riches and spoil of it dedicated to sacred uses, and not become the property of the Israelites; for as this was the first city in the land of Canaan that was conquered, it was fit the first-fruits of the conquest should be the Lord's, as an acknowledgment of his gift of the land unto them, and that the conquest of it was owing to him; though it might be some mortification to the Israelites, and a trial of their faith and obedience, that the first and so fine a city should not become their habitation, but be utterly destroyed, and not to be built more; and all the riches of it either consumed, or converted to other uses, and not their own. This Joshua thought fit to declare to the Israelites, before the taking of the city, that they might know what they had to do. The Jewish doctors generally suppose that Joshua ordered this of himself, of his own accord and will; but Kimchi is of opinion that the Lord gave him this order, which is most probable, yea, certain from ch. vii. 11. *only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all that are with her in the house*; she and her father's family, as she requested, and the spies promised; here the Targum calls her, as elsewhere, Rahab the innkeeper or victualler; and so in ver. 22, 25. *because she hid the messengers that we sent*; and so preserved them from being taken by the messengers of the king of Jericho, who were sent in pursuit of them. These though sent only by Joshua, without the knowledge of the people, yet it being on their account, and for their good, and by him as their head and governor, is ascribed to them also. This fact of Rahab's is observed by him as a reason for sparing her, and those that were with her, when all the rest would be put to the sword; and is mentioned as an instance of her faith, and of the evidence of it, Heb. xi. 30. James ii. 25.

Ver. 18. *And you in any wise keep* yourselves *from the accursed thing*, &c.] From laying hold on, secreting, and enjoying as their own, what was devoted to another use: *lest ye make* yourselves *accursed*; or a *cherem*, also devoted to destruction: *when ye take of the accursed thing*; any part of it, be it what it will, gold or any other metal, or raiment, and the like: *and make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it*; for being done secretly, and not known who did it, the whole body of the people would be chargeable with it, and suffer on account of it, unless discovered and punished, and as more fully appears by an after-instance.

Ver. 19. *But all the silver and gold, and vessels of brass and iron*, are *consecrated to the Lord*, &c.] Or rather, *for all the silver*, &c. as the particle here used sometimes signifies, and is so rendered[d]: these several metals, and whatsoever were made of them, were set apart for the Lord, and dedicated to sacred uses, and might not be converted to any other, unless what were upon their idols, which were to be burnt with fire, Deut. vii. 25. *they shall come into the treasury of the Lord*; be brought into the tabernacle, as Kimchi and Abarbinel interpret it, into some apartment there destined for such service, and which is clear from ver. 24. the same where the offering of the officers was brought after the battle with Midian, Numb. xxxi. 54.

Ver. 20. *So the people shouted when* the priests *blew with the trumpets*, &c.] As Joshua had charged them, ver. 16. *and it came to pass, when the people heard the sound of the trumpet, and the people shouted with a great shout*: that is, gave a loud shout, on hearing the long blast of the trumpets blown by the priests the seventh time, as they were no doubt directed by Joshua, agreeably to the order given to him; see ver. 5, 16. *that the wall fell down flat*; the wall of the city of Jericho, as the Lord said it should, ver. 5. see the note there: *so that the people went up into the city, every man straight before him, and they took the city*; they went up to it from the plain, where they were, and entered it without any difficulty, the wall being fallen, and that everywhere: so that they went directly from the place where they were, and went in right over-against them, into every quarter and part of the city, and seized on it, and possessed it at once. Various things may be observed concerning this surprising event; as that it was supernatural, and cannot be ascribed to second causes, there

[c] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 212. 2.

[d] וכל nam totum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

being nothing in the procession round the city, the blowing of the trumpets, or shout of the people, that could occasion the wall to fall; and that no defences or fortifications are any thing against God, when it is his will a city should be taken, with whom nothing is impossible; and that sometimes unlikely means are appointed and used by him for doing great things, that the power may appear to be his by which they are done; and that faith sticks at nothing, when it has the word and promise of God to encourage and support it; and that God does every thing in his own time and way. The falling of the walls of Jericho may be considered as an emblem of the fall of Babylon; these two cities agree, as in their greatness, so in their wickedness, Rev. xvii. 4. and xviii. 2. and as Jericho stood in the way of Israel's inheriting the land, being a frontier and barrier town; so mystical Babylon stands in the way of the kingdom of Christ, and its spread in the world, and particularly of the conversion of the Jews, Rev. xi. 14, 15. and xix. 1—8. The fall of Jericho was very sudden, and when not expected by the inhabitants of it; and so will be the fall of Babylon, Rev. xviii. 7, 8, 9. and as Jericho fell at the sound of rams' horns, the destruction of antichrist, or mystical Babylon, will be through the preaching of the Gospel, Rev. xiv. 6, 7, 8, 9. and as the one was by the sounding of seven priests, at the seventh time of sounding, on the seventh day; so the ruin of antichrist will be at the seventh angel's sounding the seventh trumpet, and pouring out the seventh vial, Rev. x. 7. and xi. 15. and xvi. 17, 19. and as at the destruction of the one, so of the other, but few saved from the common calamity, Rev. xviii. 4, 5. and both never to be raised up and built again, Rev. xviii. 21. And it may be considered also as an emblem of the subjection of the Gentile world to Christ; which, like Jericho, or the moon, as some observe the name signifies, is very changeable; and as that city, and the inhabitants of it, an enemy to God, and his people, and yet made subject by the ministry of his word; as particularly it will be when the kingdoms of this world shall become his: or rather it may be an emblem of the subjection of particular souls to Christ, and the means thereof; who are like the walled city of Jericho in their unregenerate state, their hearts hard, stubborn, and inflexible, and enmity to God; are self-confident, vainly puffed up in their fleshly minds, and shut up in unbelief, and kept and guarded by Satan, the strong man armed; but all these strong holds of sin and Satan are brought down and demolished in conversion; and that by means of the sound of the Gospel, which is as despicable with men as the sound of the rams' horns were to the inhabitants of Jericho; but is a jubilee and joyful sound, a sound of love, grace, mercy, and salvation; and being accompanied with the spirit and grace of God, is the power of God unto salvation; and mighty through him for the removing the hardness of men's hearts, and bringing them into subjection and obedience to Christ.

Ver. 21. *And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city*, &c.] All the inhabitants of it, by the direction of Joshua, and according to the order of the Lord, Deut. vii. 1, 2. being guilty of capital crimes, which deserved death, as idolatry, incest, &c. *both men and women, young and old*; neither sex nor age were spared: *and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword*; in which creatures chiefly lay the substance of the eastern people; see Job i. 3.

Ver. 22. *But Joshua had said unto the two men that had spied out the country*, &c.] Whom he had sent on that errand, ch. ii. 1. and what follows he had said unto them before the people entered into the city, and perhaps before the walls of it fell; and indeed from ver. 16, 17, it appears to have been said at the time he gave the people orders to shout: *go into the harlot's house*; he does not mention her name, but they full well knew who he meant: *and bring out thence the woman, and all that she hath*; not so much her substance, as her father's household, she had got together there, that they might be saved, as had been promised her: as *ye sware unto her*; so that this order was partly on account of her kindness to them, ver. 17. and partly on account of the oath which they had taken, and which Joshua would have inviolably kept.

Ver. 23. *And the young men that were spies went in, and brought out Rahab*, &c.] Not only went into the city, but into Rahab's house, which they knew again by the scarlet thread hung out at the window of it. But here a difficulty occurs, how they could be said to go into her house, when it was built on the town-wall, ch. ii. 15. and that was now fallen down flat. Abarbinel thinks that when the spies went round the city, they saw the scarlet thread in the window of her house, and set their eyes on the house, or wistly observed it; and marked it in such manner, that after the fall of the wall they went to the place of her house, and brought her out, though her house was broken down, and no wall standing: but then they could not be said properly to go into her house, and bring her out. Kimchi is of opinion that not all the wall of the city fell, but what was over-against the camp of Israel; and that the house of Rahab was on the wall on the other side: but it seems by the account of it as if the whole wall fell; and the apostle says, *the walls of Jericho fell down*, Heb. xi. 30. all of them; and so the Septuagint version of ver. 20. "and the whole wall, or "all the wall fell round about:" and I see not why it may not be thought that the whole wall fell, excepting that small part of it on which Rahab's house stood; and that standing alone would make the miracle the greater, and shew the divine approbation of saving Rahab and her family: besides, if the wall sunk down in its place all around into the earth, as the Jews understand the phrase; see the note on ver. 5. the house might continue on it firm and unmoved, going down with it to the surface of the earth, where it may be supposed the top of the wall was; and so they might go in and take her out, and preserve her from being destroyed with the rest of the inhabitants; and not only her, but *her father and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had*; all other relations that were with her, particularly her sisters, which are in her request, ch. ii. 13. with all that appertained to her brethren and sisters, which is there expressed also: *and they brought out all her kindred*; before mentioned, or if there were any other of her relations she had taken into her house for safety; or *all her families*[c], for her

[c] כל משפחותיה omnes familias ejus, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

father's household might be branched out into divers families, and become numerous, and so be an emblem of the number of Gentile sinners saved by Christ the antitype of Joshua: *and left them without the camp of Israel*: until they became proselytes, and embraced the religion of Israel, as Kimchi remarks. However, being Gentiles, some external rites and ceremonies were to be performed upon them, as well as a declaration at least of their renouncing idolatry was required of them, before they could be admitted into the camp of Israel; and which was required even of a proselyte of the gate, or of one that was only a sojourner among them.

Ver. 24. *And they burnt the city with fire, and all that was therein*, &c.] As Babylon the great, of which this city was an emblem, as has been observed on ver. 20. will be burnt with fire also, Rev. xviii. 8. *only the silver and the gold, and the vessels of brass and iron, they put into the treasury of the house of the Lord*: see the note on ver. 19.

Ver. 25. *And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive*, &c.] From perishing by the sword, as the rest of the inhabitants did. Kimchi says, some interpret it of his giving her food, and an inheritance by which she might live; and Josephus[f] intimates the same: he says, he gave her fields, and had her in great honour and esteem; and it is the notion of some Jewish writers, that he took her to wife, and that this is meant by saving her alive; which sense Kimchi disapproves of, as being foreign; besides, it was not Joshua, but Salmon, a prince in Israel, that married her, Matt. i. 5. *and her father's household, and all she had*: that is, he saved alive all her relations, and it may be her cattle, if she had any; and those of her kindred also, as their sheep, oxen, and asses, when those of others were killed, ver. 21. Some also understand this of intermarriages of principal persons in Israel with some of her father's family; but it only signifies that their lives were spared, when the whole city was destroyed with the edge of the sword: *and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day*: which may be meant either personally of Rahab, who was living and dwelt in the land of Canaan, when this history was written; and serves to strengthen the opinion that Joshua was the writer of it, and to explain the meaning of the phrase *unto this day*, elsewhere used in this book; and to remove any objection from it against his being the author of it; or else of her dwelling there in her posterity, and so she might dwell in it unto the times of the Messiah, who sprang from her, Matt. i. 5. *because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho*: this was the reason of her and her father's family being saved alive; see the note on ver. 17.

Ver. 26. *And Joshua adjured them at that time*, &c.] When the city was burnt and spoiled; not that he adjured the people individually, or one by one, which was not very practicable, but in a general way: *saying, cursed be the man before the Lord*; let him be cursed by him with the curses written in the book of the law; and let him be driven from him, from his presence, as Cain was: *that riseth up, and buildeth this city Jericho*; that rises up in future time, and rebuilds it; for it can't be thought that after such an adjuration any one would start up quickly, and rebuild it: *he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it*: that is, whilst he is laying, or as soon as he has laid the foundation of the city, his eldest son should die; and as he went on with the building, other sons of his, if he had more than two, should be taken away by death likewise; and by the time he has finished it, signified by setting up the gates of it, both for ornament and security, his youngest and last son should die also; so that his whole posterity should be taken away, as a curse of God upon him for rebuilding the city; which was fulfilled in Hiel the Bethelite, the rebuilder of this city in the times of Ahab, 5 or 600 years after this adjuration was made, when either it was forgotten, or, however, little regarded: Maimonides observes[g], that this was made that the miracle might remain in perpetual memory, for whoever should see the wall sunk in the earth, it would be plain and clear to him that this was not the form of a building demolished, but that it fell by a miracle; and yet this city became a very flourishing one in after-times; we soon hear of the school of the prophets in it, 2 Kings ii. 5. here, Strabo[h] says, was a royal palace, where, as Josephus[i] relates, Herod died, and who speaks of an amphitheatre and hippodrome in it; in this city sometimes the sanhedrim sat, and a great number of the stationary priests dwelt, even half a station, twelve thousand of them, all which is observed by Dr. Lightfoot[k]; our Lord himself honoured it with his presence, Luke xix. 1.

Ver. 27. *So the Lord was with Joshua*, &c.] Counselling and directing him what to do, prospering and succeeding him in all that he engaged; the Targum is, "the Word of the Lord was for the help of Joshua;" the essential Word, Christ the Son of God, called the Captain of the Lord's host, ch. v. 14, 15. and who continued with him speaking to him and giving him orders, ch. vi. 2. *and his fame was noised throughout all the country*: for his wisdom and courage, for the wonderful things done for him and by him, and the great success that attended him, through the power and presence of God with him; which struck terror into the inhabitants of the land, and made his conquest of it the more easy.

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[f] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 7.
[g] Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 50.
[h] Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.
[i] Antiqu. l. 17. c. 8. sect. 1. 2.
[k] Chorograph. Cent. c. 47.

CHAP. VII.

FOR the trespass of Achan the children of Israel were smitten and put to flight by the men of Ai, ver. 1—5. which gave him and the elders of the people great concern, both for Israel and for the name of the Lord, which was expressed by Joshua in prayer to God, ver. 6—9. when the Lord informed him of the reason of it, and gave him directions for finding out the guilty person, and for the punishment of him, ver. 10—15. which directions Joshua followed, and the person was found out, who being urged to a confession made one, ver. 16—21. upon which he and all he had, with the things he had taken, were burnt with fire, ver. 22—26.

Ver. 1. *But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing,* &c.] Or concerning it, with respect to it, by taking part of what was devoted to another use, and forbidden theirs: this was done, not by the whole body of the people, only by one of them; but it not being discovered who it was, it was imputed to the whole, on whom it lay to find out the guilty person and punish him, or else the whole must suffer for it: this chapter begins with a *but*, and draws a vail over the fame and glory of Joshua, observed in the last verse of the preceding chapter: *for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing;* of what was devoted to the Lord and to sacred uses; this he had taken to himself out of the spoil of the city of Jericho, for his own use, contrary to the command of God: his descent is particularly described, that it might be known of what family and tribe he was; and it is traced up to Zerah, who was a son of Judah, Gen. xxxviii. 30. *and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel;* because of the sin of Achan.

Ver. 2. *And Joshua sent men from Jericho to Ai,* &c.] Which was the next city of importance, though not so large as Jericho, and was, as the Jews say[l], three miles distant from it; Abarbinel says[m] four miles, and so Bunting[n]; Jerom[o] says, that in his times very few ruins of it appeared, only the place was shewn where it stood: *which is beside Beth-aven;* a name by which Beth-el in after-times was called, Hos. iv. 15. but here it is manifestly a distinct place from it; just hard-by or near to this place, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, was the city of Ai: Beth-aven seems to have been the suburbs of it, or however was very near unto it: *on the east side of Beth-el;* near to which Abraham built an altar, as did Jacob also, and which in former times was called Luz, Gen. xii. 8. and xxxv. 1, 3, 6, 7. and was well known in later ages by the name of Beth-el; it was reckoned about a mile from Ai: the situation of this city is so particularly described to distinguish it from another city of this name, Ai of the Ammonites, Jer. xlix. 3. and is here called *that Ai,* that well-known Ai, as Kimchi observes: *and spake unto them;* at the time he sent them, when he gave them their orders to go thither: *saying, go up and view the country;* the mountainous part of it; for they were now in a plain, where Jericho was seated; and observe what place was most proper to attack next, and which the best way of coming at it: *and the men went up and viewed Ai;* what a sort of a city it was, how large, and what its fortifications, and what avenues were to it: by this it appears that Ai was built upon a hill, or at least was higher than Jericho and its plains; and with this agrees what a traveller says[p] of it, it is a village full of large ruins (in this he differs from Jerom), and from hence are seen the valley of Jericho, the dead sea, Gilgal, and Mount Quarantania, and many other places towards the east.

Ver. 3. *And they returned unto Joshua, and said unto him, let not all the people go up,* &c.] After they had reconnoitred the place, they came back to their general, and gave it as their opinion, that there was no need for the whole army to go up against the city: *but let about two or three thousand men go up and smite Ai;* such a number they judged were sufficient to take it: and *make not all the people to labour thither;* carrying their tents, bearing their armour, and going up hill: *for they are but few;* the inhabitants of Ai, men and women making but 12,000; ch. viii. 25.

Ver. 4. *So there went up thither of the people about 3,000 men,* &c.] Joshua detached from the army the largest number proposed, that there might be strength enough to take the place; and those he sent under proper officers to Ai, who went up to the very gate of the city, as appears from the following verse: *and they fled before the men of Ai;* for upon their appearing at the gate of their city, they came out with all their forces against them, and as soon as they did, the children of Israel durst not face them, but without engaging with them fled at once: God having forsaken them, their courage failed, the dread of their enemies falling on them.

Ver. 5. *And the men of Ai smote of them about 36 men,* &c.] In the pursuit of them, which were but few, but a sufficient rebuke of Providence; their loss was but small, but their shame and disgrace great: *for they chased them from before the gate;* the gate of the city of Ai: *even unto Shebarim;* not that there was a place of this name before, but it was so called from hence, because there they were broken, as Kimchi observes; and the Targum and Jarchi render it, "until "they were broken," their lines broken, not being able to retreat in order, but were scattered, and fled to their camp as they could: Gussetius[q] thinks it was the name of a place, but not so called for the above

[l] Shemoth Rabba, sect. 32. fol. 135. 2.
[m] In Josh. xx. fol. 34. 1.
[n] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 93.
[o] De loc. Heb. fol. 87. E.
[p] Baumgarten. Peregrinatio, l. 2. c. 1. p. 105.
[q] Comment. Ebr. p. 923.

reason, but because there lay broken pieces of the rock scattered about: *and smote them in the going down*; the hill from Ai; *Morad*, rendered *going down*, may be taken for the proper name of a place, and which, Kimchi says, was a place before Ai, in which there was a declivity and descent, and in that place they smote them when they fled: *wherefore the hearts of the people melted, and became as water*: that is, the whole body of the people, when this little army returned defeated, their spirits failed them, their courage was lost, their nerves were loosed, and they became languid, faint, and feeble; not that their loss was so great, but that they perceived God had forsaken them, and what the issue of this would be they dreaded.

Ver. 6. *And Joshua rent his clothes*, &c.] As was usual in those ancient times, on hearing bad news, and as expressive of grief and trouble[r]; see Gen. xxxvii. 29. 34. Job i. 20. *and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord, until the eventide*; in a posture of adoration and prayer, in which he continued till even; how long that was cannot be said, since the time is not mentioned when the army returned from Ai; very probably it was some time in the afternoon: this was done before the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence, not in the most holy place, where that usually was, and into which Joshua might not enter, but in the tabernacle of the great court, over-against where the ark was: *he and the elders of Israel*; either the elders of the people in the several tribes, or rather the seventy elders, which were the sanhedrim or council, and which attended Joshua, and assisted him as such; *and put dust upon their heads*; another rite or ceremony used in times of mourning and distress, and that very anciently, before Joshua's time and after, see Job ii. 12. 1 Sam. iv. 12. 2 Sam. i. 2. and among various nations; so when Achilles bewailed the death of Patroclus, he is represented by Homer[s] taking with both his hands the black earth, and pouring it on his head; so Aristippus among the Athenians is said[t] to sprinkle dust on his head in token of mourning on a certain account.

Ver. 7. *And Joshua said, alas! O Lord God*, &c.] What a miserable and distressed condition are we in! have pity and compassion on us; who could have thought it, that this would have been our case? *wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us*; who are mentioned either for the whole people of the land of Canaan; or rather, because the people of Israel were now in that part of the country which they inhabited: these words discover much weakness, diffidence, and distrust, and bear some likeness to the murmurs of the children of Israel in the wilderness; but not proceeding from that malignity of spirit theirs did, but from a concern for the good of the people and the glory of God, they are not resented by him: *would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan*; in which he seems to cast the blame, not upon the Lord but upon himself and the people, who were not content to dwell on the other side, but were desirous of a larger and better country; and now ruin seemed to be the consequent of that covetous disposition and discontented mind.

Ver. 8. *O Lord, what shall I say*, &c.] For the comfort and encouragement of the people of Israel, in vindication of thy power and faithfulness, and against the charge of weakness in thyself, unfaithfulness to thy promises, and unkindness to thy people, brought by our enemies: *when Israel hath turned their backs before their enemies?* or after they have done it; what is to be said now, this being the case? he speaks as a man confounded, and at the utmost loss how to account for the power, the providence, and promises of God.

Ver. 9. *For the Canaanites*, &c.] Those that dwell on the east and on the west of the land, see ch. xi. 3. who were one of the seven nations: *and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear* of it; of this defeat; not only the Amorites, among whom they now were, and the Canaanites before mentioned, but the Hittites, the Hivites, the Perizzites, and the Jebusites; *and shall environ us round*; come with all their forces from all parts of the land, and surround us, so that there will be no escaping for us: *and cut off our name from the earth*; utterly destroy us, that we shall be no more a nation and people, and the name of an Israelite no more be heard of, see Psal. lxxxiii. 4. *and what wilt thou do unto thy great name?* this, though mentioned last, was uppermost in the heart of Joshua, and was reserved by him as his strongest argument with God to appear for them and save them; since his own glory, the glory of his perfections, his wisdom, goodness, power, truth, and faithfulness, was so much concerned in their salvation.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord said unto Joshua, get thee up*, &c.] From the ground where he lay prostrate, with his face to it: this he said, not as refusing his supplication to him, but rather as encouraging and strengthening him; though chiefly he said this in order to instruct him, and that he might prepare for what he was to do: *wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?* in this manner, so distressed and dejected; or *for this thing*, as the Targum, for this defeat of the army; something else is to be done besides prayer and supplication.

Ver. 11. *Israel hath sinned*, &c.] For though one only had committed the sin, others might have known of it, and connived at it; however, there was sin committed among them, and it must be discovered, the guilt charged, and punishment inflicted: *and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them*; not the law given on Mount Sinai, called the covenant, though in general that was now broken, inasmuch as they then promised to hear and obey all that the Lord should say unto them, Exod. xxiv. 7. but it particularly means the command given, ch. v. 18. that they should take nothing of that which was devoted to the Lord, and thereby make the camp of Israel a curse, and trouble it; and which shews that that was not a command given by Joshua of himself, but what he had from the Lord: *for they have even taken of the accursed thing*; somewhat of that which was devoted to sacred uses: *and have also stolen*; taken it away, not

[r] Tum pius Æneas, &c. Virgil. Æneid. l. 5. prope finem.

[s] Ἀμφοτέρῃσιν τε χερσιν, &c. Iliad. 18. ver. 23. Vid. Odyss. 24. Sparsitque cinis, &c. Seneca, Troad. Act. 1. Chorus.

[t] Heliodor. Æthiop. l. 1. c. 12.

openly, but by stealth, as being conscious they ought not to have done what they did, and so sinned both against God and their own consciences: *and dissembled* also; or *lied*[u]: pretended they had not taken any of the accursed thing, when they had; and it is probable that the people in general, the several tribes, families, and houses, were examined by proper officers, whether they had taken any of the spoil, or no, to themselves, and they all denied they had, and he that had taken it among the rest; and perhaps was particularly asked the question, which he answered in the negative: *and they have put it even amongst their own stuff*: their household stuff, mixed them with their own goods that they might not be known; or put them *in their own vessels*[w], for their own use and service.

Ver. 12. *Therefore the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies*, &c.] Being forsaken of God for the sin committed among them: but *turned their backs before their enemies*: had not courage to face them, but fled as soon as they appeared: *because they were accursed*; of God for the accursed thing that had been taken, as was threatened would be their case, should they take any of it; ch. v. 18. *neither will I be with you any more, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you*; that is, until they had put to death the person who had taken of the accursed thing, and made himself thereby accursed, and even all the camp of Israel; till this was done, the Lord would not be with them to protect and defend them, and give them success against their enemies.

Ver. 13. *Up, sanctify the people*, &c.] The word *up* not only signifies getting up from the ground on which he lay, but to bestir himself, and to be active in what he would now be enjoined and directed to do, and in the first place to *sanctify the people*, that is, by giving them orders to do it themselves: *and say, sanctify yourselves against to-morrow*; either by some ceremonial ablutions, or by the performance of moral duties, as prayer, repentance, and good works; or rather, they were to *prepare* themselves, as the Targum and Kimchi interpret it, to get ready against the morrow, and expect to be thoroughly searched, in order to find out the person who had taken the accursed thing: *for thus saith the Lord God of Israel*, there is *an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel*: an accursed person, who had taken of what was devoted to the Lord for his own use, and so accursed: *thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you*; by putting him to death.

Ver. 14. *In the morning therefore ye shall be brought according to your tribes*, &c.] One or more of every tribe, according to the number of them, were to be brought the next morning before Joshua and the elders of Israel, the sanhedrim and council of the nation, and very probably the tabernacle, where they assembled for this purpose: *and it shall be, that the tribe which the Lord taketh*; how a tribe and so a family or household were taken is differently understood; what some of the Jewish writers say deserves no regard, as the detention of persons by the ark, or of the dulness of the stones in the Urim and Thummim: it seems best to understand the whole affair as done by casting lots[x]; so Josephus[y] and Ben Gersom; and they might in this way be said to be taken by the Lord, because the disposition of the lot is by him, Prov. xvi. 33. now it is said, that the tribe that should be taken, as Judah was, from what follows, *shall come according to the families*; that is, the families in that tribe, meaning the heads of them, as Kimchi well observes; these were to come to the place where the lots were cast: *and the family which the Lord shall take shall come by households*; on whatsoever family in the tribe the lot should fall, the heads of households in that family should appear and have lots cast on them: *and the household which the Lord shall take shall come man by man*; that household that should be taken by lot, the men thereof, the heads of the house, should come each of them and have lots cast on them, that the particular man that sinned might be discovered.

Ver. 15. *And it shall be*, that *he that is taken with the accursed thing shall be burnt with fire*, &c.] He that is taken by lot, and the accursed thing found with him, this should be the death, burning, one of the four capital punishments with the Jews: this was ordered in this case, because the city of Jericho, accursed or devoted, was burnt with fire, ch. v. 24. *he and all that he hath*: the particulars of which are enumerated, ver. 24. *because he hath transgressed the covenant of the Lord*; see the note on ver. 11. *and because he hath wrought folly in Israel*; as all sin and every transgression of the law is, and was the cause of Israel's turning their backs on their enemies; which, as Abarbinel says, was folly, and made the people of Israel look foolish, mean, and contemptible: the word has also the signification of a dead carcass, and may possibly have respect to the 36 men whose death he was the occasion of, and therefore justly ought to die himself.

Ver. 16. *So Joshua rose up early in the morning*, &c.] Which shewed his readiness and diligence to obey the command of God; and as there was much work to do, it required that he should rise early: *and brought Israel by their tribes*; before the Lord, at the tabernacle, where he and the high-priest and elders attended; each tribe was thither brought by their representatives: *and the tribe of Judah was taken*: either his stone in the breast-plate of the high-priest looked dull, as some say, or rather the lot being cast fell on that tribe.

Ver. 17. *And he brought the family of Judah*, &c.] That is, the tribe of Judah, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it[z]; or rather, the several families in that tribe, even the heads of them: *and he took the family of the Zarhites*; which descended from Zerah the son of Judah; that was taken by lot: *and he brought the family of the Zarhites man by man*; and cast lots on them: *and Zabdi was taken*; that part of the family of the Zarhites which sprung from Zabdi a son of Zerah.

Ver. 18. *And he brought his household man by man*, &c.] The household of Zabdi, the heads of each house therein: *and Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, was*

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[u] וכחשו mentiti sunt, Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[w] בכליהם in vasis suis, Montanus.
[x] Pirke Eliezer, c. 38. Samaritan. Chronic. apud Hottinger. Smegm. Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 505. Jarchi in loc.
[y] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 10.
[z] So R. Sol. Ohel Moed, fol. 94. 2.

taken: the lot fell upon him, and he was laid hold on, and detained.

Ver. 19. *And Joshua said unto Achan, my son,* &c.] Treating him in a very humane, affectionate, and respectable manner, though so great a criminal, being a subject of his, and of the same religion and nation: *give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel*; by acknowledging his omniscience, justice, power, truth, and faithfulness, as in his promises so in his threatenings: *and make confession unto him*; of the sin he had been guilty of; this Joshua might urge, partly for his own good, who might more reasonably expect the forgiveness of his sin: so it is said in the Misnah[a], whoever confesses has a part in the world to come, for so we find concerning Achan, Josh. vii. 19. and partly for the glory of God, this being the instance in which he is directed to give it to him; and partly on account of others, particularly the tribe, family, and household to whom he belonged, who after all might not be satisfied thoroughly that he was guilty, unless he had confessed it: according to Maimonides[b], this was but a temporary law on which Achan was put to death; for, he says, our law condemns no man to death on his own confession, nor on the prophecy of a prophet, who says that he committed such a fact; and it was not on his confession, but by the order of God, determining the affair by lot, that he was put to death: the confession Joshua directs to was not what was made to man, but to God, that is, of the evil of it, and as committed against God, though the fact itself was to be owned before man, as follows: *and tell me now what thou hast done, hide it not from me*; what were the particular things he had taken; the lot shewed he had taken something, but what that was, as yet was unknown, and where it was; and this Joshua desires him he would inform him of and satisfy him about, and without any reserve openly declare the truth.

Ver. 20. *And Achan answered Joshua, and said,* &c.] He made a free and open confession of his sin: *indeed I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel*; against him who had been so good to Israel in many instances, and particularly in delivering Jericho into their hands in so extraordinary a manner; against a law of his, respecting the spoil of that city, which sin was the more aggravated thereby; and that he had committed the sin he was taken for and charged with, he owns was a true and real fact: *and thus and thus have I done*: such and such things have I taken, and in the manner as follows.

Ver. 21. *When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment,* &c.] One, as the Targum adds, for no more was taken; a garment made of Babylonish wool, as Jarchi; or a valuable garment made in Babylon, called *Shinar*, for that is the word in the text, so Kimchi and Abarbinel; and Babylonian garments were in great esteem in other nations: Pliny says[c] Babylon was famous for garments interwoven with pictures of divers colours, and which gave name to them; and Plutarch[d] relates, that Cato in his great modesty, and being an enemy to luxury, having a Babylonish garment that came to him by inheritance, ordered it immediately to be sold: the Vulgate Latin version calls it a scarlet robe; and in some Jewish writings[e] it is interpreted, a garment of Babylonian purple, as if it only respected the colour; and purple and scarlet are sometimes promiscuously used and put for the same, see Matt. xxvii. 28. Mark. xv. 17. and were the colour worn by kings: and Josephus here calls it a royal garment, wholly interwoven with gold[f]; and some have thought it to be the garment of the king of Jericho, which is not unlikely; however, it is much more probable than that Jericho was subject to the king of Babylon, and that he had palaces in Jericho, and when he came thither was clothed with this robe, so Jarchi; as is elsewhere said[g] by others, that he had a deputy who resided in Jericho, who sent dates to the king of Babylon, and the king sent him gifts, among which was a garment of Shinar or Babylon: *and 200 shekels of silver*; which, if coined money, was near 25 pounds: *and a wedge of gold of 50 shekels weight*; or a *tongue of gold*[h]; a plate of gold in the shape of a tongue, as Kimchi and Abarbinel; a piece of unwrought gold which weighed 50 shekels, and worth of our money about 75 pounds, according to Brererwood[i]: where he saw these, and from whence he took them, is not said; according to some Jewish writers, these belonged to one of their idols; it is said[k], he saw the Teraphim and the silver they offered before it, and the garment which was spread before it, and the tongue or wedge of gold in its mouth; and he desired them in his heart, and went and took them, and hid them in the midst of his tent: and the Samaritan Chronicle[l] makes him confess that he went into a temple in Jericho and found the above things there: and Masius conjectures that the wedge of gold was a little golden sword, with which the men of Jericho had armed their god, since an ancient poet[m] calls a little sword a little tongue: *then I coveted them, and took them*; he is very particular in the account, and gradually proceeds in relating the temptation he was under, and the prevalence of it; it began with his eyes, which were catched with the goodliness of the garments, and the riches he saw; these affected his heart and stirred up covetous desires, which influenced and directed his hands to take them: *and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent*: Josephus[n] says, he dug a deep hole or ditch in his tent, and put them there, that is, the Babylonish garment and the wedge of gold; which, as Ben Gersom gathers from ver. 23, was wrapped up and hid within the garment; which is not improbable, since otherwise no account is given of that: *and the silver under it*; the 200 shekels of silver lay under the garment in which was the wedge of gold, and so it lay under them both.

Ver. 22. *So Joshua sent messengers,* &c.] Directly to Achan's tent, to see if it was as he had said, and to

[a] Sanhedrin, c. 6. sect. 2.
[b] Pirush in ib. & Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 18. sect. 6.
[c] Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 48.
[d] In Vita Catonis.
[e] Bereshit Rabba, sect. 85. fol. 75. 2.
[f] Ut supra.
[g] Bereshit Rabba, ib.

[h] לשון זהב linguam auream, Montanus, Tigurine version, Masius; lingulam auream, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[i] De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 5.
[k] Pirke Eliezer, ut supra.
[l] Apud Hottinger, ut supra.
[m] Naevius apud A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 10. c. 25.
[n] Ut supra.

bring the things with them: *and they ran unto the tent:* either for joy that the iniquity was discovered, as Kimchi; or that none of the tribe of Judah or of Achan's family or relations should get there before them, and take them from thence and belie the lot; so Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and Abarbinel: but, no doubt, it is remarked, to shew the readiness and diligence of the messengers to obey the order of Joshua: *and, behold, it was hid in his tent, and the silver under it;* as Achan had said.

Ver. 23. *And they took them out of the midst of the tent,* &c.] Out of the place, hole, or pit in which they were hid: *and brought them to Joshua and to the children of Israel;* to Joshua as the chief ruler, and to the elders and heads of the tribes assembled together: *and laid them out before the Lord;* or *poured them out*[o]; the golden wedge, out of the garment in which it was wrapped, and the 200 shekels of silver found under it: it seems as if these were poured or laid out separately upon the ground before the tabernacle, where the ark of the Lord was, they belonging to the spoils which were devoted to him; as well as hereby they were plainly seen by the Israelites, that these were the very things which Achan had confessed.

Ver. 24. *And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah,* &c.] Joshua and all Israel are mentioned, to shew the perfect agreement between Joshua and the heads of the people in this affair of Achan, and in the nature and manner of his punishment: *and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold:* which, though devoted to sacred uses, yet having been converted to another's use, and made his property, was not to be employed in the service of the sanctuary, but to be burnt with him: *and his sons and his daughters;* who, according to Ben Gersom, Abarbinel, and Abendana, were not brought forth to be put to death, only to be spectators of the sentence of judgment, and the execution of it, that they might keep themselves from such evil things; though, as Achan may be supposed to be a man in years, being but the fourth generation from Judah; his sons and daughters were grown up in all probability, and might be accessories in this affair; and so, as some Jewish writers remark, were worthy of death, because they saw and knew what was done, and were silent and did not declare it[p]; and it seems by what is said, ch. xxii. 20. that they died as well as Achan, since it is there said, *that man perished not alone in his iniquity;* though it may be interpreted of his substance, his cattle, perishing with him; and indeed from ver. 25 it seems as if none were stoned but himself, that is, of his family; no mention is made of his wife, who, if he had any, as Kimchi observes, knew nothing of the matter, it being hid from her: *and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep;* in which lay his substance, as that of the eastern people generally did: *and his tent, and all that he had;* the tent he and his family dwelt in, with all the household goods in it: *and they brought them unto the valley of Achor;* so called by anticipation here; for it had its name from the trouble Achan gave to Israel, and with which he was troubled himself: some render it, *they brought them up*[q]; and as it is more proper to descend into a valley than to go up to it, it is thought there was a mountain between the camp of Israel and this valley, so Kimchi and Ben Melech; see Hos. ii. 15.

Ver. 25. *And Joshua said, why hast thou troubled us?* &c.] Been the occasion of so much trouble to us, by committing this sin: *the Lord shall trouble thee this day;* by the destruction of him and all that belonged to him: this is said to shew that his punishment was of God, and according to his will: in the Misnah[r] an emphasis is laid on the phrase *this day*, and it is observed, "this day thou shalt be troubled, but thou "shalt not be troubled in the world to come;" suggesting that though temporal punishment was inflicted on him, yet his iniquity was forgiven, and he would be saved with an everlasting salvation; and as it may be hoped from the ingenuous confession that he made, that he had true repentance for it, and forgiveness of it: *and all Israel stoned him with stones;* hence some gather, that only Achan himself suffered death, and not his sons and daughters: *and burnt them with fire after they had stoned them with stones;* which the Jewish commentators understand of his oxen, asses, and sheep; so Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and Abarbinel; likewise his tent, and household goods, the Babylonish garment, gold and silver, were burnt, and he himself also, for that is the express order, ver. 15. the Jews say, as particularly Jarchi observes, that he was stoned because he profaned the sabbath, it being on the sabbath-day that Jericho was taken, and stoning was the punishment of the sabbath-breaker, and he was burnt on the account of the accursed thing; so Abendana.

Ver. 26. *And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day,* &c.] That is, at the place where he suffered, or where they laid his ashes, they heaped up a pile of stones over him, as a monument whereby it might be known hereafter where he was executed and was buried; and which pile continued to the writing of this history: such sort of funeral monuments were usual with the Heathens[s] also as well as with the Jews, see ch. viii. 29. 2 Sam. xviii. 17. *so the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger;* or the effects of it ceased; the outward face of things was altered, the dealings of God in his providence with Israel were changed; though, properly speaking, there is no change in God, nor such affections and passions in him as in man: *wherefore the name of the place was called the valley of Achor unto this day;* from the trouble Achan met with, and the people of Israel on his account, see ver. 24. and so it was called in the days of Isaiah and Hosea, Isa. lxv. 10. Hos. ii. 15. and where it is prophesied of as what should be in time to come: according to Bunting[t], it was 12 miles from Jerusalem; Jerom[u] says it was at the north of Jericho, but Lamy[w], following Bonfrerius, places it to the south; see ch. xv. 7.

[o] ויציקום fundentes, Munster; fuderunt, Piscator.
[p] Pirke Eliezer, ut supra, Kimchi in loc.
[q] יעלו ascendere fecerunt, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, Vatablus.
[r] Sanhedrin ut supra.

[s] Vid. Pausan. Arcadica, sive, l. 8. p. 477. & Phocica, sive, l. 10. p. 616, 617.
[t] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 99.
[u] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. B.
[w] Apparat. Geograph. p. 61.

CHAP. VIII.

JOSHUA is encouraged to go up and take Ai, and is directed what method to make use of, ver. 1, 2. accordingly he set an ambush on the west side of it, and he and the rest of the army went up before it, ver. 3—13. which, when the king of Ai saw, he and all his forces came out against them, and the Israelites making a feint as if they were beaten, drew on the men of Ai to pursue them, upon which the ambush arose and entered the city and set fire to it, ver. 14—19. the smoke of which being observed by Joshua and Israel, they turned back upon the pursuers, and the ambush sallying out of the city behind them, made an entire destruction of them, then slew all the inhabitants, took the spoil, burnt the city, and hanged the king of it, ver. 20—29. after this Joshua built an altar at Ebal, wrote the law on stones, and read the blessings and curses in it before all Israel, ver. 30—35.

Ver. 1. *And the Lord said unto Joshua*, &c.] Immediately after the execution of Achan, the fierceness of his anger being turned away: *fear not, neither be thou dismayed*; on account of the defeat of his troops he had sent to take Ai: *take all the people of war with thee*; all above 20 years of age, which, with the 40,000 of the tribes on the other side Jordan he brought over with him, must make an army of 600,000 men; these Joshua was to take with him, not so much to animate and encourage him, or to terrify the enemy, nor because such a number was necessary for the reduction of Ai, which was but a small city; but that all might have a part in the spoil and plunder of it, which they were denied at Jericho, and chiefly to draw all the men out of the city, seeing such a numerous host approaching: *and arise, go up to Ai*; which lay high, and Joshua being now in the plains of Jericho, see the note on ch. vii. 2. *see, I have given into thy hand the king of Ai, and his people, and his city, and his land*: this city, though a small one, had a king over it, as most cities in the land of Canaan had; the number of his people in it were 12,000, and his land were the fields about it; all which were given to Joshua by the Lord, and were as sure as if he had them already in his hand.

Ver. 2. *And thou shalt do to Ai and her king as thou didst to Jericho and her king*, &c.] Burn the one and slay the other: *only the spoil thereof, and the cattle thereof, shall ye take for a prey unto yourselves*; which they were not allowed to do at Jericho: *lay thee an ambush for the city behind it*; at the west side of it: some have called in question the lawfulness of the ambush, but, as this was appointed by the Lord, there is no room for it.

Ver. 3. *So Joshua arose, and all the people of war, to go up against Ai*, &c.] As the Lord had commanded him: *and Joshua chose out 30,000 mighty men of valour*; out of all the men of war; these were a select company, picked men, not the whole army, as some have thought, for he was ordered to take all the people of war, as he did: *and sent them away by night*; from the main army, that they might pass the city and get behind it undiscovered, for they were sent for an ambush; and of these some were to take the city and be left in it to burn it, and some to smite the men of Ai, as Abarbinel notes.

Ver. 4. *And he commanded them, saying*, &c.] At the time he sent them away; *behold, ye shall lie in wait against the city, even behind the city*; that is, on the west side of it, ver. 9. *go not very far from the city, but be ye all ready*; to enter into it, as soon as the forces are drawn out eastward to meet the army of Israel.

Ver. 5. *And I and all the people that are with me will approach unto the city*, &c.] That is, Joshua with the main body of the army would march up to the city the next morning, in order to draw out the inhabitants of it to fight them: *and it shall come to pass, when they come out against us, as at the first*; as they had done before, when the 3,000 were sent against them, ch. vii. 4, 5. *that we will flee before them*; as the 3,000 did, which would animate them to pursue them with the greater eagerness, and to a distance from their city.

Ver. 6. *For they will come out after us*, &c.] Of which there could be no doubt, when they should see them run from them: *till we have drawn them from the city*; some distance from it, that they could not return soon enough to save it from the ambush, or prevent their entrance into it, and firing it: *for they will say, they will flee before us, as at the first*; they run away as they did before, and let us pursue them and smite them as we did then: *therefore we will flee before them*; to draw them out of the city, and make your way easy to get into it.

Ver. 7. *Then ye shall rise up from the ambush*, &c.] When they should see a signal made, that in ver. 18, 19. and when their watch, they might set in a proper place, should see Israel flee, and the men of Ai at a distance from their city, pursuing, and give notice of it to the ambush: *and seize upon the city*; enter into it, and take possession of it, its fortresses, and secure its passes: *for the Lord your God will deliver it into your hand*; Joshua expresses himself with great confidence, having the promise of God, and relying on it.

Ver. 8. *And it shall be, when ye have taken the city*, &c.] Entered it and become masters of it: that *ye shall set the city on fire*; not the whole city, only some out-houses of it, to make a smoke which might be seen both by Israel and the men of Ai, for different purposes; for the spoil of the city was first to be taken before it was utterly burnt with fire: *according to the commandment of the Lord shall ye do*; plunder the city, destroy the inhabitants of it, and then burn it: *see I have commanded you*; delivered the command of the Lord unto them, and therefore were left without excuse, and could not plead ignorance; besides, he was their general, and he expected his orders to be obeyed, as they ought to have been.

Ver. 9. *Joshua therefore sent them forth*, &c.] The 30,000 chosen men: *and they went to lie in ambush*; as they were ordered: *and abode between Beth-el and Ai*,

on the west side of Ai; for as Ai was on the east of Beth-el, ch. vii. 2. Beth-el must be on the west of Ai, as Jarchi notes: *but Joshua lodged that night among the people;* the main body of the army, to direct them in the affair of war, how they should behave the next day, when they came to fight; and to inspire them with courage and confidence, that they might not be afraid, because of their having been smitten before by this people, so Ben Gersom: or rather that he and they might be ready in the morning to march towards Ai, as Jarchi and Kimchi.

Ver. 10. *And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and numbered the people,* &c.] To see if there were any wanting, and to put them in proper order for their march: *and went up, he and the elders of Israel, before the people to Ai:* these elders were either the seventy elders who went with Joshua as council to him; or it may be rather they were inferior officers, who went at the head of their respective corps under them.

Ver. 11. *And all the people,* even the people *of war that were with him, and went up, and drew nigh,* &c.] To the city of Ai: *and came before the city;* as if they intended to besiege it, storm it, or force an entrance into it: *and pitched on the north side of Ai:* which was judged fittest for the purpose: *now* there was *a valley between them and Ai:* which the Rabbins call the valley of Halacah, as Jarchi says; so that they were upon a hill, at least on rising ground, and might the more easily be seen by the inhabitants of Ai, whom they wanted to draw out of their city.

Ver. 12. *And he took about 5,000 men, and set them to lie in ambush,* &c.] This was another ambush, as both Jarchi and Kimchi observe; and the latter adds, perhaps he set them nearer the city than the former; though some are of opinion that these are the same ambush spoken of, whose number is here given, being set on the same side of the city; and they suppose that Joshua had with him but 30,000 men in all, 5,000 of which he sent to lie in ambush, and the other 25,000 remained with him; but it seems clear that all the men of war were to be taken, and were taken by them, and that out of them 30,000 were sent by him to lie in wait at first, and now 5,000 more: *between Beth-el and Ai, on the west side of the city;* and though they were on the same side of the city with the first and larger ambush, yet, as Abarbinel observes, they might be set nearer the city and to the army; and he supposes the first ambush was to take the city, and the second little ambush, as he calls it, was placed, that when the men of the city came out, they might make a noise and a stir, and skirmish with them, that so they might not come upon the camp suddenly.

Ver. 13. *And when they had set the people,* &c.] In battle array, as in 1 Kings xx. 12. that is, Joshua and the officers of the army: even *all the host that* was *on the north of the city;* where Joshua and the main army were: *and the liers in wait on the west of the city;* both the first and second ambush; when all were prepared and got ready by their several officers, to act the part they were to do: *Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley;* according to Ben Gersom, to see whether the guards or sentinels which were placed there were awake or asleep, lest the men of Ai should come suddenly upon them and smite them; but perhaps it might be to pray and meditate.

Ver. 14. *And it came to pass, when the king of Ai saw it,* &c.] Not the ambush on the west side, but the host or army on the north side, or, however, some of his people gave him notice of it: *that they hasted and rose up early;* or made haste to rise out of their beds, on the alarm given of Israel's near approach: *and the men of the city went out against Israel to battle;* being raised out of their beds and accoutred with armour, and put into a military order, they marched out with their king at the head of them, to give Israel battle: *he and all his people, at a time appointed, before the plain;* which was before the city, the same with the valley mentioned, ver. 11, 13. the city was built on an eminence, and this plain or valley lay at the bottom of it; and on an eminence on the other side of the valley the army of Israel was pitched; wherefore the king of Ai and all his men of war went out hither to attack Israel, and this is said to be at an appointed time; it is difficult to say what is meant by it, when they seem to have hurried out as fast as they could, as soon as they perceived the Israelites were near them: Ben Gersom and Abarbinel think it was the same time of the day they went out at first, which the king might choose as lucky, being before successful, and to encourage the men, that as they conquered then they should now; which seems not amiss, though perhaps it rather designs an appoined place, as their rendezvous, and where to attack Israel, and where they had been before victorious: *but he wist not that there were liers in ambush against him behind the city;* that he knew nothing of, and therefore took no precaution against them to prevent their design.

Ver. 15. *And Joshua and all Israel made as if they were beaten before them,* &c.] Or smitten, as some of them might be in the pursuit: *and fled by the way of the wilderness;* not a barren desert, but, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, a place for the pasture of cattle; though perhaps it is the same with the wilderness of Beth-aven, ch. xviii. 12. Epiphanius [w] makes mention of the wilderness of Beth-el and Ephraim as near Jericho.

Ver. 16. *And all the people that were in Ai were called together to pursue after them,* &c.] Because the host of Israel was very numerous, it was judged proper that all the people in Ai should assist in pursuing them, not only to kill the more in the pursuit, but to carry off the spoil and prisoners they should take; or rather the sense is, that all the people in Ai, which were come out with the king to battle, when they saw Israel flee, *cried* [x], or shouted, as soldiers do when victorious, *in* or *while pursuing* [y] after them; *and they pursued after Joshua, and were drawn away from the city;* at some considerable distance from it; which was the design to be answered by feigning a flight

Ver. 17. *And there was not a man left in Ai or Beth-el*

[w] Contr. Hæres. l. 1. tom. 2.

[x] ויזעקו vociferantes, V. L. vociferati sunt, Pagninus, Montanus.

[y] לרדף persequendo, Pagninus, Montanus.

that went not out after Israel, &c.] For as these two places were very near to each other, but a mile asunder, they were in confederacy, and acted together, and could easily be called to the help of each other when required: though there is a difficulty how the men of Beth-el could join those of Ai, when the ambush lay between them both, ver. 12. they either went another way, or the ambush purposely let them pass, for fear of a discovery by a skirmish with them, and that Beth-el as well as Ai might be cleared of its armed inhabitants, and so fall an easy prey to them as well as Ai: this must be understood only of men of war; for otherwise there were inhabitants left, as old men, and such as were unfit for war, afterwards slain, ver. 24, 25. *and they left the city open*: they did not stay to shut the gates, nor left porters or any guards about, to take care of, protect, and defend the city: *and pursued after Israel*; with great eagerness and vehemence, not having the least apprehension of their city being in any danger.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord said unto Joshua, stretch out the spear that is in thy hand towards Ai*, &c.] On which was a flag, as Abarbinel and Ben Melech think; and which is not improbable, and served for a signal for the ambush to come out and seize the city, as both they and Jarchi observe, as well as a signal also to the army of Israel to prepare to turn and face about, and engage with the enemy; though they did not actually do this until they saw the smoke of the city, ver. 21. *for I will give it into thine hand*: of which the stretching out of his spear seems also to be a confirming sign to him, and which he kept stretched out until all the inhabitants of Ai were destroyed, ver. 26. *and Joshua stretched out the spear that* he had *in his hand toward the city*: and therefore must turn himself towards it; and it is highly probable that at the same time there was a full stop of the army, and that they immediately turned or prepared to turn about.

Ver. 19. *And the ambush arose quickly out of their place*, &c.] As soon as the sentinels set in proper places observed the signal, and gave them notice of it, which was the stretching out of the spear, as appears by what follows: *and they ran as soon as he had stretched out his hand*; and the spear in his hand; from whence it is plain, that though the Lord is said to bid Joshua do this now, he had orders from him for it before and the ambush must have been made acquainted with it before they were sent away; and this was only a renewal of the order from the Lord, and which pointed out the proper time, the very crisis, when it should be stretched out: *and they entered into the city*; without any difficulty, the gates being open: *and took it*; took possession of it, and the strong holds in it: *and hasted and set the city on fire*; that is, they made haste to set some houses on fire as the signal to the army of Israel to return.

Ver. 20. *And when the men of Ai looked behind them*, &c.] On some account or another, perhaps observing that the army of Israel made a full stop and was gazing at the city: *they saw, and, behold, the smoke of the city ascended up to heaven*; from whence they concluded an enemy was there, and had set fire to it: *and they had no power to flee this way or that way*; for if they turned back to their city there was an enemy, how powerful they knew not, possessed of it, and whom they might expect would meet them; and if they pushed forward, there was the whole army of Israel against them, which now turned and faced them, shewing no fear of them: *and the people that fled to the wilderness turned back upon the pursuers*; the people of Israel, that fled by the way of the wilderness, ver. 15. turned about, and fell upon the men of Ai that pursued them.

Ver. 21. *And when Joshua*, &c.] Or *for Joshua**: *and all Israel saw that the ambush had taken the city*; which they knew by the smoke, as follows: *and that the smoke of the city ascended*; in large columns, which sufficiently indicated that the whole city was taken and fired by the ambush: *then*, or, *and, they turned again and slew the men of Ai*; great numbers of them.

Ver. 22. *And the other issued out of the city against them*, &c.] That is, the ambush, or at least a part of them: *so that they were in the midst of Israel, some on this side, and some on that side*; or, as we commonly say, they were between two fires, the ambush on one side, the army of Israel on the other: *and they smote them, so that they let none of them remain or escape*; not one was saved alive, excepting their king, as in the next verse; no quarter was given them, nor any suffered to make their escape.

Ver. 23. *And the king of Ai they took alive*, &c.] They spared him, and reserved him for a more shameful death: *and brought him to Joshua*; their general; delivering him into his hands as his prisoner, to do with him as seemed good in his sight.

Ver. 24. *And it came to pass, when Israel had made an end of slaying all the inhabitants of Ai*, &c.] That came out against them: *in the field, in the wilderness wherein they chased them*; both in the arable lands that were sown with corn, and now clothed with it, the wheat especially, not being gathered in, as not yet ripe, and in the pasture-ground, designed by the wilderness, see ver. 15. so Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it: *and when they were all fallen on the edge of the sword*; and were slain by it: *until they were consumed*; and not one left: *that all the Israelites returned unto Ai*; both the ambush that came out of it, and the army that came against it: *and smote it with the edge of the sword*; that is, the inhabitants that were left in it unfit for war, as old men, infirm persons, women and children, as follows.

Ver. 25. *And so it was*, that *all that fell that day*, &c.] Partly in the city, and partly in the field, both by the ambush and the army: *both of men and women*; were 12,000, even *all the men of Ai*; so that the city was not a very large one, and the numbers of inhabitants were comparatively but few, as in ch. vii. 3.

Ver. 26. *For Joshua drew not his hand back wherewith he stretched out his spear*, &c.] But continued it, and that stretched out: *until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai*; just as the hand of Moses was held up, and kept held up until Amalek was discomfited by Joshua, Exod. xvii. 12, 13.

Ver. 27. *Only the cattle, and the spoil of the city*,

* ויהושע et enim Josua, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Masius.

Israel took for a prey unto themselves, &c.] Even all their substance, as besides their cattle, also their gold, silver, household goods, merchandise, &c. *according unto the word of the Lord which he commanded Joshua,* ver. 2.

Ver. 28. *And Joshua burnt Ai,* &c.] The whole city, fire being only set before to a few houses, to make a smoke as a signal; he did with it as he had done with Jericho, for so he was ordered, ver. 2. *and made it an heap for ever;* that is, for a long time, for it appears to have been rebuilt, and to have been inhabited by the Jews, after their return from their Babylonish captivity, Neh. xi. 31. *even a desolation unto this day;* to the time of the writing of this book; and by what has been just observed, it appears that Ezra could not be the writer of it, since this city was inhabited in his time.

Ver. 29. *And the king of Ai he hanged on a tree until even-tide,* &c.] By way of terror to other kings in the land of Canaan, that should refuse to submit unto him: *and as soon as the sun was down, Joshua commanded that they should take his carcass down from the tree;* according to the law in Deut. xxi. 23. and that the land might not be defiled: *and cast it at the entering of the gate of the city;* this was done, according to Ben Gersom and Abarbinel, that it might be publicly known to the rest of the kings of the nations, that they might be afraid to fight with Israel: *and raise thereon a great heap of stones,* that remaineth *unto this day;* as a sepulchral monument, shewing that there was a person lay interred there; whether there was any inscription on the stone, shewing who he was, does not appear; it looks as if it was only a rude heap of stones; and such kind of sepulchral monuments were common in former times in other countries.

Ver. 30. *Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal,* &c.] As was commanded, Deut. xxvii. 5. The Samaritan Chronicle says, 'twas built in Mount Gerizzim; but there is a difficulty arises, when this was done by Joshua; it should seem by inserting the account here, that it was done immediately after the destruction of Ai; and Mercator endeavours to prove that Ebal was near to Ai, but what he has said does not give satisfaction; for certain it is, that Ebal and Gerizzim were near Shechem in Samaria, at a great distance from Ai, see Judg. ix. 6, 7. The Jews[a] generally are of opinion, that this was done as soon as Israel, even the very day, they passed over Jordan, which they think the letter of the command required, Deut. xi. 29. and xxvii. 4, 5. though it does not, only that it should be done after they were passed over it; Ebal being at too great a distance from Jordan for them to accomplish it on that day, being, as they themselves say[b], 60 miles from Jordan; so that they are obliged to make Israel travel that day 120 miles, and as they assert they did[c]; and which they must do, if what they say was true, it being 60 miles to Ebal, and 60 more to return again to Gilgal that night, where they encamped, but this is incredible: and as this account of Joshua's building the altar is too soon after he had passed Jordan, what R. Ishmael[d] has pitched upon is too late, who says this was not done till after 14 years, when the land was conquered, which was seven years doing, and when it was divided, which were seven years more; what Josephus says[e] is more probable than either, which is, that Joshua, five years after he had entered Canaan, when he had placed the tabernacle at Shiloh, went from thence and built an altar at Ebal; for as for what R. Eliezer suggests[f], that Ebal and Gerizzim here mentioned are not the Ebal and Gerizzim of the Samaritans, only two hills were made, and they were called by these names, cannot merit any belief or regard.

Ver. 31. *As Moses the servant of the Lord commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses,* &c.] Deut. xxvii. 5. *an altar of whole stones, on which no man hath lift up any iron;* see Exod. xx. 25. Deut. xxvii. 5, 6. and the notes there: *and they offered thereon burnt-offerings unto the Lord, and sacrificed peace-offerings;* by way of thanksgiving for the good land they were introduced into, and this was what they were ordered to do by Moses, Deut. xxvii. 6, 7.

Ver. 32. *And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses,* &c.] Not upon the stones of which the altar was made, though some have so thought; but upon other stones erected in the form of a pillar, and plastered over, Deut. xxvii. 4. which copy of the law was not the whole book of Deuteronomy, as some, at least only an abstract of the laws in it; but rather the decalogue, as Abarbinel; or the blessings and curses after read, as Ben Gersom: *which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel;* they being witnesses of it, that he did what was enjoined.

Ver. 33. *And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges, stood on this side the ark, and on that side,* &c.] Some on Ebal, and some on Gerizzim: *before the priests and the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord;* it being brought out of the tabernacle on this occasion, and borne by the priests and Levites: *as well the stranger, as he that was born among them;* that is, as well the proselytes as the native Israelites, both appeared and were in the same situation: *half of them over-against Mount Gerizzim;* that is, half of the tribes, and these were Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin: *and half of them over-against Mount Ebal;* which were the tribes of Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali; see the notes on Deut. xxvii. 12, 13. *as Moses the servant of the Lord had commanded before, that they should bless the people of Israel,* as in Deut. xxvii. 12.

Ver. 34. *And afterwards he read all the words of the law,* &c.] Not the whole Pentateuch, nor the whole book of Deuteronomy, but either some parts of it, the decalogue, or whatsoever he had written on the stones, and as follows: *the blessings and cursings, according to all that was written in the book of the law;* Deut. xxvii. 14—26. and xxviii. 1—6. see the note on Deut. xxvii. 11.

Ver. 35. *There was not a word of all that Moses commanded, which Joshua read not,* &c.] So punctually,

[a] Misn. Sotah, c. 7. sect. 5. Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 30. Jarchi loc.
[b] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 36. 1.
[c] T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 21. 2.
[d] Apud ib.
[e] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 14.
[f] In T. Hieros. Sotah, ut supra.

precisely, and exactly did he observe the instructions and commands that were given him by Moses; and this he did in the most public manner: *before all the congregation of Israel;* who were on this occasion called together, and not before the men only, but *with the women, and little ones;* who all had a concern in the things that were read to them: yea, even *and the strangers that were conversant among them;* not the proselytes of righteousness only, but the proselytes of the gate, that dwelt, walked, and conversed with them.

CHAP. IX.

THIS chapter gives an account of the combination of the several kings of Canaan against Israel, ver. 1, 2. and of the craftiness of the Gibeonites, pretending they were ambassadors from a far country, and desired to enter into a league with Israel, which they obtained, ver. 3—15. but when it was discovered who they were, it occasioned a murmuring among the people, ver. 16—18. which the princes quelled by proposing to make them hewers of wood, and drawers of water, ver. 19, 20, 21. in order to which Joshua summoned them before him, and chid them for beguiling them; and after they had made their excuse, he ordered them to the service the princes proposed, and so peace in the congregation of Israel was preserved, ver. 21—27.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when all the kings which were on this side Jordan,* &c.] On the side Israel now were, and was that in which the land of Canaan lay, and was now governed by many kings, and all that were now remaining, even all but the kings of Jericho and Ai, who were slain: both those *in the hills, and in the valleys;* that dwelt in the mountainous part of the country, and in the plains of it: *and in all the coasts of the great sea, over-against Lebanon;* who inhabited and governed in that part of the country which lay on the coast of the Mediterranean sea, the country of Phœnicia, in which were Tyre, Sidon, and other cities, and were over-against Mount Lebanon, which was on the northern part of the country; according to the Latin version, they dwelt near Lebanon; and according to the Septuagint, near Antilibanus. It seems best, with Noldius[a], to render the words, *even unto Lebanon;* for it designs all the sea-coasts reaching to it; for all the maritime coasts did not lie over-against it: *the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite, heard* thereof; what they heard is not said, but to be understood; particularly they heard what had been done by Joshua, and the people of Israel, to Jericho and Ai, and their kings, ver. 3. Some think, as Abarbinel, that they had heard of the altar Joshua had made, and of the stones he had set up, and of his reading the law to the people, by which they were to be governed; all which they understood as taking possession of the country, and looking upon it as conquered, and obliging his people to swear fealty to him. All the nations of Canaan are mentioned but the Gergasites; which, according to the Jewish writers, are omitted, because they were but few; the Septuagint version has them in some copies.

Ver. 2. *That they gathered themselves together to fight with Joshua, and with Israel,* &c.] Not at this time, but they met together to consult what was proper to be done in order to secure themselves, and their people, and put a stop to the successes of the arms of Israel; and for this purpose entered into alliances with each other to assist one another, or at a convenient time and place to join their forces together, and attack Israel, as afterwards they did, ch. xi. 1—5. and this they did *with one accord;* were unanimous in their councils and resolutions; they all confederated together, and agreed as one man to make a common cause of it, and oppose Israel with their united forces.

Ver. 3. *And when the inhabitants of Gibeon,* &c.] A large and royal city, a metropolitan one, which had three others belonging to it, and under it, mentioned ver. 17. see ch. x. 2. no mention is made of any king over them, perhaps they were governed by elders, ver. 11. Though an Arabic writer[b] says, the king of Gibeon wrote to Joshua, and desired security, and sent him large gifts, whom having preserved in safety, Joshua placed on his throne: when these *heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai;* had taken the one in a miraculous way, and the other by a stratagem, and had burnt them both, destroyed the inhabitants, plundered their substance, and slew both their kings, all which struck them with terror.

Ver. 4. *And they did work wilily,* &c.] Acted craftily, dealt in much cunning and subtlety; our version leaves out a very emphatic word, *also:* they also, as well as other nations, acted a cunning part, but in a different way; they did not enter into consultations and alliances with others, how to defend themselves, but made use of a stratagem to make peace, and enter into a league with Israel; or also as the Israelites had done, either as Simeon and Levi had dealt craftily with the Shechemites, who were Hivites, Gen. xxxiv. 2, 13. so now the Gibeonites, who also were Hivites, ver. 7. wrought in a wily and crafty manner with them, so Jarchi; or as the Israelites had lately done in the affair of Ai: *and went and made as if they had been ambassadors;* from some states in a foreign country, sent on an embassy to the people of Israel, to compliment them on their successes, and to enter into alliance with them, which they thought would be pleasing and acceptable to them; the Targum is, "they prepared "food," which they took with them for their journey; and so the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions: *and took old sacks upon their asses;* in which they put their provisions: *and wine-bottles, old, and rent, and bound up:* not made of glass, as ours usually are, but of the skins of beasts, as the bottles in

[a] Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 60. No. 370.

[b] Patricides, p. 30. apud Hottinger. Smegm. Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 307.

the eastern countries commonly were; which in time grew old, and were rent and burst, and they were obliged to mend them, and bind them up, that they might hold together, and retain the liquor put into them, see Matt. ix. 17.

Ver. 5. *And old shoes and clouted upon their feet,* &c.] Which being worn out, were patched with various pieces of leather: *and old garments upon them:* full of holes and rents, ragged and patched: *and the bread of their provision was dry and mouldy:* having been kept a long time, and unfit for use; or like cakes over-baked and burnt, as the Targum and Jarchi: the word for *mouldy* signifies pricked, pointed, spotted, as mouldy bread has in it spots of different colours, as white, red, green, and black, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; or it signifies bread so dry, as Ben Gersom notes, that it crumbles into pieces easily, with which the Vulgate Latin version agrees; or rather through being long kept, it was become dry and hard like crusts, so Noldius[i]; or very hard, like bread twice baked, as Castell[k].

Ver. 6. *And they went to Joshua, unto the camp at Gilgal,* &c.] From whence it appears, that after Jericho and Ai were destroyed, the army of Israel returned to their encampment at Gilgal, ch. v. 10. and here they were when the Gibeonites applied to them: *and said unto him, and to the men of Israel;* not to the whole body of the people, but either to the seventy elders, the great council, who were with Joshua, or the princes of the congregation, after mentioned, who are said to swear to them; and so some render the words, *to the chief men of Israel*[l]; the word *Ish* here used sometimes denotes an eminent person or persons, see Isa. ii. 9. *we be come from a far country;* this lie they told, that they might not be thought to be inhabitants of Canaan, and be destroyed as those of Jericho and Ai were; and as the rest of the inhabitants would be, of which they had intelligence, as the design of the Israelites, and what their orders were; according to Jerom[m], Gibeon was but four miles from Beth-el, unless he means Gibeah; however, it could not be at a much greater distance; and as Gilgal was a mile and a quarter from Jericho, where the Gibeonites now were, and Ai but three miles from Jericho, and Beth-el a mile from thence, and Gibeon four miles from Beth-el, they were come but little more than nine miles. Bunting[n] makes it 12 miles from Gilgal to Gibeon: *now therefore make ye a league with us:* offensive and defensive, to help and assist each other against a common enemy.

Ver. 7. *And the men of Israel said unto the Hivites,* &c.] Though they did not know them to be such, but as they afterwards appeared to be the Hivites, as the Gibeonites were, they are here so called, see ch. xi. 19. The name signifies *serpents;* according to a Derash, or mystical Exposition, mentioned by Kimchi, the Gibeonites are so called, because they did the work of the serpent; that is to say, they deceived the Israelites, as the serpent deceived Eve: *peradventure ye dwell among us;* of which they had some suspicion; *and how shall we make a league with you?* which they were forbid to do with any of the seven nations, Deut. vii. 2.

Ver. 8. *And they said unto Joshua, we are thy servants,* &c.] Not that they meant to be subjects of his, and tributaries to him; but this they said in great humility and lowliness of mind, being willing to be or do any thing he should enjoin them. Abarbinel observes, that this they proposed to Joshua singly, not to be servants to all the people, but to him only, and to have him for their head and governor: *and Joshua said, who are ye? and from whence come ye?* by what name are ye called? and from what country do ye come? suspecting, as it should seem, that they were the inhabitants of Canaan; or however he was cautious and upon his guard, lest they should be such, and yet was not enough upon his guard to prevent imposition.

Ver. 9. *And they said unto him, from a very far country thy servants are come,* &c.] Which they magnified and expressed in stronger terms than before, but were careful not to mention any country, lest such questions should be asked about it, their answers to which would betray them, but put it off by saying they were come, *because of the name of the Lord thy God;* because of what they had heard of his name, his power and goodness; or *unto the name of the Lord thy God*[o]; that is, they were come to profess it, and to embrace the religion of the Israelites, and be proselytes to it; which they knew would be very agreeable to them, and engage them to shew them favour; and so the Samaritan Chronicle[p] represents them as promising to do this, saying, "we will believe in thy "Lord, nor will we contradict him in what ye shall "mark out for us, be it small or great;" which seems to be confirmed by what follows, unless it be considered as an explanation of the preceding clause: *for we have heard the fame of him, and all that he did in Egypt;* the miracles wrought there, the plagues he inflicted on the Egyptians, and the wonderful deliverance of the children of Israel from their slavery.

Ver. 10. *And all that he did to the two kings of the Amorites, that were beyond Jordan,* &c.] On the other side of Jordan from Gilgal: *to Sihon king of Heshbon, and to Og king of Bashan in Ashtaroth:* the history of which see in Numb. xxi. 21—35. they wisely took no notice of the miracle of dividing the waters of Jordan, to make a passage for the Israelites; nor of the destruction of Jericho and Ai, which were recent things, and could not be thought as yet to have reached a far country they pretended to come from; and which, if they mentioned, might have created a stronger suspicion still of their being Canaanites.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore our elders, and all the inhabitants of our country, spake unto us,* &c.] They suggest, that their senate, or the states of their country, their principal men were convened, and that it was the unanimous voice of them, and of the people, that they should go on this embassy: *saying, take victuals with you for the journey;* sufficient for so long a journey: for, in those times and countries, inns on the road were

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[i] P. 379. No. 1214.
[k] Lex. col. 2397.
[l] אל איש ישראל primoribus viris Israelis, Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator.
[m] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. A.
[n] Travels, p. 96.
[o] לשם יהוה ad nomen Domini, Masius; ad nomen Jehovæ, Junius & Tremellius.
[p] Apud Hottinger. Smegma Oriental. l. 1. c. 8. p. 507.

not frequent as now: *and go to meet them;* to prevent their coming in an hostile manner unto them, and make peace, and enter into an alliance with them: *and say unto them, we are your servants;* ready to come into any terms with them, just and reasonable: *therefore now make ye a league with us*; that we may live in friendship, and mutually assist each other, as occasion should require.

Ver. 12. *This our bread we took hot for our provision out of our houses,* &c.] These are not the words of the elders to the messengers they sent, continued, but of the ambassadors to the Israelites, pointing to the bread they brought with them, which they pretended was newly baked and took hot out of the oven: *on the day we came forth to go unto you, but now, behold, it is dry, and it is mouldy;* as in ver. 5. see the note there; which they gave as a demonstration and proof that they were come from a far country, as they had asserted.

Ver. 13. *And these bottles of wine, which we filled, were new,* &c.] That is, on the day they came out on their journey: *and, behold, they be rent;* which were owing to the long use that had been made of them, as they pretended: *and these our garments, and our shoes, are become old by reason of the very long journey:* quite worn out through length of time and tedious travels. Isidore of Pelusium[s] thinks these Gibeonites were Cappadocians, of whom he gives a shocking character, and particularly that they were prone to lying and deceit; but his reason for it, that they were of the Philistines, will not hold good.

Ver. 14. *And the men took of their victuals,* &c.] That is, the princes of Israel took thereof; not to eat of them, for it can't be thought that such personages would eat of such dry and mouldy bread, and especially as they were now in a plentiful country, and possessed of the fruits of it; but to see whether it was in such a plight and condition as they said, whereby they might judge of the truth of what they said; and they learned and knew, as R. Jonah observes, from the dryness of their food, that it was truth they said; and so the Targum, the men hearkened to their words; and so Jarchi, they believed what they said on sight of their provisions; but, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, they ate of them, to confirm the covenant they made with them; but had this been the case, as it sometimes was a custom to eat together at making covenants, see Gen. xxvi. 30. the princes would doubtless have provided a better entertainment for such a purpose: the *margin* of our Bibles leads to the other sense, "they received the men by reason of their "victuals:" *and asked not counsel at the mouth of the Lord;* as they might and should have done, by desiring the high-priest to inquire of the Lord by Urim and Thummim; but this they neglected, which, had they attended to, the fraud would have been discovered; or however, they would have had the mind of God about making peace with the Gibeonites, which in all likelihood he would not have disapproved of, they becoming proselytes, and giving up their possessions to Israel; but this did not excuse their neglect.

Ver. 15. *And Joshua made peace with them,* &c.] Upon the report the princes made of having examined what they had said, and which they found to be true, particularly concerning their victuals: *and made a league with them, to let them live;* and not destroy them as he did the Canaanites, and was ordered to do; they being supposed not to belong to them by the representation of things they had made: *and the princes of the congregation sware unto them;* that they would keep the league and covenant they had made with them inviolable; they ratified it by an oath, which was a sacred solemn thing.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass at the end of three days, after they had made a league with them,* &c.] The league seems to have been made the same day they came; the Gibeonites were no doubt in haste to have it concluded, lest they should be discovered; and Joshua, and the princes of Israel, took no pains, and gave themselves no great trouble to inquire about them, but made peace with them at once; and it was but three days after, or within three days of its being made, *that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them;* that is, in their neighbourhood, as the Arabic version; and so Noldius[t] renders the words, *and that they dwelt near them;* for the Gibeonites did not dwell among the Israelites, or in the midst of them, but near the place where they were; and this they understood either by some deserters that came to the camp of Israel, or by some of the Israelites who were sent to reconnoitre several parts of the country, especially such as lay nearest, or for the sake of getting provisions for their camp.

Ver. 17. *And the children of Israel journeyed,* &c.] Not the whole camp, for that still remained at Gilgal, and continued there until the Gibeonites in distress sent to them for assistance in virtue of the league, as appears from the following chapter; but a party of them, who were sent along with some of the princes, to know the truth whether the Gibeonites were their neighbours or no, as had been reported to them: *and came unto their cities on the third day;* not on the third day from their setting out on their journey, for it was but one night's march from Gilgal to them, ch. x. 9. but on the third day from the making of the league; it is very probable it was early on the third day they heard of their being their neighbours, upon which a party was sent out at once to know the truth of it, who arrived thither the same day: *now their cities were Gibeon and Chephirah, and Beeroth and Kirjath-jearim;* Gibeon was the metropolis, and the other three were subject to it; the three first fell to the lot of Benjamin, and the last to the tribe of Judah; we shall meet with them again in the lots of the several tribes, in ch. xv. 60. and xviii. 25, 26.

Ver. 18. *And the children of Israel smote them not,* &c.] The inhabitants of the four cities, when they came to them, though they found it to be a true report that was brought them of their being neighbours, and that they were imposed upon by them: *because the princes had sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel;* by the Word of the Lord God of Israel, as the Targum, and therefore they restrained the people from smiting and plundering them; for it was not the oath of the princes the people so much regarded,

[s] L. 1. Ep. 281.

[t] Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 211. No. 932.

or had such an influence on them as to abstain from seizing on them, but the princes, by reason of their oath, would not suffer them to touch them: *and all the congregation murmured against the princes;* not only for taking such an oath, but chiefly because they restrained them from smiting the Gibeonites, and taking their substance for a prey; their eager desire of revenge, and of seizing their goods, and inhabiting their cities, raised a murmur in them against the princes. This is to be understood not of the whole body of the people at Gilgal, but of all that party that was sent to Gibeon, and of the princes that went with them.

Ver. 19. *But all the princes said to all the congregation,* &c.] That is, all the princes that went to Gibeon addressed all the Israelites that were there: *we have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel:* by the Word of the Lord God, as the Targum; an oath is a solemn sacred thing, and not to be broken, and a good man will make conscience of it, and keep it, though he has sworn to his own hurt: and *now therefore we may not touch them;* neither take away their lives nor their substance.

Ver. 20. *This we will do to them,* &c.] Either this favour we will shew them, preserving their lives, next mentioned, or this punishment we will inflict on them, making them hewers of wood, and drawers of water: which though not mentioned directly, was what was upon their minds, and in their design to propose, only they were extremely desirous of sparing their lives, which they repeat: *we will even let them live;* this by all means must be done, their lives must not be taken away as the rest of the Canaanites: *lest wrath come upon us, because of the oath which we sware unto them;* that is, lest the wrath of God come upon us princes, and upon the whole community, for perjury, a breach of the third command, a sin highly displeasing to God; since an oath is made not only in his presence, and before him as a witness, who is appealed unto, but in his name, and is often severely threatened, and sorely punished; and as even the breach of this oath was several hundreds of years after, in the times of David, 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 2. The Vulgate Latin version therefore reads the words, *lest the wrath of the Lord come upon us;* but Abarbinel observes, that it may be understood of the wrath of Israel; for the words may be rendered, *and there shall not be wrath upon us, because of the oath;* there need be none, there is no occasion for it, since this was agreed upon on all hands, that the Gibeonites should be let to live; and since it was an act of kindness and goodness, and especially they would have no reason to be angry and wrathful with them, when they heard them out, what they had further to propose to them, to make them their servants, though they spared their lives.

Ver. 21. *And the princes said to them, let them live,* &c.] They were very pressing upon them, and importunate with them, to save their lives, because of the oath they had taken: *(but let them be hewers of wood, and drawers of water, unto all the congregation:)* which was a very low and mean employment, Deut. xxix. 11. as well as wearisome; and this being a yoke of servitude on the Gibeonites, and a punishment of them for their fraud, and of service, profit, and advantage to the people of Israel, the princes proposed it in hopes of pacifying them, and that they would yield to spare the lives of the Gibeonites; what they proposed was, not that they should hew wood and draw water for all the Israelites for their private use, but what was necessary for the service of the sanctuary, which the congregation was obliged to furnish them with; and now these men should do that work for them, which before was incumbent on them; for Joshua afterwards imposed this upon them, to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God, ver. 23. though Kimchi thinks that while the people of Israel were in camp, and before the land was divided, they were hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation; but after the land was divided, and they were settled in their cities and inheritances, then they only hewed wood and drew water for the sanctuary at Gilgal, Shiloh, Nob, Gibeon, and the temple; the Jewish writers say [r], the Nethinim and the Gibeonites were the same, who became proselytes in the times of Joshua, see 1 Chron. ix. 2. *as the princes promised them;* which is to be connected, not with their being hewers of wood and drawers of water, this the princes had said nothing of before, and which is rightly included in a parenthesis, but with their being let to live; this they had promised and sworn to, even all the princes, not only all that were now at Gibeon, and were persuading the people to let the Gibeonites live, but all the princes, even those that were not present, but in the camp at Gilgal.

Ver. 22. *And Joshua called for them,* &c.] The Gibeonites, who came as ambassadors for their people, and who were detained at Gilgal until the children of Israel returned from Gibeon; and upon their return, and having made their report to Joshua that they found it to be true that they were near neighbours, Joshua ordered them to be brought before him: *and he spake unto them, saying, wherefore have ye beguiled us?* what is your reason and motive for so doing? what has induced you to act such a deceitful part, to tell such lies and falsehoods, and impose upon us after this manner? *saying, we are very far from you, when ye dwell among us;* pretending to come from a very far country, when they were inhabitants of the land Israel were come to possess.

Ver. 23. *Now therefore ye are cursed,* &c.] Appear to be the posterity of cursed Canaan, and, notwithstanding the artifice used, should not be exempted from the curse denounced on Canaan: *a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren;* as these Gibeonites were; they became the servants of the Levites, who were servants to the priests; and they seemed to be spared in Providence, that that part of the curse on Canaan might be fulfilled: *and Canaan shall be his servant;* the servant of Shem, from whom the Israelites sprang, Gen. ix. 25, 26. though the curse was turned into a blessing to the Gibeonites, since though their post and office was mean, yet they had a place in the sanctuary of the Lord, and opportunity of learning the law of God, and understanding the true religion, worship, and knowledge

[r] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 4. sect. 1.

of God, and were an emblem and pledge of the reception of the Gentiles into the church of God: *and there shall none of you be freed from being bondmen*, which the oath taken did not oblige Joshua, and the princes, to exempt them from, only to let them live, ver. 15: *and hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of my God;* which explains what is meant by the *congregation*, and who might purposely choose that phrase, to make the people more easy; but their work, as assigned them by Joshua, was not to hew wood and draw water for every one's private use, only for the service of the sanctuary, which in some sense was the service of the congregation; and a great deal of work there was to be done of this kind, much wood to hew for keeping the fire of the altar continually burning, and for boiling the flesh of the peace-offerings, and the like, and much water to draw for divers uses, for the washing of the priests and the sacrifices, and divers other things.

Ver. 24. *And they answered Joshua, and said, because it was certainly told thy servants*, &c.] Or *it was told, told* [t]; not only certainly told, but frequently told them, they had often heard of it by one means or another: *how that the Lord thy God commanded his servant Moses to give you all the land;* all the land of Canaan, no part excepted; they had heard much of the Lord God of Israel, and of Moses, what character he bore, and of the commands of the Lord to him; they seem to have knowledge of God, and faith in him as to his promises and threatenings, believing they would be fulfilled: *and to destroy all the inhabitants of the land from before you;* as the gift of the land of Canaan to Israel was often spoken of by the Lord to Moses, and frequently mentioned by him; so there were instructions given him from the Lord, and which he delivered to Israel, utterly to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan, so that these people had right intelligence and information of this matter; see Deut. vii. 1, 2: *therefore we were sore afraid of our lives because of you, and have done this thing;* they answer to Joshua's question, *wherefore have ye beguiled us?* that it was fear of losing their lives, than which nothing is dearer to a man, and the principle of self-preservation that put them upon framing and using this device.

Ver. 25. *And now, behold, we are in thine hand*, &c.] In thy power, and at thy disposal, and are ready to submit to whatsoever may be enjoined us: *as it seemeth good and right unto thee to do unto us;* do what is consistent with the laws of kindness, and with the rules of justice, and particularly with the league made, and oath taken; all which they left with him to consider of, and to do as in his wisdom and goodness he should see fit.

Ver. 26. *And so did he unto them*, &c.] What was good and right, he shewed them favour, and did them justice: *and delivered them out of the hand of the children of Israel, that they slew them not;* who were so incensed against them for imposing on them in the manner they did, that they were ready many of them to draw their swords and slay them; and would have done it, had it not been for the interposition of Joshua, and the orders he gave to the contrary.

Ver. 27. *And Joshua made them that day*, &c.] Constituted and appointed them, ordered and settled them, in the post and office after mentioned; or *gave* them [u]; hence some think they had the name Nethinim, persons given to the Levites for the service of the sanctuary: namely, to be *hewers of wood and drawers of water for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord;* some think they were employed both for the service of the congregation, when they wanted wood and water, and for the altar, and what belonged to it, that needed both. Abarbinel supposes that they served the congregation whilst they were engaged in war, and subduing the land, but after the division of the land they only served the sanctuary; see the note on ver. 21: *even unto this day in the place which he should choose;* to have the tabernacle pitched, and the altar set up therein, as it was in divers places, before the temple built by Solomon at Jerusalem, which was the place the Lord chose; and this shews that the writer of this book lived before the building of the temple, or otherwise it is highly probable he would have expressly mentioned it; whereas he uses only the phrase that Moses frequently expressed it by in his time; see Deut. xii. 5, 11, 14, 18, 21. and xvi. 2, 6, 7, 11, 15, 16.

CHAP. X.

THIS chapter treats of the combination of five kings against the Gibeonites, ver. 1—5. and of the application of the Gibeonites to Joshua, for assistance, in virtue of the league between them, which was granted, ver. 6—9. of the slaughter of the army by the kings of Israel, and chiefly by hail-stones from heaven, ver. 10, 11. and of the standing still of the sun, and of the moon, whilst vengeance was taken on them, ver. 12—14. and of the five kings being hid in a cave, and of the usage of them when taken, ver. 15—27. and of the taking of Makkedah, Libnah, Lachish, Eglon, Hebron, and Debir, ver. 28—39. which finished the conquest of the southern part of the land, ver. 40, 41, 42, 43.

Ver. 1. *Now it came to pass, when Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem*, &c.] So called, perhaps by anticipation, Jerusalem, since it seems to have had this name given it by the Israelites, when they had got possession of it: and Jerusalem signifies *the possession of Salem* [w], and in memory of this its ancient name, the Jews say [x], they don't put *jod* in Jerusalem between *lamed* and *mem;* though some make the signification of it, *they shall see peace* [y]; and others, nearer to its old name, and with

[t] הגד הגד indicando indicatum est, Pagninus, Montanus.
[u] ויתנם dedit que eos, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.
[w] Reland, p. 833.
[x] Gloss. in T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 16. 1.
[y] Vid. Stockium, p. 420.

respect to it, *fear Salem*, O ye enemies. Now the king of this place *had heard how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it*; which, being nearer to him than Jericho, the more alarmed him: *as he had done to Jericho and her king, so he had done to Ai and her king*; burnt the one, and slew the other; and this terrified him, lest he and his city should undergo the same fate: *and how the inhabitants of Gibeon had made peace with Israel*; which as it weakened the interest of the kings of Canaan, might set an example to other places to do the like. Abarbinel suggests, that the Gibeonites making peace with Israel secretly, without the knowledge of their king, as he supposes, made Adoni-zedek fearful, lest his subjects should do the like; the Jewish chronologers say [z], that these three articles respecting Jericho, Ai, and Gibeon, were all finished within three months.

Ver. 2. *That they feared greatly*, &c.] The king of Jerusalem and his people, lest they should fall into the hands of the Israelites, and be used as Jericho and Ai, and the kings and inhabitants of them were, and that they would be the next that should fall a sacrifice to them; for Gibeon was fifty furlongs from Jerusalem, as Josephus says [a]; and in another place he says [b] but forty, which were but five miles; and if fifty, but little more than six miles; according to Bunting [c], it was but four miles: and what added to their terror was, *because Gibeon was a great city*; being a metropolitan city, and having others subject to it; wherefore the surrender of that to the Israelites might intimidate other cities, and lead them by example to do the like, and so of bad consequence: *as one of the royal cities*: the Vulgate Latin version omits the note of similitude, and reads, *and one of the royal cities*: and sometimes *caph* or *as* is not a note of likeness, but of reality; yet as we nowhere read of a king of Gibeon, the sense may be, that though it was not a royal seat, it was equal to those that were, and like one, being a metropolitan city: *and because it was greater than Ai*: had more inhabitants in it, and perhaps better fortified: *and all the men thereof were mighty*; men of strength, courage, and valour, warlike men, and therefore for such a city to yield so easily, and in such a base, mean, and cowardly way, was setting a very bad example.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent to Hoham king of Hebron*, &c.] Which, according to Jerom [d], was 22 miles from Jerusalem; it was an ancient city built seven years before Zoan in Egypt; see Gen. xiii. 18. Numb. xiii. 22. and the notes there: *and unto Piram king of Jarmuth*; a city which fell to the lot of Judah, as did Hebron, ch. xv. 35, 54. according to Jerom [e], it was four miles distant from Eleutheropolis; according to Procopius [f] 14, about the village Eshtaol, near to which Samson was buried, Judg. xvi. 31. but Jerom [g] speaks of a city called Jermus, in the tribe of Judah, which seems to be the same with this; and which he says in his day was a village, that went by the name of Jermucha, 10 miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Ælia or Jerusalem; and as Eleutheropolis lay 20 miles from Jerusalem, this place must be 10 miles from it, lying between them both: *and unto Japhia king of Lachish*; which the above writer says [h] was a city in the tribe of Judah, and in his time a village, seven miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Daroma, or the south; and, according to Bunting [i], it lay between Eleutheropolis and Hebron, and was 20 miles from Jerusalem towards the south-west: *and unto Debir king of Eglon*: which the Septuagint version calls Odollam or Adullam; and Jerom, following this version, makes Eglon the same with Adullam, when it is certain they were different places, and had distinct kings over them, ch. xii. 12, 15. and which he says [k] in his time was a very large village, 12 miles from Eleutheropolis to the east; and, according to Bunting [l], it was 12 miles from Jerusalem southward. To these four kings the king of Jerusalem sent: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 4. *Come up unto me, and help me, that we may smite Gibeon*, &c.] For which he thought himself not a match, not only because it was a great city, and full of mighty men, and had other cities subject to it, but because he might reasonably judge that Joshua would come to their assistance if possible, being in league with him; he sends to these kings in an authoritative manner, as if they were in some respects subject to him; and he proposes Jerusalem as the place of their rendezvous, and which it seems lay higher than their cities, though they were in the mountainous part of the country: *for it hath made peace with Joshua, and with the children of Israel*; their avowed enemies, and so had separated themselves from their countrymen, and from their common interest; and therefore it was thought proper to make an example of them, that others might fear to do the same.

Ver. 5. *Therefore the five kings of the Amorites*, &c.] For though they were chiefly Hittites that dwelt in Hebron, and Jebusites who inhabited Jerusalem; yet as the Amorites were the most powerful people in the land, and had dispersed themselves in the several parts of it, and seem to have the greatest authority in it, they were all called Amorites, and perhaps the kings of those cities were of them, and set over them by them; so we find that the Gibeonites, who were Hivites, are said to be of the remnant of the Amorite, 2 Sam. xxi. 2: *the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, the king of Eglon, gathered themselves together, and went up, they, and all their hosts*; that is, to Jerusalem, the place of their rendezvous, and from thence they marched: *and encamped before Gibeon, and made war against it*: by besieging it, and attacking it in some of its forts.

Ver. 6. *And the men of Gibeon sent unto Joshua to the camp to Gilgal*, &c.] Which some think they did when besieged, and not before, which shewed their faith in the power of God, whom they now professed; but it is not likely that they should defer sending for

[z] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31.
[a] De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 19. sect. 1.
[b] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 11. sect. 7.
[c] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 92.
[d] De loc. Heb. fol. 87. E.
[e] Ib. fol. 92. H.
[f] Apud Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. l. 2. p. 505.
[g] Ut supra, I.
[h] Ib. M.
[i] Travels, p. 99.
[k] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. A.
[l] Travels, p. 99.

help so long, since it is reasonable to suppose they might have heard of the design of the five kings against them; or that they should be able to send out messengers when surrounded on all sides; it may be better therefore to render the words, *had sent*[m], which they did as soon as they heard of the preparations made by the five kings to war with them, and of their rendezvous at Jerusalem, and especially as soon as they had information of their march towards them: *saying, slack not thine hands from thy servants:* they entreat he would not neglect them, be indifferent to them, and delay to assist them, since they were his subjects, and were entitled to his protection: *come up to us quickly, and save us, and help us;* they did not doubt, if he made haste and helped them, but they should be saved by him: *for all the kings of the Amorites that dwell in the mountains are gathered together against us.* Jerusalem lay among mountains, and Hebron was in the hill-country in Judea, see Psal. cxxv. 2. Josh. xxi. 11. Luke i. 39. and the other cities were doubtless in a like situation.

Ver. 7. *So Joshua ascended from Gilgal,* &c.] Which lay low in the plains of Jericho: *he and all the men of war with him;* which must not be understood of the whole camp of Israel, which consisted of 600,000 fighting men at least; since such a number was unnecessary for this expedition, and could not have proceeded with that haste the case required; nor would it have been prudent and advisable to have left the unarmed people, ancient men, women, and children, defenceless; but these were a select company of able men, fit for travel as well as war: *and all the mighty men of valour;* or *even all,* as many as were picked out for the purpose, being men of strength, activity, and courage.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord said unto Joshua,* &c.] Either when upon the march, and while he was proceeding on in his journey to the assistance of the Gibeonites, or rather before he set out; and it is highly probable he consulted the Lord on this occasion, having, it may be, some doubt on his mind, whether he should go to their assistance, since the league between them was obtained by fraud; and the words may be rendered, *and the Lord hath said*[n]: before he set forward with his men of war: *fear them not:* the five kings, and their combined army: *for I have delivered them into thine hand;* had determined to do it, and which was as certain as if it had been actually done: *there shall not a man of them stand before thee;* but be either cut off, or obliged to flee.

Ver. 9. *Joshua therefore came unto them suddenly,* &c.] Which no doubt threw them into consternation and confusion: and *went up from Gilgal all night;* he chose the night for secrecy and surprise, and that he might be the sooner with the enemy, and to the assistance and relief of Gibeon; and as it was about nine or ten miles from Gilgal to Gibeon, it was easily performed in a night's march; see the note on ch. ix. 6.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord discomfited them before Israel,* &c.] Disturbed, troubled, and affrighted them, at the appearance and presence of the people of Israel; they were thrown into terror and confusion upon their approach, being so sudden and unexpected: *and slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon;* by the Israelites, who came upon them suddenly: *and chased them along the way that goeth up to Beth-oron;* there were two places of this name, the upper and the nether, both built by Sherah, the daughter or granddaughter of Ephraim, 1 Chron. vii. 24. therefore here so called by anticipation. It was about 100 furlongs, or 12 miles and a half, according to Josephus[o], from Jerusalem, which agrees with Eusebius and Jerom; and from Gibeon thither, it was 50 furlongs, or six miles and a quarter; so far the kings were pursued by Joshua and his army, at least unto the ascent of it; for being built on a hill, it had an ascent on one side, and a descent on the other, after mentioned, and both were very strait passages; of the former it is said in the Talmud[p], that if two camels go up the ascent to Beth-oron, they both fall; upon which the gloss says, it is a strait place, and there is no way to turn to the right hand, or the left: *and smote them to Azekah, and unto Makkedah;* the former of which is placed by Jerom[q] between Eleutheropolis and Jerusalem, and was a village in his days, and the other eight miles from Eleutheropolis, and both in the tribe of Judah, see ch. xv. 35, 41. according to Bunting[r], they were both eight miles from Jerusalem towards the west.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, as they fled before Israel, and were in the going down to Beth-horon,* &c.] The descent of it on that side towards Azekah, and which was also a very strait passage, of which Josephus[s] makes mention. The Jews say[t], that the going down of Beth-oron was the place where the army of Sennacherib fell: *that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azekah, and they died;* the Septuagint version calls them hail-stones; and so they are called in the next clause; and that such sometimes have fallen as to kill men and cattle, is certain from the plague of hail in Egypt, Exod. ix. 19, 25. and some in very late times[u] have been known to fall, which were from 8, 9, and 12 inches about, some bigger than the eggs of turkeys, and some half a pound weight, see Rev. xvi. 21. and the note there; but these seem to be proper stones, such as did not melt away as hail-stones do; though so called, because they fell from heaven, as they do, but remained, and still remain, according to the notion the Jews have of them; for they say[w], whoever sees these great stones, in the going down to Beth-oron, is bound to bless; and frequent mention is made by historians of showers of stones being rained. Livy[x] speaks of such a shower when King Tullus conquered the Sabines; and of another[y], when Scipio succeeded at Carthage; and Pomponius Mela[z] relates, that when Hercules fought with the sons of Neptune, and darts failed him, he obtained of Jupiter to rain a shower of stones, which lay spread in

[m] וישלחו sed miserunt, Piscator; so Pool and Patrick.
[n] ויאמר & dixerat, Masius, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[o] Antiqu. l. 20. c. 4. sect. 4.
[p] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 39. 2.
[q] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. A. & 94. C.
[r] Travels, &c. p. 98.
[s] De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 19. sect. 7, 8.

[t] Gloss. in T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 54. 2.
[u] Vid. Louthorp. Abridg. Philosoph. vol. 2. p. 144, 146.
[w] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 54. 1.
[x] L. 1. p. 17.
[y] L. 30. c. 30.
[z] De Orbis Situ, l. 2. c. 5.

great abundance; and some[a] think it refers to this fact in Joshua's time, who is supposed to be the same with the Tyrian Hercules[b], from hence also called Saxanus[c]; and in memory of this there are stony camps in various places, called by his name[d]: there were *more which died with hail-stones than* they *whom the children of Israel slew with the sword*; but what was the number of each of them is not said; it was doubtless very great, since there was an utter destruction and consumption of them, ver. 20.

Ver. 12. *Then spake Joshua to the Lord,* &c.] In prayer, and entreated as follows, that the sun and moon might stand still, until the victory was complete; though the Jewish writers interpret it of a song; so the Targum, then Joshua praised, or sung praise, as in the Targum on Cant. i. 1. and which is approved of by Jarchi and Kimchi: *in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel*; the five kings of the Amorites, and their armies, ver. 5. *and he said, in the sight of Israel*; in their presence, and in the hearing of great numbers, being under a divine impulse, and having strong faith in the working of the miracle, after related, and that it would be according to his word; he was bold to say what he did, being fully persuaded he should not be disappointed, and made ashamed: *sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, moon, in the valley of Ajalon*: where they now appeared, and were seen by all Israel, the one as if over Gibeon, and the other as in the valley of Ajalon, which Masius thinks is the same with the valley of Gibeon, Isa. xxviii. 21. and so must be near Gibeon, and the sun and the moon not far from one another, as they might be if it was now new moon, as Kimchi and R. Isaiah; or on the decrease; some say seven days before her change: but Abarbinel is of opinion that it was near the full of the moon, which was just rising in the valley of Ajalon, and the sun near setting as it seemed over Gibeon, and were just opposite one to another; and Joshua fearing he should not have time to pursue his enemies, and make the victory entire, should the sun set, prays that both sun and moon might continue in the position they were; the sun that he might have the benefit of day-light, which was the chief thing desired; the moon being only mentioned, that the heavenly motions might not be confounded, and the order of the orbs disturbed; and he observes, with Jarchi and Kimchi, that Gibeon was in the tribe of Benjamin, and Ajalon in the tribe of Dan, xv. Josh. 42. and it may be observed, that there was also another in the tribe of Zebulun, Judg. xii. 12. but that seems to be at too great a distance; and still less probable is what some late travellers have observed[e], that the plain of Sharon near Joppa, is thought by many to be the place where Joshua defeated the five kings, when the sun stood still, &c. the opinion of Masius, first mentioned, seems most likely.

Ver. 13. *And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,* &c.] The sun that came out of his chamber like a bridegroom, and rejoiced as a strong man to run his course, stopped his course at once; and the moon that walks in her brightness proceeded not on, but both stood still, motionless, and continued in this position: *until the people had avenged themselves on their enemies*; until the nation and people of Israel had taken vengeance on and destroyed the five kings and their forces: how this is to be reconciled to the Copernican system, or that with this, I shall not inquire. It was a most wonderful and surprising phenomenon, to see both luminaries standing still in the midst of heaven; it is pretended by some historians[f], that a like miracle was wrought at the battle of Mulberg, won by the Emperor Charles the Fifth, on April 24, 1547. In the Chinese history[g] it is reported, that in the time of their seventh emperor, Yao, the sun did not set for ten days, and that men were afraid the world would be burnt, and there were great fires at that time; and though the time of the sun's standing still is enlarged beyond the bounds of truth, yet it seems to refer to this fact, and was manifestly about the same time; for this miracle was wrought in the year of the world 2554, which fell in the 75th, or, as some say, the 67th year of that emperor's reign, who reigned 90 years: is *not this written in the book of Jasher?* about which the Jews are divided; some say it is the book of Genesis, others the book of Deuteronomy, others the book of Judges[h]; the Targum interprets it of the book of the law, and so Jarchi and Kimchi; and Ben Melech interprets it of the book of the law of Moses, where they suppose this miracle was predicted. The former thinks, in the words of Jacob to Joseph, *his seed shall fill the nations*, Gen. xlviii. 19. which he supposes was fulfilled in Joshua of the tribe of Ephraim, when the whole world was filled with the fame of him on account of this miracle; and the latter in the words, *before all thy people I will do miracles*, Exod. xxxiv. 10. one was in making the face of Moses to shine, the other the standing still of the sun for Joshua, as he interprets it. Bolducius, a commentator on the book of Job[i], fancies that that book is designed, and that this miracle is foretold in it, particularly in ch. ix. 7. *which commandeth the sun, and it riseth not*; it is most likely that this book of Jasher, in which this miracle was recorded, was a public register, or annals, in which memorable events were written, as they happened in different ages by different persons; and Masius thinks Josephus[k] means this by the archives laid up in the temple, to which he appeals for the truth of this miracle: *so the sun stood still in the midst of heaven*; somewhere above the horizon, very probably this was about noon, when the sun was in its meridian. Gussetius[l] thinks about ten or eleven o'clock; it may be supposed that early in the morning Joshua came up with his troops, and engaged the kings, and it might be noon before the battle was over, and the victory obtained, at least before Joshua had proceeded in his pursuit of them, so far as he had done, when the miracle was wrought; and the rather, as it would be the more conspicuous in the several parts of the world; for had it been near sun-setting, it could

[a] Vossius de Origin. Idol. c. 1. sect. 16.
[b] See Gale's Court of the Gentiles, l. 2. c. 5.
[c] Dickins. Delph. Phœnic. c. 4. p. 42.
[d] Sanford de Descens. Christi, l. 1. sect. 20. p. 35.
[e] Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 290.
[f] See Bayle's Dictionary, vol. 4. p. 268.

[g] Martin. Sinic. Histor. l. 1. p. 25.
[h] T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 25. 1.
[i] Bolduc. in Job. ix. 7.
[k] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 17.
[l] Comment. Ebr. p. 281.

not have been seen in some places, and particularly by the Chinese, as it seems to have been by what has been observed: *and hasted not to go down about a whole day:* which was either artificial or natural; if an artificial day, then it stood still but 12 hours; if a natural day, 24 hours; and accordingly the length of the day must be judged of; if it was at noon when it stood still, and continued so a natural day, or 24 hours, then as it had gone six hours to noon, and, after it returned to its motion, had six more to go to its setting, this day must be 36 hours long; and so the Jews commonly say [l]; but if an artificial day, or 12 hours, then it was but a day of 24 hours; but if this was, as the Jews say [m], on the third of Tammuz, which answers to part of June, and was in the summer solstice, on the longest day in the year, when their days consisted of 14 hours, this will make this long day four hours longer. According to the author of Ecclesiasticus, ch. xlvi. 5. it was a double day, or, as he expresses it, one day became two, or was as long as two.

Ver. 14. *And there was no day like that, before it, or after it,* &c.] Which must be understood as referring not to natural days, or such as are according to the natural course of things, as those in the northern and southern poles, which are much longer, but to miraculous and extraordinary ones: never was there such a day as this, occasioned by the sun standing still; and as for Hezekiah's day, which is objected, when the sun went ten degrees backward on the dial of Ahaz, it is not certain whether those degrees were hours, or half-hours, or quarters of an hour; and if they were hours, as the going backwards was at once, in a moment, it could only make an addition of ten hours in the return of them, and so it must make but a day of 22 hours: besides, the writer of this book only speaks of days that had been in his time, and not of what might be hereafter; add to which, that this respects not so much the length of the day, as the manner in which it became so long; and especially it regards the following circumstance, being at the entreaty of a man, and that delivered in a very authoritative manner: *that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man;* expressed in prayer, and which prayer was a prayer of faith: *for the Lord fought for Israel;* by casting hail-stones upon their enemies, and preserving them from them by the stopping the course of the sun, until they had taken full vengeance on them. The day on which this miracle was wrought, is conjectured to be Wednesday the 11th of April, in the year before Christ 1454 [n].

Ver. 15. *And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, unto the camp to Gilgal.*] That is, he thought to have returned, had determined upon it, and prepared for it, but was prevented by hearing that the five kings had hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah; which he ordered to be stopped up till the people had finished the pursuit of their enemies, when he destroyed Makkedah, and which led him on to the conquest of other places before he returned; or else this verse stands not in its proper place, or is superfluous, since the same is expressed ver. 43. after all the above mentioned was done; the Septuagint version leaves it out.

Ver. 16. *But these five kings fled,* &c.] They were not killed by hail-stones, nor slain by the the sword of the Israelites, but made their escape, being reserved by the providence of God for a more shameful end: *and hid themselves in a cave at Makkedah;* not in the city of Makkedah, which as yet was not in the hands of Israel, whereas this cave was, as appears by what follows; but it was in some hill, or mountain, near it; in the border of it, as Kimchi expresses it, and where a hill is shewn to this day in which it was, as Drusius says.

Ver. 17. *And it was told Joshua,* &c.] Either by some of his own people, or by some of the inhabitants of the land in his interest, who had observed it: *saying, the five kings are found hid in a cave at Makkedah;* this seems to make it appear that they were others, and not Joshua's soldiers, that found them; for had they, no doubt they would have seized them, and brought them before him, or slain them, unless they chose first to know his will concerning them, next expressed.

Ver. 18. *And Joshua said, roll great stones upon the mouth of the cave,* &c.] To keep the kings in, that they might not make their escape, until he had convenient time to have them brought before him, and be treated by him as they deserved; and no doubt there were plenty of stones about the hill or mountain, in which this cave was, fit for this purpose: *and set men by it for to keep them;* as a guard upon them, to prevent their escape.

Ver. 19. *And stay you not,* but *pursue after your enemies,* &c.] That is, don't stay at the cave, but having placed a sufficient guard there, go in pursuit of the enemy, with as much celerity as possible: *and smite the hindmost of them;* their rear; or *tail* them [o], as the word is, cut off the tail of them: *suffer them not to enter their cities;* where they would not only be safe themselves for a while, but would be able to hold out against a siege for some time, and give much trouble to conquer them: *for the Lord your God hath delivered them into your hands;* this he said to encourage them, and quicken them to the pursuit of them with all eagerness and vehemence. According to the Samaritan Chronicle [p], the signal or watch-word was, "God is "strong in battle, God is his name."

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass, when Joshua and the children of Israel,* &c.] Joshua seems to have pitched his camp at Makkedah, whilst the rest of his army pursued the flying Canaanites, and when he and they were at different places: *had made an end of slaying them with a very great slaughter, till they were consumed;* and not to be seen in any large bodies, but scattered here and there: *that the rest* which *remained of them entered into fenced cities;* to which they belonged, and which were afterwards taken, as related in the latter part of this chapter.

Ver. 21. *And all the people returned to the camp to Joshua at Makkedah in peace,* &c.] Sound and well, as not one killed or missing, so not one wounded, as

[l] Targum in Cant. i. 1. T. Bab. Avoda Zara, fol. 25. 1. Kimchi in loc. So Justin Martyr. Dialog. cum Tryph. p. 361.
[m] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31. Kimchi in loc.
[n] Bedford's Chronology, p. 492.

[o] וזנבתם caudam eorum cædite, Pagninus, Vatablus, Masius, Drusius; & decaudetis eos, Montanus; decaudabitis eos, Munster.
[p] Apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 509.

the Vulgate Latin version, "sound and in full "number:" *none moved his tongue against any of the children of Israel*: as to curse them, reproach them, and speak ill of them, for invading them, and using them in the manner they did, such was the terror that was upon them. It may be supplied, *not a* dog *moved* his tongue, as in Exod. xi. 7. as it was with them when they came out of Egypt, so it was when they entered the land of Canaan. It seems to be a proverbial expression, as Ben Gersom observes, signifying that no hurt was done to them by word or deed.

Ver. 22. *Then said Joshua, open the mouth of the cave*, &c.] That is, roll away the great stones that were laid at the mouth of it: *and bring out those five kings unto me out of the cave*: to receive their sentence in a public manner, for the encouragement of his troops and the terror of the Canaanites, particularly Makkedah, now besieged by him.

Ver. 23. *And they did so*, &c.] Opened the mouth *of* the cave, by rolling away the stones: *and brought forth those five kings unto him out of the cave*; who are next mentioned by name, one by one, according to their dignity, and in the order they were brought unto him: *the king of Jerusalem, the king of Hebron, the king of Jarmuth, the king of Lachish, and the king of Eglon*: who are particularly named for the greater glory of the conquest, and the triumph over them.

Ver. 24. *And it came to pass, when they brought out these kings unto Joshua*, &c.] And set them before him, and he had passed sentence on them: *that he called for all the men of Israel*: that is, for the chief men, the principal officers of the army: *and said unto the captains of the men of war which went with him*; the chiliarchs and centurions, the captains of thousands and hundreds, of the several regiments in the army who went out to battle with him, and under him: *come near, put your feet on the necks of these kings*; not in a contemptuous and insulting manner, not through vanity and haughtiness, but for the mortification of the kings; and as a token of their extreme subjection, and as a proper punishment for their crimes of idolatry, tyranny, and cruelty; and by way of terror to others of the kings of Canaan that should fight against them, and as a pledge and confirmation of the subjection of the rest, as well as to fulfil the promises and predictions of God, Deut. xxxiii. 29. and which was done not of himself, but by the order, and according to the will of God: *and they came near, and put their feet upon the necks of them*; as Joshua ordered them, and in obedience to him their general.

Ver. 25. *And Joshua said, fear not, nor be dismayed*, &c.] Not meaning at the kings, who perhaps lay bound upon the ground, or however were not in a condition to make any resistance, so that they had nothing to fear from them; but this respects future time, and what other enemies they should meet with; who would be brought into subjection to them as these were, and therefore from hence should take heart: *be strong, and of good courage*; and go on valiantly in subduing the rest of their enemies, and not be afraid of them: *for thus shall the Lord do to all your enemies against whom ye fight*; put them into their hands, and give them power to tread on their necks: this shews that what Joshua did, or ordered to be done, was of the Lord.

Ver. 26. *And afterwards Joshua smote them and slew them*, &c.] With the sword; either by his own hands, or by others whom he ordered to slay them: *and hanged them on five trees*; to their shame and disgrace, and the terror of others: *and they were hanging upon the trees until the evening*; by way of contempt of them, and as a spectacle of terror to others, especially to the inhabitants of Makkedah, and their king they were now besieging.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass, at the time of the going down of the sun*, &c.] Which was the time fixed by the law of God for taking down bodies that were hanged, Deut. xxi. 23. *that Joshua commanded, and they took them down off the trees*; not from any respect to them, but that they might not defile the land, as dead bodies in a ceremonial sense did, Deut. xxi. 23. and this Joshua was the more careful of, as they were just entered into it, and were taking possession of it: *and they cast them into the cave wherein they had been hid*; so that what had been their hiding-place now became their grave; and according to the Samaritan Chronicle[q], the trees also on which they were hanged were cast in with them; *and laid great stones in the cave's mouth*; not as a monumental pile, as in the instances of Achan and the king of Ai, ch. vii. 26. and viii. 29. but to prevent their carcasses being dragged out, and eaten by wild beasts, as some think; or that they might not be taken out, and buried in a more honourable manner: which remain *until this very day*; when Joshua was grown old, the writer of this book.

Ver. 28. *And that day Joshua took Makkedah*, &c.] Some say it was the day on which the sun stood still, but it seems to mean the day in which the five kings were hanged: *and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof*; slew the inhabitants of it and their king, after having entered and taken it: *he utterly destroyed them and all the souls that* were *therein, he let none remain*; that is, all human souls or persons; for the cattle were taken for a prey: *and he did to the king of Makkedah as he did unto the king of Jericho*; slew him with the sword, along with the inhabitants, but did not hang him up, as he did the king of Ai and the five kings.

Ver. 29. *And Joshua passed from Makkedah*, &c.] After he had taken it, and destroyed its inhabitants, and its king: *and all Israel with him*; that is, all the men of war he took with him from the camp at Gilgal, from whence he went to the relief of Gibeon: *unto Libnah, and fought against Libnah*; a city that fell to the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 42. Jerom[r] says, in his time it was a village, in the region of Eleutheropolis, and was called Lobnah; according to Bunting[s] it was but two miles from Makkedah.

Ver. 30. *And the Lord delivered it also, and the king thereof, into the hand of Israel*, &c.] At once, no op-

[q] Apud Hottinger. Smegma. p. 511.
[r] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. M.
[s] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 96.

position being made that we read of: *and he smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, he let none remain in it*; that is, Israel smote it, or Joshua, and indeed both; and this was according to the orders given them to be observed with respect to all the cities and nations of Canaan; and that because of their abominable sins and wickedness, and to make way and room for the people of Israel, Deut. vii. 1, 2. *but did unto the king thereof as he did unto the king of Jericho*: slew him with the inhabitants.

Ver. 31. *And Joshua passed from Libnah, and all Israel with him, unto Lachish*, &c.] Which, according to Bunting[d], was 8 miles from Libnah, and 20 miles from Jerusalem to the south-west of this city; see ver. 5. *and encamped against it, and fought against it*: for it seems this city stood out, and would not surrender at once, which obliged Joshua to encamp about it, and besiege it.

Ver. 32. *And the Lord delivered Lachish into the hand of Israel, which he took on the second day*, &c.] Either the second day from the slaughter of the kings, or rather the second day of the encampment or siege; so Kimchi: *and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein, according to all that he had done to Libnah*; no mention is made of its king, because he was one of the five kings that had been hanged up; so that at the taking of this city there was no king.

Ver. 33. *Then Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish*, &c.] Perhaps the rather induced to it, because it had no king to defend it. In Jerom's[e] time it was a village called Gazera, 4 miles from Nicopolis, or Emmaus, to the north: if this king came before the city was taken, he was not able to raise the siege; and if he came after, and so too late, he fell into the hands of Joshua: *and Joshua smote him, and his people, until he had left him none remaining*; destroyed him and all his army, so that there were none left to return and relate their unhappy case.

Ver. 34. *And from Lachish Joshua passed unto Eglon*, &c.] Which, according to Bunting[f], was 8 miles from Lachish, and 12 from Jerusalem southward, of which see ver. 5. *and all Israel with him, and they encamped against it, and fought against it*: it not surrendering at once, but attempted to hold out a siege.

Ver. 35. *And they took it on that day*, &c.] The same day they encamped about it and besieged it; the besieged finding they were not able to keep it: *and smote it with the edge of the sword, and all the souls that were therein he utterly destroyed that day*; made an utter devastation of all its inhabitants: *according to all that he had done to Lachish*: the last city he took; this having no king as that had not, its king being one of the five that had been hanged.

Ver. 36. *And Joshua went up from Eglon, and all Israel with him, unto Hebron*, &c.] Which lay in the hill-country, and therefore they are said to go up to it from Eglon, which lay lower; and, according to Bunting[g], it was sixteen miles from it: *and they fought against it*; it making some resistance at first, and did not surrender at once, as demanded.

Ver. 37. *And they took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and the king thereof*, &c.] For though the king of Hebron was one of the kings that were taken in the cave of Makkedah, and hanged; yet before Joshua came up to it, they had set up another king over them: *and all the cities thereof*; for Hebron was a metropolitan city, and had other cities dependent on it, and subject to it: *and all the souls that were therein*; both in Hebron, and in the cities subject to it: *he left none remaining*; in any of them: *according to all that he had done to Eglon*; the last place he came from: *but destroyed it utterly, and all the souls that were therein*; but it seems that afterwards some that made their escape before the taking of the city, and other Canaanites driven out of their habitations, re-peopled it; so that after Joshua's death it was recovered again by the tribe of Judah, Judg. i. 10. unless there is given in that place a more particular account of the taking of this city, with others at this time; but the former seems most likely.

Ver. 38. *And Joshua returned, and all Israel with him, to Debir*, &c.] A city, according to Kimchi, which he passed by when he went to Hebron, and did not fight against it; but, when he had taken Hebron, returned and took it; and which Bunting[h] says was but a mile from it, and 22 miles from Jerusalem, towards the south; it is the same with Kirjath-sepher and Kirjath-sannah, ch. xv. 15, 49. the city of a book or books; and the Rabbins say[i], that with the Persians Debir signifies the same, and had its name from a library which was here kept, or from the archives in which the most memorable things since the flood were recorded; or from the making of paper or parchment, or whatsoever was made use of for writing, and of which volumes of books were made: *and fought against it*; it refusing to submit to him upon his summons.

Ver. 39. *And he took it, and the king thereof, and all the cities thereof*, &c.] For this also was a royal city, and had others dependent on it; and therefore must lie further from Hebron than before suggested; and indeed Burchard[k] says it was 5 or 6 miles from it, and another writer[l] says 10 miles: *and they smote them with the edge of the sword*; the inhabitants of Debir, and the other cities adjacent to it: *and utterly destroyed all the souls that were therein, he left none remaining*; and yet it seems this city recovered again, and was re-inhabited, and after the death of Joshua was taken by Othniel, Josh. i. 11, 12, 13. unless, as before observed, with respect to Hebron, there is there a more particular account of the taking of it at this time: *as he had done to Hebron, so did he to Debir, and to the king thereof, as he had done also to Libnah and her king*: that is, slew them.

Ver. 40. *So Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings*, &c.] That part of the land of Canaan which lay southward, and consisted of hills and vales; which abounded with springs, and was a well-watered

[d] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 96.
[e] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. A.
[f] Ut supra.
[g] Ibid.

[h] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 96.
[i] T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 24. 2.
[k] Apud Masium in loc.
[l] Fuller's Pisgah Sight of Palestine, B. 2. c. 13. p. 276.

country, and agrees with the description Moses gives of it, though he never saw it, Deut. viii. 7. *he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed;* that is, all human creatures; for as for the cattle, they were spared as a prey: as *the Lord God of Israel commanded;* this law is extant, Deut. xx. 16. and which is here observed to clear the Israelites from the charge of cruelty and inhumanity; since what they did was not of themselves, nor from a private spirit of revenge, nor a greedy desire after the substance of the inhabitants; but in obedience to the command of God, and who ordered this as a righteous punishment of those people for their gross abominations of idolatry, incest, &c. see Lev. xviii.

Ver. 41. *And Joshua smote them, from Kadesh-barnea,* &c.] Which lay to the south of the land of Canaan, Numb. xiii. 17, 26. and xxxii. 8. and xxxiv. 4. even unto Gaza, which lay to the south-west, and was one of the five principalities of the Philistines; of which city see the notes on Amos i. 7. and Acts viii. 26. *and all the country of Goshen, even unto Gibeon:* to which he returned back in his way to his camp at Gilgal, having conquered all the southern part of the country. This country of Goshen is not that in the land of Egypt, as Kimchi rightly remarks. Bishop Cumberland[m] is of opinion, that the Phœnician or Canaanitish pastors, who were driven out of Egypt before their expulsion, inhabited that part of Egypt called Goshen, which the Israelites some years after dwelt in; and when those shepherds were driven out, they came into this part of the land of Canaan, and called it after the name of the country they left in Egypt; and might perhaps the rather choose to give it this name, because of the goodness and fruitfulness of it, in which it resembled the country they had formerly dwelt in.

Ver. 42. *And all these kings, and their land, did Joshua take at one time,* &c.] Not in one day, but in a very short time, in a few days, as the history clearly shews: *because the Lord God of Israel fought for Israel;* which is the true reason of such quick dispatch being made, otherwise in all probability much longer time must have been consumed in subduing them. The Targum is, "because the Lord God of Israel fought "by his Word for Israel."

Ver. 43. *And Joshua returned,* &c.] After all these kings and their cities had been taken by him, and not before; though the same is said, ver. 15, before the history of those facts; see the note there: *and all Israel with him to the camp in Gilgal;* where the body of the people were left, and where was the tabernacle of the Lord; and no doubt he and Israel with him gave public praise and thanksgiving there for the signal victories they had obtained over the Canaanites.

CHAP. XI.

THIS chapter relates how that the kings of the northern parts of Canaan combine together against Joshua, ver. 1—5. and that the Lord encouraged him to fight with them, and did deliver them into his hands, who, with all their people, were smitten by him, ver. 6—11. and how that he took their cities, and destroyed the inhabitants of them, and took the spoil of them for a prey, ver. 12—15. and so became master of the whole country, both southern and northern, which is described ver. 16—20. and the chapter is concluded with an account of his cutting off the Anakim from divers parts, which finished the conquest of the whole land, ver. 21, 22, 23.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when Jabin king of Hazor had heard* these things, &c.] The taking of Jericho and Ai, the defeat of the five kings, and the conquest of the southern part of the land of Canaan; he was alarmed by them, and sent to all the northern kings to join with him against Israel; and he the rather took this upon him, because as Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem was the principal king in the southern part of the land, so was he in the northern part; see ver. 10. Hazor fell to the tribe of Naphtali, ch. xix. 36. It was situated, as Josephus[n] says, on the lake Samachonitis, the same with the waters of Merom, ver. 5. According to Adrichomius[o], it was 4 miles from the castle Theron to the north, 6 miles from Cæsarea Philippi to the south-west, and 9 miles from the great sea to the east; and was, in the times of Christ, one of the ten principal cities of the region of Decapolis, in which he preached, Matt. iv. 25. and is now called Antiopia; and in the Arabic version here it is called Cæsarea, and, according to Bunting[p], it lay 80 miles from Jerusalem to the north: *that he sent to Jobab king of Madon;* of which place we nowhere else read but in ch. xii. 19. though Brocard[q] finds a place near Dan, called Madan by the Turks at this day: *and to the king of Shimron;* not Samaria, as many think, for that was built by Omri, king of Israel, and had its name from Shemer, the owner of the hill on which it was built some hundreds of years after this; besides Samaria was in the tribe of Ephraim, this in the tribe of Zebulun, ch. xix. 15. and is called Shimron-meron, ch. xii. 20. and in the Jerusalem Talmud[r] Simoniah, and here in the Septuagint version Symoson: *and to the king of Achshaph;* a city which fell to the lot of the tribe of Asher, ch. xix. 25. The Septuagint calls it Aziph, as if it was the same with Achzib, or Ecdippa, now called Zib: but Achshaph and Achzib are manifestly distinguished, ch. xix. 25, 29. Jerom says[s], in his time it was a little village, and went by the name of Chasalus, 8 miles from Diocæsarea, at the foot of Mount Tabor. The Arabic version adds a fourth king that Jabin sent to, called *the king of Mausel;* but we read not of any such place in the land of Canaan.

Ver. 2. *And to the kings that were on the north of the*

[m] Remarks on the History of Sanchoniatho, p. 380, 381.
[n] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.
[o] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 102.
[p] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 101.
[q] Apud Fuller's Pisgah Sight, B. 2. c. 4. p. 114.
[r] Megillah, fol. 70. 1.
[s] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. C. D.

mountains, &c.] Of Libanus and Antilibanus, with others near them; so Josephus [t] says, the kings about Lebanon being Canaanites, fought against them, *i. e.* the Israelites; for Lebanon lay to the north of the land: *and of the plains south of Cinneroth;* or Gennesaret, of the land and lake of which we read in the New Testament, Matt. x. 34. Mark vi. 53. Luke v. 1. and seems to have respect chiefly to the famous plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, of which see the note on Hos. i. 5. *and in the valley;* which may more especially design the valley of Jezreel, as it is called in the above place, and distinguish it from other plains; it was two miles broad, and ten long: *and in the borders of Dor, on the west;* which fell to the lot of the tribe of Manasseh, ch. xvii. 11. which Pliny [u] calls Dorum, and mentions it along with the promontory of Carmel; so Josephus says [w], in Phœnicia, near Mount Carmel, is a city called Dora, four days' journey distant from Judea; that is, that part of the land of Israel particularly so called; some copies read Idumea. According to Jerom [x], it was 9 miles from Cæsarea of Palestine, as you go to Tyre; and in his time a desert. It was a haven in the Mediterranean sea, and lies three leagues from the castle of the *pilgrims* near Mount Carmel; and, as a traveller says, is now so decayed, that there is nothing more extant than a large and high tower, which the inhabitants still call Dorteite [y].

Ver. 3. *And to the Canaanite on the east and on the west*, &c.] That is, that particular nation of the seven so called, part of which dwelt in the eastern part of the land, by the dead sea, and by the coast of Jordan, Numb. xiii. 29. and others dwelt on the coast of the Mediterranean sea, which was to the west of the land: *and to the Amorite, and to the Hittite, and to the Perizzite;* which were scattered about in several parts of the country: *and the Jebusite in the mountains;* in the mountainous part of Judea, in the mountains about Jerusalem, and which they still inhabited, and did to the times of David: *and to the Hivite under Hermon, in the land of Mizpeh;* so described to distinguish them from the Gibeonites, who were also Hivites. Mizpeh is the place, as Kimchi thinks, where the people of Israel are often said to meet together; which he supposes they did, on account of the great salvation wrought here in Joshua's time. Hermon was a mountain that adjoined to Lebanon, where it is certain some of the Hivites dwelt, Judg. iii. 3.

Ver. 4. *And they went out*, &c.] The several kings and people sent to; these went out from the places they inhabited: *they and all their hosts with them;* the kings of those several places, with their armies: *much people, even as the sand that is upon the sea-shore in multitude;* a proverbial expression, to denote an exceeding great number: *with horses and chariots very many*, being supplied with horses from Egypt, and their chariots were chariots of iron; see Judg. iv. 3. Josephus [z] gives us the number of this great army, and says it consisted of 300,000 foot, 10,000 horse, and 30,000 chariots; some copies read only 20,000; and these chariots were armed with iron hooks or scythes, to cut down men as they drave along, and so were very terrible.

Ver. 5. *And when all those kings were met together*, &c.] At some certain place, which Jabin had appointed: *they came and pitched together at the waters of Merom;* Josephus [a] says it was at Berotha; perhaps it should be Merotha, a city of upper Galilee, not far from Cedesa, the same he elsewhere calls [b] Meroth. These waters are the same with the lake Samachonitis, on which Hazor was situated; so that it was near Jabin where the rendezvous was. This lake is thought [c] to have its name from the Arabic word Samacha, which signifies high, as Merom does in Hebrew. It was, as Josephus says [d], 30 furlongs broad, and 60 long, and its waters clayey. Jerom says [e], in his time there was here a village called Merrus, 12 miles from the city Sebaste by Dothaim: here the kings and their armies met *to fight against Israel;* so that they were the aggressors, which made the war still more lawful.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord said unto Joshua, be not afraid because of them*, &c.] Of their number, of their horsemen, and of their scythed chariots; which might at first hearing occasion some fear and dread. And according to Josephus [f], the multitude of them terrified both Joshua and the Israelites; and therefore the Lord appeared and spoke to him for his encouragement: though what was said was for the sake of the Israelites, and to animate them who might be disheartened, rather than for the sake of Joshua, who was of a bold and courageous spirit. Whether this was said to him at Gilgal, and out of the tabernacle there, quickly after the tidings of the combination of the kings were brought to him, or whether when upon his march towards them, is uncertain: *for to-morrow about this time will I deliver them up slain before Israel;* as many were, and others wounded and put to flight, as the word signifies, so as to be as good as dead. If Gilgal was 22 miles from the waters of Merom, as Bunting says [g], and supposing this to be said to him before he set out, he must travel all night to reach thither the next day; and if it was 60 miles, as some say, this must be said to him when on his march, and within a day's march of the enemy; for Josephus says [h] it was on the fifth day that he came up with them, and fell upon them: *thou shalt hough their horses;* cut their nerves under their hams, or hamstring them, so that they might be useless hereafter; for the kings of Israel were not to multiply horses; and Joshua, as their chief ruler, was to have no advantage of them by their falling into his hands: *and burn their chariots with fire;* that so they might not be used by the Israelites afterwards, who might be tempted to put their trust and confidence in them, as many did.

[t] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 18.
[u] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.
[w] Contr. Apion. l. 2. c. 9.
[x] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. I.
[y] Rauwolff's Travels, par. 2. c. 1. p. 211. Ed. Ray.
[z] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 18.
[a] Ibid.
[b] De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 20. sect. 6.
[c] Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 1. p. 262.
[d] De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 1. sect. 1. & l. 3. c. 9. sect. 7.
[e] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. D.
[f] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 18.
[g] Travels, p. 96.
[h] Ut supra.

Ver. 7. *So Joshua came, and all the people of war with him, against them, &c.*] Being encouraged by the Lord, they set out with Joshua at the head of them, to fight the kings and their forces. It is highly probable that these were not the whole body of armed men in the camp of Israel, but a select company Joshua took of them, and who would be able to make quicker marches on this expedition: *by the waters of Merom suddenly;* the Targum is, "they lay by the waters of "Merom;" and as they were thoughtless and careless, and not on their guard, Joshua and his forces came to them suddenly, unawares, and they not provided for them: *and they fell upon them;* at once, which threw them into disorder and confusion.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord delivered them into the hand of Israel, &c.*] The whole host, who either were killed or wounded, or put to flight: it was of the Lord that Israel was directed to make so quick a march, and come upon them so suddenly, and that they were off their guard, and unprovided for them, and so fell into their hands: *who smote them;* with the edge of the sword killed and wounded great numbers; and the rest fleeing, *they chased them unto great Zidon;* not that there was another Zidon called the less, as Kimchi and Ben Melech thought there seemed to be, and which also Jerom[i] suggests; but this was so called because of its greatness, the large extent of it, and the abundance of wealth and riches in it: Curtius says[k], it was renowned for its antiquity and the fame of its buildings; and Mela says[l], that before it was conquered by the Persians, it was the greatest of the maritime cities, though now greatly reduced: Mr. Maundrell[m] says of it, "Sidon is stocked well enough with inhabitants, "but is very much shrunk from its ancient extent, and "more from its splendour, as appears from a great many "beautiful pillars that lie scattered up and down the "gardens without the present walls:" it lay, according to Strabo, not more than 200 furlongs from Tyre[n], or 25 miles: it was more ancient than that, which is called the daughter of it: Homer speaks much of Sidon, as the same writer observes, but not a word of Tyre: Josephus[o] thinks it had its name from Sidon, the first-born of Canaan, and that he built it, Gen. x. 15. but Justin says[p] it had its name from the plenty of fishes there: and Tzaid in the Chaldee and Syriac languages signifies fishing and a fisherman: hence Bethsaida, a city mentioned in the New Testament, had its name; and Sidon is at this day called Said, and is now in the hands of the Turks: and though it was a part of the land of Canaan, and belonged to the tribe of Asher, never was conquered and possessed by them, but remained an Heathen city to the time of Christ: *and unto Misrephoth-maim,* or *boilings of water,* it seems as if it was a place of hot baths, but the Targum renders it *pits of water,* which Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Melech say, were pits into which the salt waters of the sea were drawn, and where they were heated by the sun, and made salt of; and so it is thought this was a place of salt-pits, where salt was boiled, either by the heat of the sun or by fire[q]: Junius and Tremellius render the word by *glass furnaces,* furnaces in which glass was made; and it is certain, that at Sidon, and near it, within the borders of which this place was, ch. xiii. 6. glass was made: Pliny[r] calls Sidon the artificer of glass, or a city where glass was made: and Strabo says[s], that between Ace and Tyre is a shore which bears glassy sand, but they say it is not melted there, but carried to Sidon to be melted; and some say the Sidonians have a glassy sand fit for melting: Calmet[t] thinks this place is the same with Sarepta, Luke iv. 26. which had its name from melting: of what construction the furnaces were in this place cannot be said, no doubt great improvement has been since made[u]: *and unto the valley of Mizpeh eastward;* the same with the valley of Lebanon; now as Sidon lay north-west and this was eastward, it seems that the armies of the Canaanites, in their consternation and confusion, fled some to the west and some to the east, who were pursued by different bodies of the army of Israel, separated for that purpose.

Ver. 9. *And Joshua did unto them as the Lord bade him, &c.*] Namely, in the following instances: *he houghed their horses, and burnt their chariots;* not consulting his own worldly interest or that of the people of Israel, but the command of God, which he carefully obeyed, and reserved none for himself or them, as David in another case afterwards did; see 2 Sam. viii. 4.

Ver. 10. *And Joshua at that time turned back and took Hazor, &c.*] After he had chased the Canaanites to the places mentioned, he returned to Hazor, near to which Joshua first fell upon them, but through the pursuit he was led on many miles beyond it: Bunting says[w], it was 32 miles from Sidon: *and smote the king thereof with the sword;* who, very probably, upon the surprise at the waters of Merom, fled to his capital for safety; but that being taken by Joshua, he was slain by him with the sword: *for Hazor before-time was the head of all those kingdoms;* before-mentioned, ver. 1. but not of all the land of Canaan: Jerom[x] says, it was the metropolis of all the kingdoms of the Philistines; and though they were not now subject to it, and had kings of their own, yet it appears that the king of this place was in great authority, and regard was paid unto him; and this seems to be the reason why Joshua hasted to take this city, slay the king of it, and burn it with fire, because it had been the principal in this war, and might, if not prevented, raise new troubles; wherefore, as a precaution to that, and to deter the rest, he hastened the conquest and destruction of it.

Ver. 11. *And they smote all the souls that were therein with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them, &c.*] Men, women, and children: *there was not any left to breathe;* any human creature; for as for the cattle they were taken for a prey: *and he burnt Hazor*

[i] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. B.
[k] Hist. l. 4. c. 1. 4
[l] De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 12.
[m] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 45.
[n] Geograph. l. 16. p. 521.
[o] Antiqu. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 2.
[p] E Trogo, l. 18. c. 3.
[q] Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum Terræ Sanct. sect. p. 2.
[r] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.
[s] Ut supra.
[t] Dictionary on this word.
[u] Vid. Merrett de Fornac. Vitriar. p. 421, &c.
[w] Travels, p. 96.
[x] De loc. Heb. fol. 82. B.

with fire: as he did Jericho and Ai, though no other cities he had taken; but it seems that this city, though burnt, was built again and inhabited by Canaanites, who had a king over them of the same name with this in the times of Deborah, Judg. iv. 2.

Ver. 12. *And all the cities of those kings, and all the kings of them did Joshua take*, &c.] As particularly Madon, Shimron, and Achshaph, with others which he marched unto, after he had burnt Hazor; in which he took their kings, whither they had fled, or else he had taken them before in the pursuit: *and smote them with the edge of the sword*; both the kings and the inhabitants of those cities: and *he utterly destroyed them, as Moses the servant of the Lord commanded*: so that, in doing what he did, he did not indulge a spirit of revenge, cruelty, and avarice, but had regard purely to the command of Moses, which was of God, Deut. vii. 1, 2.

Ver. 13. *But as for the cities that stood still in their strength*, &c.] Whose walls were not demolished when taken, as Kimchi and Jarchi interpret it, or that *stood upon their heaps*[y]; upon an eminence, being built on hills and mountains: *Israel burned none of them*: but reserved them for their own habitations, being well fortified, and having no need of new walls being built to them, or being in a very agreeable situation: *save Hazor only, that did Joshua burn*: because it was the chief city where the scheme was formed, and the combination against Israel was made, and was the rendezvous of the confederate forces against them: the Jews have a tradition[z], that God said to Moses, and Moses said to Joshua, that he should burn it, and that only.

Ver. 14. *And all the spoil of these cities, and the cattle, the children of Israel took for a prey unto themselves*, &c.] The gold, silver, household goods, corn, wine, oil, or any mercantile goods, together with cattle of every sort, all were taken by them for a prey, for their own use and benefit, which was allowed them: *but every man they smote with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, neither left they any to breathe*: for which they had warrant so to do from the Lord, as follows.

Ver. 15. *As the Lord commanded Moses his servant, so did Moses command Joshua*, &c.] Which was to destroy the people of the land, Deut. vii. 1, 2. *so did Joshua, he left nothing undone of all that the Lord commanded Moses*; both with respect to the destruction of the people, and of all their images, pictures, altars, groves, and high places; see Exod. xxxiv. 11, 12, 13. Numb. xxvii. 19. and xxxiii. 52. Deut. vii. 1—5. and xxxi. 7.

Ver. 16. *So Joshua took all that land*, &c.] The whole land of Canaan, described as follows, both as to the southern and northern parts of it: *the hill*; the hill-country of Judea, of which see Luke i. 39, 65. *and all the south country*; where lived the five kings; and those of other places, the account of the taking of which we have in the preceding chapter, ver. 40. *and all the land of Goshen*; see ch. x. 41. *and the valley, and the plain*; the low places and champaign fields which lay between the hills and mountains; particularly all the plain and champaign country near Eleutheropolis, towards the north and west, Jerom says, in his day, was called *Sephela*, or the vale[a]: *and the mountain of Israel, and the valley of the same*; by which may be meant Jerusalem, situated on a mountain, and is so called, Ezek. xvii. 23. and xx. 40. and its valley may be the valley of Hinnom or of Jehoshaphat, as they were after called, which were near it: some think the hill of Samaria or the mountains about that are meant.

Ver. 17. Even *from the mount Halak, that goeth up unto Seir*, &c.] Or the *smooth* and *bald* mountain, which had no trees on it, as some interpret it, observed by Kimchi; it was a mount on the borders of Edom, to which the land of Canaan reached on that side: *unto Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, under Mount Hermon*; and so describes the northern part of the land conquered by Joshua: *and all their kings he took, and smote them, and slew them*; both in the southern and northern parts of the land.

Ver. 18. *Joshua made war a long time with all those kings*.] For, though the account of the conquest of them is put together, and lies in a small compass, yet those victories were not obtained at once, or in a few days, as were those of the five kings, and others, related in the preceding chapter, but were the work of some years; Josephus[b] says five years, but the common notion of the Jews is, that Joshua was seven years in subduing the land of Canaan[c]; our Bishop Usher[d] thinks it was done in six years; and it may be concluded that it was about six or seven years ere this work was completely finished.

Ver. 19. *There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel*, &c.] Though, according to the Jews, Joshua, upon his first landing in Canaan, sent letters and messages to all the inhabitants of the land, offering them peace on certain terms; particularly that he sent three messages, or proposed three things to them; that those who had a mind to flee might flee; that those who were desirous of making peace might make it; and they that were for war, let them fight; all were for the last, and so perished[e]: *save the Hivites and the inhabitants of Gibeon*: these, some have thought, did not hear of the offers of peace, but others think they did, and at first rejected them, but repenting were obliged to take the crafty methods they did to obtain it, of which see ch. ix. *all* other *they took in battle*: refusing to submit to them and make peace with them.

Ver. 20. *For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts*, &c.] As he hardened the hearts of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, that his power might be displayed in their destruction: *that they should come against Israel in battle*; and so fall in it: *that he might destroy them utterly*; for their abominable wickedness, idolatry, incest, &c. they had been guilty of: and *that they might have no favour*; which they would have had, had they made peace as the Gibeonites did; or that they might not pray and make supplication, the Lord not giving

[y] על תלם super tumulum eorum, Montanus; quæ erant in collibus & in tumulis sitæ, V. L.
[z] Bereshit Rabba, sect. 31. fol. 71. 1.
[a] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. M.

[b] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 19.
[c] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31.
[d] Annal. Vet. Test. p. 39, 40.
[e] Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 37. 3.

them a spirit of supplication, but an hard heart, as Gussetius[f] observes the words may be interpreted, though he seems to prefer the former sense: *but that he might destroy them, as the Lord commanded Moses:* Deut. vii. 1, 2.

Ver. 21. *And at that time came Joshua,* &c.] After he had made a conquest of the land, or at the time he made it, as before related: *and cut off the Anakim from the mountains;* whither, upon the conquest of the land, they had betaken themselves, and lived in dens and caves: these were giants, so called from Anak the father of them; though these are not to be restrained to his posterity, but include all other giants in the land; and the Targum renders the word by *mighty men;* and as some of them dwelt in mountains, others in cities, as follows: *from Hebron;* where the children of Anak dwelt when the spies were sent into the land between forty and fifty years before this; and though the inhabitants of Hebron had been before destroyed by Joshua, these Anakim, who very likely then made their escape, returned and took possession of it after Joshua's departure, and whilst he was engaged in making other conquests; as we find that after this others of the same race again possessed it, and were in the possession of it after the death of Joshua, when they were slain by the tribe of Judah, Judg. i. 10. *from Debir;* where others of them also had got after the conquest of it; unless we suppose, as I see no great reason to object to it, that these were cut off both at Hebron and Debir, at the time of the taking of them, of which see ch. x. 36—39. *from Anab;* a city which fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 50. Jerom[g] says, in his time it was a village, near Diospolis or Lydda, about four miles from it to the east, and called Bethoannaba; but he says, that most affirm it to be eight miles from it, and called Bethannaba: Masius conjectures, that it is the same with the city of Nob; for, he says, that travellers in those parts affirm, that the city Nob is called Bethanoba and Bethanopolis: *and from all the mountains of Judah;* the hill-country of Judea, and the mountains round about Jerusalem: *and from all the mountains of Israel;* as those about Samaria, and elsewhere: *Joshua destroyed them utterly with their cities;* which they had formerly inhabited, or had got into the possession of.

Ver. 22. *There was none of the Anakim left in the land of the children of Israel,* &c.] For those that escaped the sword fled elsewhere, particularly to the following places: *only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod there remained;* that is, some of the Anakim or giants; these were three of the five principalities of the Philistines, and were never conquered and possessed by Israel, see ch. xiii. 3. of the city of Gaza, see the notes on Amos i. 7, 8. and on Zeph. ii. 4. and of Gath on Amos vi. 2. Ashdod is the same with Azotus, Acts viii. 40. see the note there: Mela says[h], the port of Azotus was a mart for the merchandises of Arabia, and was built on such an eminence, that from the top of it, at the fourth watch, might be seen the rising of the sun at the mountain Azotus; see 1 Maccab. ix. 15. this city held out a siege of 29 years against Psammitticus, king of Egypt, see the note on Isa. xx. 1.

Ver. 23. *So Joshua took the whole land,* &c.] Of Canaan, the far greater and better part of it, all before described; all that he went against, he failed not in any of his attempts; no place stood out against him that he besieged or summoned, all yielded to him: *according to all that the Lord said unto Moses:* in Deut. xi. 23, 24, 25. *and Joshua gave it for an inheritance unto Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes;* as is after related in this book: *and the land rested from war;* there were no combinations of any of the dispersed Canaanites, or insurrections made by them, nor any annoyance given to Israel by the Philistines, who inhabited five principal cities, with what belonged to them; nor did Joshua attempt any thing more in a warlike manner: and so it became a land of rest, as the heavenly Canaan will be to the spiritual Israel and church of God, after their militant state is ended, in which they now are: being engaged with many spiritual enemies, the Canaanites that are in the land, but then their warfare will be ended.

CHAP. XII.

THIS chapter gives a short account of the conquests made by the Israelites, both in the times of Moses and of Joshua, and first of the kingdom of Sihon and Og on the other side Jordan, in the times of Moses, and which he gave to the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and which are particularly described, ver. 1—6. and then of the kings and the countries on this side Jordan whom Joshua conquered, ver. 7, 8. and the names of the 31 kingdoms are recited, that so it might be exactly known and observed what were afterwards divided among the tribes and possessed by them, ver. 9—24.

Ver. 1. *Now these are the kings of the land which the children of Israel smote,* &c.] In the days of Moses, as Jarchi remarks, and as it clearly appears from what follows: *and possessed their land on the other side Jordan toward the rising of the sun;* on the east of the land of Canaan: *from the river Arnon unto the mount Hermon, and all the plain on the east;* Arnon was the border of Moab between them and the Amorites, Numb. xxi. 13. and from hence to Hermon, a mountain adjoining to Lebanon, lay the country of the two kings of the Amorites after mentioned, Deut. iii. 8, 9. and the plain on the east were the plains of Moab, which lay to the east of Jordan.

Ver. 2. *Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt in Heshbon,* &c.] Which he took from the Moabites, and made his capital city, Numb. xxi. 26. and *ruled from Aroer, which is upon the bank of the river of Arnon;* a city of Moab, which never fell into the hands of Sihon, and

[f] Comment. Ebr. p. 272.
[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. C.
[h] De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 10.

therefore he is said to rule from it but not over it: *and from the middle of the river;* that is, the river Arnon, which being the boundary of the Moabites and Amorites, the king of the Amorites might be said to rule from the middle of it: *and from half Gilead even unto the river Jabbok,* which is *the border of the children of Ammon;* so it is said to be, Deut. iii. 16. it should be rendered, not *from half Gilead,* but *and half Gilead,* as it is in the Hebrew text, and so in the Targum; for half Gilead belonged to the kingdom of Sihon, as the other half did to the kingdom of Og, as in ver. 5. and so Jarchi remarks.

Ver. 3. *And from the plain,* &c.] Or rather, *and the plain,* the plains of Moab, which, before possessed by the Israelites, belonged to the kingdom of Sihon; and the plains of Jordan, *which reached to the sea of Cinneroth on the east;* the same with the lake of Gennesaret, and sea of Tiberias, mentioned in the New Testament: *and unto the sea of the plain;* where stood the cities of the plain, Sodom, Gomorrah, &c. even *the salt sea on the east;* the same with the dead sea, into which the plain the above cities stood on was converted: *the way to Beth-jeshimoth;* which was a place in the plains of Moab, Numb. xxxiii. 49. *and from the south under Ashdoth-pisgah;* or the springs of Pisgah, which flowed from the mount of that name, Deut. iii. 17. and 49.

Ver. 4. *And the coast of Og king of Bashan,* &c.] The country that he reigned over, who was another king of the Amorites, smitten by Israel in the times of Moses: which was *of the remnant of the giants;* see Deut. iii. 11. and the note there: *that dwelt at Ashtaroth and at Edrei;* of which two places see Deut. i. 4. it seems as if Og had a palace in each of those cities, and sometimes was at one and sometimes at another, as is usual with kings.

Ver. 5. *And reigned in Mount Hermon,* &c.] That is, over all the people that inhabited that mount or dwelt under it, and adjacent to it, ch. xi. 17. of which mountain, see the notes on Deut. iii. 8, 9. *and in Salcah;* which was a city belonging to the kingdom of Og, Deut. iii. 10. *and in all Bashan;* or Batanea, a country famous for pasturage, and for fat cattle, and for oaks, frequently mentioned in Scripture: *unto the border of the Geshurites, and the Maachathites;* which were two nations the Israelites never expelled, ch. xiii. 13. of which see Deut. iii. 14. *and half Gilead;* which belonged to Og, as the other half did to Sihon, before observed, which was as follows: *the border of Sihon king of Heshbon;* here the two kingdoms joined, even in the midst of Gilead, which was divided between them, but now wholly fell into the hands of Israel.

Ver. 6. *Them did Moses the servant of the Lord, and the children of Israel, smite,* &c.] That is, the inhabitants of those kingdoms they smote with the edge of the sword, and took possession of them, the history of which see in Numb. xxi. *and Moses the servant of the Lord gave it;* the whole dominion of the two kings before mentioned: *for a possession unto the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh;* of which grant, and the conditions of it, see Numb. xxxii.

Ver. 7. *And these are the kings of the country,* &c.] After particularly named: *which Joshua and the children of Israel smote on this side Jordan on the west;* that is, on the west of Jordan: *from Baal-gad, in the valley of Lebanon, even unto the mount Halak, that goeth up to Seir;* of which see ch. xi. 17. *which Joshua gave unto the tribes of Israel for a possession, according to their divisions;* as after related in this book.

Ver. 8. *In the mountains, and in the valleys, and in the plains, and in the springs, and in the wilderness, and in the south country,* &c.] Which is a description of the whole land of Canaan; some parts of which were hills and mountains, others vales and champaign fields; others were dry and barren, and others well watered; some part of it lay to the north, as towards Lebanon, and others to the south, towards Seir: *the Hittites, the Amorites, and the Canaanites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites;* which were the nations that inhabited the land of Canaan before it was taken and possessed by the Israelites.

Ver. 9. *The king of Jericho, one,* &c.] Who was first taken, and so named first, ch. vi. *the king of Ai, which is beside Beth-el, one;* who was next taken; and though Beth-el was so near Ai, it had a king of its own, after mentioned, see ch. vii. and viii.

Ver. 10. *The king of Jerusalem, one,* &c.] Whose name was Adoni-zedek, and was one of the five kings taken and hanged, ch. x. 1, 26. *the king of Hebron, one;* another of the five kings, whose name was Hoham, ch. x. 3.

Ver. 11. *The king of Jarmuth, one,* &c.] Whose name was Piram, a third of the five kings before observed: *the king of Lachish, one;* another of them, whose name was Japhia, ch. x. 3.

Ver. 12. *The king of Eglon, one,* &c.] The last of the five kings, and his name was Debir, ch. x. 3. *the king of Gezer, one;* who came up to help Lachish, and his name was Horam, ch. x. 33.

Ver. 13. *The king of Debir, one,* &c.] The same with Kirjath-sepher, of which place see ch. x. 38. *the king of Geder, one:* Jerom[h] seems to confound this with the tower of Eder, beyond which Jacob pitched his tent, Gen. xxxv. 21. and he speaks of a Gaddera in the tribe of Judah, in his time a village belonging to the country about Ælia or Jerusalem, and of Gahedur in the tribe of Judah, a large village, 10 miles from Diospolis or Lydda, as you go to Eleutheropolis: it seems to be the same with Gederah, ch. xv. 36, or Gedor, ver. 58.

Ver. 14. *The king of Hormah, one,* &c.] Which was formerly called Zephath, Judg. i. 17. see ch. xv. 3. *the king of Arad, one;* perhaps the same with Arath, which, Jerom[i] says, is the border of the land of Judah, and is twenty miles distant from Hebron to the south; see Numb. xxi. 1. and Judg. i. 16.

Ver. 15. *The king of Libnah, one,* &c.] Taken at the same time as the kings of Makkedah, Debir, and of other places were, ch. x. 29, 30. *the king of Adullam, one;* a city in the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 35. Jerom says[k] there was a village in his time, not a small one, called by this name, ten miles to the east of Eleuthero-

[h] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. A. B.
[i] Ib. fol. 87. L.
[k] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. F.

polis: near to this place was a cave where David hid himself when he fled from Saul, 1 Sam. xxii. 1. see the note on Mic. i. 15.

Ver. 16. *The king of Makkedah, one,* &c.] In a cave near to which five kings hid themselves, and were taken out and hanged, and the city afterwards was taken by Joshua, ch. x. 16. which fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 41. *the king of Beth-el, one*: a city near to Ai, about a mile from it, and yet had a king over it: it was taken at the same time that Ai was, ch. vii. 2. and viii. 17. and fell to the lot of Benjamin, ch. xviii. 22.

Ver. 17. *The king of Tappuah, one,* &c.] Which Jerom calls[l] Thaffu; it signifies an apple, and perhaps had its name from plenty of that fruit that grew there: a city of this name fell to the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 34. where also was another place called Beth-tappuah, ver. 53. and both different from another Tappuah on the border of Manasseh, which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, ch. xvii. 8. by some thought to be meant here: *the king of Hepher, one*: mention is made of Gittah-hepher as on the border of Zebulun, ch. xix. 13. the same with Gath-hepher, of which place was the Prophet Jonah, 2 Kings xiv. 25. and of the land of Hepher in 1 Kings iv. 10. which is said by Jerom to be in the same tribe, and not far from Diocæsarea or Zippore; and we read of a Chepher or Hepher in the Jewish writings[m], which, according to the account of it there given, could not be far from the same place, at least it must be less than 12 miles from it.

Ver. 18. *The king of Aphek, one,* &c.] There was a place called Aphekah in the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 53. and an Aphek that was on the border of the Amorites, ch. xiii. 4. and another in the tribe of Asher, ch. xix. 30. but Adrichomius[n] places this Aphek in the tribe of Issachar, whose king Joshua smote, and takes it to be the same place where the Philistines in the times of Samuel and David brought their armies against Israel, 1 Sam. iv. 1. and xxix. 1. and where the king of Syria fought against Israel, 1 Kings xx. 26. and says that its ruins were now shewn in the great plain not far from Gilboa to the east of Mount Carmel, and five miles from Tabor: *the king of Lasharon, one*; which, according to the Vulgate Latin version, is the same with Saron, which, in Acts ix. 35, in some copies is called Assaron: so Adrichomius[o], who places it in the tribe of Ephraim, and takes it to be the same Sharon Isaiah speaks of, ch. xxxiii. 9. and xxxv. 2. and of which Jerom says[p], to this day there is a country between Tabor and the lake of Tiberias called Sarona, and also that from Cæsarea of Palestine to the town of Joppa, all the land that is seen bears that name.

Ver. 19. *The king of Madon, one,* &c.] Whose name was Jobab, ch. xi. 1. *the king of Hazor, one*; whose name was Jabin, and of him and his city see the note on ch. xi. 1.

Ver. 20. *The king of Shimron-meron, one,* &c.] See ch. xi. 1. this place fell to the tribe of Zebulun, ch. xix. 15. *the king of Achshaph, one*; see ch. xi. 1. this city fell to the lot of Asher. ch. xix. 25.

Ver. 21. *The king of Taanach, one,* &c.] It was in the tribe of Manasseh, ch. xvii. 11. Jerom says[q], in his time it was a large village, distant from Legion on the plain of Esdraelon three miles: *the king of Megiddo, one*; which belonged to the same tribe, ch. xvii. 11. near this place were some waters where the Canaanites fought with the Israelites, Judg. v. 19. and a valley where Josiah was slain, 2 Chron. xxxv. 22.

Ver. 22. *The king of Kedesh, one,* &c.] Which afterwards fell to the tribe of Naphtali, and was one of the cities of refuge, ch. xix. 37. and xx. 7. it was situated in upper Galilee on Mount Naphtali, four miles from the city of Sephet, and as many from Capernaum, and twenty miles from Tyre[r]: *the king of Jokneam of Carmel, one*; a city that came to the lot of the tribe of Zebulun, ch. xix. 11. and was given to the Levites, ch. xxi. 34. it was not far from Mount Carmel, from whence it is described.

Ver. 23. *The king of Dor, in the coast of Dor, one,* &c.] Of which see ch. xi. 2. it fell to the lot of Manasseh, but never was possessed by them, as were not Taanach and Megiddo, before mentioned, ch. xvii. 11. Judg. i. 27. *the king of the nations of Gilgal, one*; not the place where Joshua encamped after he had passed Jordan, for that was then no city; the Septuagint version renders it the land of Galilee; and Doctor Lightfoot[s] is of opinion that Galilee is meant, and in 1 Maccab. ix. 2. Galgala is spoken of as near to Arbel, a city in Galilee: Jerom[t] takes this to be the same with Glagulis, which in his time was a village six miles from Antipatris to the north.

Ver. 24. *The king of Tirzah, one,* &c.] To what tribe this place fell is nowhere said: Adrichomius[u] places it in the tribe of Manasseh; and so does Bunting[w], who says of it, that it was a fair and beautiful city, situated on a high and pleasant mountain, in the tribe of Manasseh, 24 miles from Jerusalem to the north: here Jeroboam had his royal seat, and so his successors unto Omri, 1 Kings xiv. 17. and xv. 33. and xvi. 6, 8, 9, 15, 17, 23. and Doctor Lightfoot[x] seems to suspect as if Shechem in Mount Ephraim and Tirzah were the same; for, he says, if Shechem and Tirzah were not one and the same town, it appears that Jeroboam had removed his court, when his son died, from where it was when he first erected his idols; compare 1 Kings xii. 25, with ch. xiv. 17. and so it may argue that there was some space between: it was, no doubt, a very pleasant and beautiful city, as not only appears from its name, but from the allusion to it in Cant. vi. 4. *all the kings thirty and one*; it may seem strange that, in so small a country as Canaan was, there should be so many kings in it, since the length of it from Dan to Beersheba was scarce 160 miles, as Jerom[y] says;

[l] De loc. Heb. fol. 95. C.
[m] T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 37. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 20. fol. 161. 4.
[n] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 25.
[o] Ib. p. 30.
[p] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. M.
[q] Ib. fol. 95. D.
[r] Adrichom. Theatrum, p. 104.
[s] Chorograph. Cent. c. 88.
[t] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. B.
[u] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 74.
[w] Travels, &c. p. 160.
[x] Works, vol. 1. p. 78.
[y] Epist. Dardano, tom. 3. p. 22. I. K.

who further observes, that he was ashamed to give the breadth of it, lest it should give occasion to Heathens to blaspheme; for, adds he, from Joppa to our little village Beth-lehem (where they then were) were 46 miles, to which succeeded only a vast desert: but it may be observed, that in ancient times, in other countries, there were a great many kings, as here in Britain, and in France, Spain, and Germany, as Bishop Patrick has observed from several writers; and Strabo [z] testifies the same of the cities of Phœnicia or Canaan, that they had each of them separate kings, as Joshua here describes them.

C H A P. XIII.

IN this chapter Joshua is informed by the Lord, or put in mind, that part of the land of Canaan remained unconquered, and which it was; and is directed to divide the whole land among the nine tribes, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, ver. 1—9. and since the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other half-tribe of Manasseh, had received their inheritance on the other side Jordan, ver. 8. that is described in general, ver. 9—14. and then the particular portion of Reuben, ver. 15—23. and of Gad, ver. 24—28. and of the half-tribe of Manasseh, ver. 29—33.

Ver. 1. *Now Joshua was old, and stricken in years,* &c.] How old he was cannot be said precisely, but it is very probable he was now about 100 years of age, for he lived to be 110; and the land of Canaan was seven years in dividing, as the Jews generally say, and it seems as if he did not live long after that: *and the Lord said unto him:* either spoke to him out of the tabernacle, or appeared to him in a dream or vision: *thou art old, and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be possessed:* that is, very much of the land of Canaan, which God had promised to Abraham, yet remained unconquered by Joshua, and unpossessed by the children of Israel; and the old age of Joshua is observed, to intimate to him that through it, and the infirmities of it, he was unable to go out to war, and to finish this work, which must be left to be done by others hereafter; and that he should with all expedition set about another work he was capable of doing, before he died, which was the division of the land among the tribes of Israel.

Ver. 2. *This is the land that yet remaineth,* &c.] Unconquered and unenjoyed, namely, what is after described; and this account is given for Joshua's information, that he might know what to divide, and for the people of Israel's sake, that they might know what they had a right to a claim upon; what they should endeavour to possess themselves of, and what the Lord would deliver into their hands, provided they were obedient to his will, for, because they were not, hence many of these places never came into their possession, though divided to them by lot: *all the borders of the Philistines;* whose country bordered and lay upon the shores of the Mediterranean sea, in the south-west of the land of Canaan: *and all Geshuri;* the principal city belonging to it is said to be in Syria, 2 Sam. xv. 8. and had a king over it in the times of David, 2 Sam. iii. 3. and seems never to have come into the hands of the Israelites.

Ver. 3. *From Sihor, which is before Egypt,* &c.] Which Jarchi and Kimchi interpret of the river Nile, and so that river is called, Jer. ii. 18. it seems to have this name from the waters of it being black and turbid; and hence it was called by the Greeks *Melas;* and by the Latins *Melo;* though it is thought, that not properly the river itself is here meant, which did not reach to the borders of Palestine, but a branch of it, a rivulet from it, for so a traveller [a] writes, "in a journey of "about five days from Gaza towards Egypt, the "hithermost arm of the Nile is received by the sea, "and is commonly called Carabus:" *even unto the borders of Ekron northward:* that is, from the south-west of Palestine, near to which was the river Nile, to the northern part of it, where stood the principality of Ekron, one of the five which belonged to the Philistines: which *is counted to the Canaanite;* which was reckoned as belonging to the posterity of Canaan, though the Philistines got possession of it, who descended from Mizraim; and indeed it was only accounted as belonging to Canaan and his sons; of right, and according to the grant of God, it belonged to the seed of Abraham: *five lords of the Philistines:* who had not kings, as other countries and cities in the land of Canaan had, and their cities were called lordships, principalities, and not kingdoms, and are as follow: *the Gazathites, and the Ashdothites, the Eshkalonites, the Gittites, and the Ekronites;* so called from Gaza, Ashdod, Ascalon, Gath, and Ekron, the cities they were in possession of: *also the Avites;* it is not certain whether these were a distinct principality from the other five, or a people dispersed amongst them; which seems most likely, since those were the original inhabitants, but were driven out or destroyed by the Philistines, though it seems some remained and dwelt among them; see Deut. ii. 23.

Ver. 4. *From the south, all the land of the Canaanites,* &c.] That is, of those Canaanites who were particularly so called, in distinction from those of the other nations or tribes, and who dwelt in several parts of the land, some in the east and others in the west, see ch. xi. 3. and, as it seems here, some in the south: now on the side of the south, as Kimchi interprets it, all the land of the Canaanites was left, that is, remained unconquered and not possessed: *and Mearah that is beside the Sidonians:* the inhabitants of Sidon, and parts adjacent: what this place was, which belonged to the Sidonians, for so it may better be rendered, is not certain; some take it to be a cave belonging to them: Sandys [b] speaks of a number of caves cut out of the rock in those parts, called the caves of the Sidonians,

[z] Geograph. l. 16. p. 519.
[a] Jodocus a Gistella apud Drusium in loc.
[b] Travels, l. 3. p. 169. Ed. 5.

and afterwards the caves of Tyre; so it is interpreted by the Targum, and in the Syriac and Arabic versions; others take it to be the river Magoras, Pliny [c] makes mention of as on the borders of Lebanon near Zidon and Berytus: mention is made of the waters of Mearah along with the waters of Tiberias in Jewish writings [d]; but rather something of more importance than a cave or a river is meant; most likely a tract of land near Sidon, and which belonged to it, and reached *unto Aphek, to the borders of the Amorites;* of this place see the note on ch. xii. 18.

Ver. 5. *And the land of the Giblites,* &c.] This was another country that remained unconquered; the Greeks call it Byblus, and near to which Pliny [e] speaks of a place called Gabale, and is now called Gibyle; it is [f] said to be "pleasantly situated by the sea-side, and "at present it contains but a little extent of ground, "but yet more than enough for the small number of "its inhabitants:" it was in greater splendour, and its inhabitants of more fame, in the times of Ezekiel, Ezek. xxvii. 9. *and all Lebanon toward the sun-rising;* or east of the land; all that inhabited that mountain remained unconquered, though the conquest was carried as far as the borders thereof: *from Baal-gad, under Mount Hermon;* of which see ch. xi. 17. *unto the entering into Hamath;* which was the north border of the land; see Numb. xxxiv. 8.

Ver. 6. *All the inhabitants of the hill-country,* &c.] Not in Judea, but in and about Lebanon, as follows: *from Lebanon unto Misrephoth-maim;* of which see ch. xi. 8. and *all the Sidonians;* the inhabitants of the ancient city of Sidon, and the villages and lands belonging to it: these remained unconquered, and never were possessed by the Israelites: *them will I drive out from before the children of Israel,* which, though it may have a special respect unto the Sidonians, with whom the clause is closely connected, yet may include all the above lands unconquered, out of which, as well as Sidon, the Lord promises to drive the inhabitants, to make way for the children of Israel; that is, on condition of their obedience, for it appears that not only the Sidonians, but many others, even the chief, and most of those mentioned, were never possessed by them: *only divide thou it by lot unto the Israelites for an inheritance;* that is, the whole land, as Abarbinel rightly remarks, both what was subdued and what was not; that was the business, and all the business, Joshua had now to do; he was not to be employed in making any further conquests, but leave them to others, and apply himself to the division of the land, by lot, to the tribes that as yet had no portion assigned them: *as I have commanded thee;* now, at this time.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance,* &c.] Having the command and authority of God for it, he was to set about it at once, with all diligence and application: *unto the nine tribes;* of Judah, Simeon, Benjamin, Dan, Ephraim, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, and Naphtali, in which order they are placed, when the Lord gave to Moses the names of the men that should divide the land under Eleazar and Joshua, Numb. xxxiv. 16—28. *and the half-tribe of Manasseh;* that half which had no inheritance on the other side Jordan, and for which a prince of the children of Joseph was appointed to divide, Numb. xxxiv. 23.

Ver. 8. *With whom the Reubenites and the Gadites have received their inheritance,* &c.] That is, along with the half-tribe of Manasseh, but not with that half of it before mentioned, who was to have a division of a part with the nine tribes, but with the other half of the tribe settled beyond Jordan; with them the tribes of Reuben and Gad had received their portion at their own request, and so were to have no share in the present distribution: *which Moses gave them beyond Jordan eastward;* at their desire, and upon certain conditions to be performed by them, see Numb. xxxii. even *as Moses the servant of the Lord gave them;* this character of Moses, as the *servant of the Lord,* seems to be observed to shew that he gave the said tribes their inheritance according to the will of God, and in obedience to it: here end the words of the Lord to Joshua, and next follows an account of the land given to the two tribes and a half described by the writer of this book.

Ver. 9. *From Aroer, that is on the bank of the river Arnon,* &c.] A city belonging to Moab, from whence the description begins, the river Arnon, on which it was situated, being the border between Moab and the Amorites, Numb. xxi. 13: *and the city that is in the midst of the river;* or *even the city;* meaning the same city of Aroer, it lying both on the bank of it, and in the middle of it, or it was a double city, as may seem from Isa. xvii. 2. and so differently situated at that river: *and all the plains of Medeba unto Dibon;* of these two places, see Numb. xxi. 30. between them lay a plain, which some take to be the plain of Moab; but it rather seems to be a plain that was between these two places, and, according to ver. 17, Dibon itself was in a plain.

Ver. 10. *And all the cities of Sihon king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon,* &c.] A city he took from the Moabites, and made it his royal seat, Numb. xxi. 26: *unto the border of the children of Ammon;* which was the river Jabbok, Deut. iii. 16.

Ver. 11. *And Gilead,* &c.] The land of Gilead, which was part of the kingdom of Og, half of which was given to Reuben, and the other half to Gad: *and the border of the Geshurites and Maachathites;* of which see Deut. iii. 14: *and all Mount Hermon;* called also Sirion, Shenir, and Sion, Deut. iii. 9. and iv. 48: *and all Bashan unto Salcah;* another part of the dominions of Og, Deut. iii. 10.

Ver. 12. *All the kingdom of Og in Bashan, who reigned in Ashtaroth and in Edrei,* &c.] See the note on ch. xii. 4: *who remained of the remnant of the giants;* was descended from those that remained in Ashtaroth, after the rest were cut off by Chedorlaomer, Gen. xiv. 5. called there the Rephaim, as here: *for these did Moses smite, and cast them out;* that is, not only the giants, but the inhabitants of the above kingdom, the greatest part of them; for the Geshurites and the Maachathites are excepted in the following verse.

Ver. 13. *Nevertheless, the children of Israel expelled not the Geshurites, nor the Maachathites,* &c.] Neither

[c] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20.
[d] Misn. Sabbat. c. 22. sect. 5. T. Hieros. Sabbat, fol. 6. 1.
[e] Ut supra.
[f] Maundrel's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 33.

in the times of Moses, nor in the times of Joshua: *but the Geshurites and the Maachathites dwell among the Israelites until this day*; in full possession of their cities unmolested; yea, in after-times they became separate and distinct kingdoms; for we read both of the king of Geshur, and of the king of Maachah, 2 Sam. iii. 3. and x. 6.

Ver. 14. *Only unto the tribe of Levi he gave none inheritance*, &c.] Neither the Lord, nor Moses by his order, nor did he appoint any inheritance for them, either beyond Jordan, or on this side it, for the Lord was to be their inheritance, Numb. xviii. 20: *the sacrifices of the Lord God of Israel made by fire* are *their inheritance, as he said unto them*, Deut. xviii. 1. and which are put for the whole of what was granted to them for their subsistence, as tithes, first-fruits, &c.

Ver. 15. *And Moses gave unto the tribe of the children of Reuben* inheritance *according to their families*.] According to the number of them, and sufficient for them.

Ver. 16. *And their coast was from Aroer that* is *on the bank of the river Arnon*, &c.] As the country of Sihon is described, ver. 9. from whence it appears that it was his country which was given to Reuben, though not all of it: *and the city that* is *in the midst of the river*; see the note on ver. 9: *and all the plain by Medeba*; which reached unto Dibon, ver. 9.

Ver. 17. *Heshbon, and all her cities that* are *in the plain*, &c.] Which was by Medeba, and reached to Dibon: *Dibon, and Bamoth-baal, and Beth-baal-meon*; Dibon was rebuilt by Gad, though it belonged to Reuben, and perhaps was inhabited by both, being on the borders of each; and Bamoth-baal signifies the high places of Baal; see Numb. xxii. 41. perhaps this is the same with Bamoth in the valley, Numb. xxi. 20. and Beth-baal-meon is the same with Baal-meon in Numb. xxxii. 38. where it is highly probable was a temple of Baal, since both *beth* signifies an house, and *meon* an habitation.

Ver. 18. *And Jahaza*, &c.] Called Jahaz, Numb. xxii. 23. where the battle was fought between Sihon and Israel: *and Kedemoth*: near to which was a wilderness, which took its name from it, from whence Moses sent messengers with words of peace to Sihon, Deut. ii. 26: *and Mephaath*; thought to be the Maipha of Ptolemy [f]; here Jerom says [g], in his time was a garrison of Roman soldiers, because of the desert that was near. It was a city, with its suburbs, given to the Levites, as were the two preceding, ch. xxi. 36, 37. Adrichomius [h] takes it to be the same with Malle, which, Josephus says, [i] was called the city of the strangers.

Ver. 19. *And Kirjathaim, and Sibmah*, &c.] Of which see the note on Numb. xxxii. 3, 37, 38: *and Zareth-shahar, in the mount of the valley*; which was built on one of the mountains that looked over the valley of Moab, as did Nebo, Pisgah, Abarim; perhaps it is the same place Josephus [k] calls Zara, to which he joins the valley of the Cilicians, and mentions it along with Heshbon, Medeba, and other cities of Moab; according to Adrichomius [l], it was in the mount of the valley of Beth-peor, which next follows.

Ver. 20. *And Beth-peor*, &c.] So called from Peor, the idol of the Moabites, and where very likely there had been a temple built to the honour of it; over-against this place was a valley, where Israel abode some time, Deut. iii. 29: *and Ashdod-pisgah*; of which see Deut. iii. 17: *and Beth-jeshimoth*; of which see Numb. xxxiii. 49.

Ver. 21. *And all the cities of the plain*, &c.] In the champaign country, as well as those in the mountainous part: *and all the kingdom of Sihon*; or, as Masius renders the words, *which all had been the kingdom of Sihon*: for the whole kingdom of Sihon was not given to Reuben, only a part of it, and the rest to Gad, as in ver. 27: *king of the Amorites, which reigned in Heshbon*; as in ver. 10: *whom Moses smote with the princes of Midian, Evi, and Rekem, and Zur, and Hur, and Reba*; not at the same time that Sihon was smitten by him, but afterwards in a war with Midian, Numb. xxxi. 8. where their names are given as here; and there they are called kings of Midian, petty kings, and, as it seems by what follows, were subject to Sihon, and therefore are here mentioned: which were *dukes of Sihon dwelling in the country*: for Midian, as Kimchi supposes, and not without reason, was under the government of Sihon, and these were his nobles, though they dwelt in the land of Midian.

Ver. 22. *Balaam also, the son of Beor the soothsayer, did the children of Israel slay with the sword*, &c.] At the same time that the princes of Midian were slain, and which is also observed in Numb. xxxi. 8. see the note. Kimchi supposes that he returned to Midian, on hearing that the counsel he gave to them, to ensnare Israel with their daughters, had taken effect, in order to receive his wages, and so received his righteous doom and just reward; it is commonly said by the Jews [m], that he was slain by Phinehas: *among them that were slain by them*; among the above princes, and the common soldiers, of which there was a great slaughter; even all the males of Midian were slain, Numb. xxxi. 7.

Ver. 23. *And the border of the children of Reuben was Jordan, and the border* thereof, &c.] As their border eastward was Aroer on the river Arnon, so their border westward was the river Jordan: *this was the inheritance of the children of Reuben, after their families, the cities and the villages thereof*; which Moses gave them on the other side Jordan; and next follow an account of the inheritance of the tribe of Gad in those parts.

Ver. 24. *And Moses gave* inheritance *unto the tribe of Gad*, &c.] On the other side Jordan, as he did to Reuben: even *unto the children of Gad, according to their families*; according to the number and largeness of them, dividing to each their part and portion.

Ver. 25. *And their coast was Jazer*, &c.] Their southern coast; of Jazer, see Numb. xxi. 32. where it is called Jaazer, and is mentioned in Isa. xvi. 8. and in Jer. xlviii. 32. where it is spoken of as a city of Moab, as it was in the days of those prophets: *and all the*

[f] Geograph. l. 5. c. 7.
[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. D.
[h] Theatrum Ter. Sanct. p. 179.
[i] Antiqu. l. 12. c. 8. sect. 2.
[k] Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 4.
[l] Ut supra, p. 130.
[m] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2. Kimchi in loc.

cities of Gilead; which lay in those parts, for the whole was not given to this tribe, half of Gilead was given to the half-tribe of Manasseh, ver. 31: *and half the land of the children of Ammon*; not what then belonged to them, but what had been taken from them by the Amorites; and which Israel taking from them, had a right to retain, though they were forbid meddling with any of their land in present possession; see Deut ii. 19. Judg. xi. 13—24: *unto Aroer that is before Rabbath*; Aroer was a city of Moab, situated on the river Arnon, ver. 9. and stood over-against Rabbath, a city of the Amorites, since called Philadelphia, the same that Joab took, 2 Sam. xii. 26. though Reland thinks[n], that according to the situation of these cities another Aroer must be here meant, and which belonged to the Amorites.

Ver. 26. *And from Heshbon unto Ramath-mizpeh, and Betonim*, &c.] This was their coast from the south to the north, and so describes their eastern border, which reached from Heshbon, given to the tribe of Reuben, ver. 7. to these places mentioned; Ramath-mizpeh, the same with Ramoth-gilead, which Jerom[o] says was a village in his time, and lay 15 miles from Philadelphia or Rabbath before mentioned, to the east; it should be to the west; of Betonim we nowhere else read, it seems to have been near to Ramath: *and from Mahanaim unto the border of Debir*: the former of these was the place where the angels met Jacob, and who gave it the name from thence; and in after-times a city of this name was built there, and was near the river Jabbok, Gen. xxxii. 2. Debir is different from that in the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 15. in the Septuagint version here it is called Daibon, perhaps the same with Dibon, the tribe of Gad rebuilt, and is called Dibon-gad, Numb. xxxii. 34. and xxxiii. 45. unless Lidbar here should be the same with Lodebar in Gilead, 2 Sam. xvii. 27.

Ver. 27. *And in the valley, Beth-aram*, &c.] The same with Beth-haran, Numb. xxxii. 36. see the note there: *and Beth-nimrah*; sometimes called Nimrah, Numb. xxxii. 3, 36. near to which were some waters, called the waters of Nimrim, Isa. xv. 6. It was in Jerom's[p] time a large village; it seems to have its name from leopards, which perhaps had their haunts hereabout: *and Succoth*: the place where Jacob pitched his tent after he had passed over Jabbok; it is called in the Jerusalem Talmud[q] Thaarabah: *and Zephon*; which in the same Talmud is Amatho or Amathus, which Jerom says[r] is a village beyond Jordan, 21 miles from Pella to the south, though he places it in the tribe of Reuben: *the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon*; which was not given to the tribe of Reuben, ver. 21. *Jordan and his border*; that is, the cities which were near it, as Kimchi; or that were upon the bank of it, as Jarchi: *even unto the edge of the sea of Cinneroth*: the same with the lake of Gennesaret, Luke v. 1. *on the other side Jordan eastward*: the other from that in which the inheritance of Gad lay, which was beyond Jordan, from the land of Canaan.

Ver. 28. *This is the inheritance of the children of Gad, after their families*, &c.] As described in the preceding verses: *the cities and their villages*; the cities given them, some of which are mentioned by name, and the villages adjacent and belonging to them were included in them.

Ver. 29. *And Moses gave inheritance unto the half-tribe of Manasseh*, &c.] Whether at their request or of himself, there being land enough for them, and the two tribes of Gad and Reuben, is not certain: *and this is the possession of the half-tribe of Manasseh, by their families*: which is after related and described.

Ver. 30. *And their coast was from Mahanaim*, &c.] A place in the tribe of Gad, ver. 26. which was the boundary of the half-tribe that way: *all Bashan*; so famous for its oxen, and for pasturage for them, and for its oaks, called by Josephus Batanea: *all the kingdom of Og king of Bashan*; which, besides Bashan, took in the kingdom of Argob or Trachonitis, half the land of Gilead, all which was possessed by the half-tribe of Manasseh: see Deut. iii. 13: *and all the towns of Jair which are in Bashan, threescore cities*; of Jair, and his relation to Manasseh, and of his taking these cities, and the number of them, see Numb. xxxiii. 41. Deut. iii. 4, 14.

Ver. 31. *And half Gilead*, &c.] The other half not given to the Gadites, who had that half of it which Sihon possessed, and the tribe of Manasseh that half of it which Og possessed, see Deut. iii. 12, 13. *and Ashtaroth, and Edrei, cities of the kingdom of Og in Bashan*; which are particularly mentioned, because royal cities, ver. 12. see Deut. i. 4. were pertaining *unto the children of Machir the son of Manasseh*; and who was his only son; however, to his posterity only was this inheritance given, though not to them all: *even to one half of the children of Machir, by their families*; which seems to confirm it that Manasseh had no other son, since his whole posterity, both the half-tribe on the other side, as well as that in the land of Canaan, were denominated from him; though he seems to have had another son, who perhaps died without issue, 1 Chron. vii. 14.

Ver. 32. *These are the countries which Moses did distribute for inheritance in the plains of Moab*, &c.] Which is particularly described, that each might know their proper portion: *on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward*; of the land of Canaan; of Jordan by Jericho, see the note on Numb. xxii. 1.

Ver. 33. *But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance*, &c.] Neither on the other side Jordan, nor did he order them any in Canaan; but expressly declared they were to have no part in the division of it, though they were his own tribe; which shews him to be a disinterested man, that he faithfully observed the orders and instructions the Lord gave him: *the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance, as he said unto them*: what was given to the Lord out of the sacrifices, and the tithes, and first-fruits, that were theirs; see Numb. xviii. 20, &c. Deut. xviii. 1, &c.

[n] Palæstin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 583.
[o] De loc. Heb. fol. 99. A.
[p] Ib. fol. 93. I.
[q] T. Hieros. Sheviith, fol. 38. 4.
[r] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. E.

CHAP. XIV.

THIS chapter proceeds to give an account of the countries divided to the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, ver. 1—5. but previous to that division relates the claim of Caleb to Hebron, through a promise made unto him by Moses forty-five years ago, upon his report of the good land, whither he was sent a spy by him, ver. 6—12. and the grant which Joshua made of it to him, with his blessing, ver. 13—15.

Ver. 1. *And these are the countries which the children of Israel inherited in the land of Canaan,* &c.] Of which an exact account is given in the following chapters, particularly in the xvth, xvith, xviith, xviiith, and xixth chapters: *which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel, distributed for an inheritance unto them:* namely, 10 princes, one of each tribe, who, with Eleazar and Joshua, were appointed of the Lord by name to do this business, even seven years ago, before their entrance into the land of Canaan, Numb. xxxiv. 17—29.

Ver. 2. *By lot was their inheritance,* &c.] Every tribe had its part and portion assigned to it, by the casting of lots; which was done to prevent any future quarrels, animosities and strifes among the tribes, the disposition being of the Lord; and to shew the exact agreement between the lot and the divine predictions by Jacob and Moses; and to make it appear that the division of the land was not owing to the private combination of the above men, and their private settlement of it: but to the providence of God, the directors of the lot; their chief business was to see that the lot was executed in a faithful manner, and that every tribe had its allotment according to it. In this Canaan was a type of the heavenly inheritance, which the saints obtain by lot, in and through Christ, the antitypical Joshua, Eph. i. 11. *as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses,* Numb. xxvi. 55, 56. *for the nine tribes, and for the half-tribe:* see ch. xiii. 7. the reason why this number of them is particularly mentioned follows.

Ver. 3. *And Moses had given the inheritance of two tribes, and an half-tribe, on the other side Jordan,* &c.] The two tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, whose inheritance is described in the preceding chapter: *but unto the Levites he gave none inheritance among them;* this is frequently observed, that it might be taken notice of, to shew the disintegestedness of Moses in this affair, Levi being his own tribe; and to recommend the care of the Levites to the other tribes, according to the provision God had made for them.

Ver. 4. *For the children of Joseph were two tribes, Manasseh and Ephraim,* &c.] For the birthright being forfeited by Reuben, was given to Joseph, who had the double portion, the privilege of the first-born; by which means the number of the twelve tribes was kept up in the division of the land, though that of Levi had no share in it; and which is also a reason why they had none, that Joseph's two sons might be reckoned two tribes: *therefore they gave no part unto the Levites in the land;* to make way for the sons of Joseph to have the double portion: *save cities to dwell in;* and that only, for they might not sell them, as other Israelites could theirs: *with their suburbs, for their cattle, and for their substance;* the Targum is, "for all their "beasts, and for their cattle;" that is, for convenient places to put them into, and for pasturage for them; which Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret of their larger and lesser cattle, their herds and their flocks, their oxen and sheep.

Ver. 5. *As the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel did,* &c.] Particularly with respect to the division of the land, and making provision for the Levites; this they did by their heads and representatives, the high-priest and chief ruler, and the princes of the several tribes: *and they divided the land;* met about it, and began to take measures in order to do it; they prepared for it, though as yet it was not actually done, and previous to it was the following incident.

Ver. 6. *Then the children of Judah came unto Joshua in Gilgal,* &c.] Whither he was returned after the conquest of the kings and their kingdoms; these were not the whole tribe of Judah, but some of the chief men of it who accompanied Caleb, for the honour of him, as Ben Gersom observes, he being their prince; and to second his petition, and to shew their consent unto, and an approbation of such an assignment to him as he desired: *and Caleb, the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, said unto him:* whether Caleb or Jephunneh is called the Kenezite, and what the reason of the name, are not very material; and of which see the note on Numb. xxxii. 12. and as Caleb was personally and singly concerned in the following affair, he alone addressed Joshua, attended with some principal men of his tribe: *thou knowest the thing the Lord said unto Moses the man of God, concerning thee and me, in Kadesh-barnea:* the place from whence the spies were sent, and whither they returned to Moses there, of whom Caleb speaks with great respect and veneration, which he knew would be very pleasing and endearing to Joshua, who could not but remember what had been said by him concerning himself and Caleb, though it was now forty-five years ago; it being so very striking and memorable, that only two of that generation then present should enter into the land of Canaan; the fulfilment of which, in all its circumstances, they had lived to see.

Ver. 7. *Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land,* &c.] Not he alone, but eleven more with him, one out of every tribe; his age he mentions, and of which, or near it, it is highly probable the rest of the spies were, to shew that he and they were in the prime of their days, both as to bodily strength and intellectual capacity, which were requisite for such service as to spy out the land, of what quality that and its inhabitants were; and Moses he calls the servant of the Lord, because it was by the order and appointment of God, signified to Moses, that this was done; and the place

from whence they were sent forth is named, which ascertains what that Kadesh was, where Israel was encamped when the spies were sent, Numb. xiii. 26. *and I brought him word again, as* it was *in mine heart*: that is, he gave to Moses upon his return a sincere, honest and faithful representation of the land, and its inhabitants, as it appeared to him.

Ver. 8. *Nevertheless, my brethren that went up with me*, &c.] Meaning the rest of the spies, excepting Joshua, that went up with him into the land of Canaan to spy it, which they might be properly said to do, since they went up a hill or mountain, in order to go into it, Numb. xiii. 17. *made the heart of the people melt*: discouraged them, filled them with fears, sunk their spirits, that their hearts flowed, and became as weak as water, having no strength left in them, or hope of possessing the land; being told what stout and gigantic men the inhabitants of it were, and how strongly fortified were their cities: *but I wholly followed the Lord my God*; and did not join with them in an ill report of the good land; but having the fear of God before his eyes, walked after that, and delivered in his report faithfully, according to the dictates of his conscience, and the real sentiments of his mind; of this phrase, see the note on Numb. xiv. 24.

Ver. 9. *And Moses sware on that day, saying*, &c.] Or declared the oath of the Lord, for it was the Lord that sware to what follows; see Deut. i. 34, 35, 36. *surely the land whereon thy feet have trodden shall be thine inheritance, and thy children's for ever*: not the whole land of Canaan, nor all the parts of it Caleb travelled through, but particularly Hebron; which though not expressly mentioned in the aforesaid oath, yet was understood and known to be the meaning of it, and which Joshua by the following grant owned, and it is elsewhere expressly affirmed, Judg. i. 20. and it is remarked, that it is not said *they*, but *he* came to Hebron, Numb. xiii. 22. that is Caleb, so that it was literally true that his feet had trodden there: now the reason of this oath, and the inheritance assured by it to Caleb, was, *because thou hast wholly followed the Lord thy God*; in all his ways, and with full purpose of heart, and particularly had acted the upright and faithful part in the report he made of the good land; see the note on Numb. xiv. 24.

Ver. 10. *And now, behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said*, &c.] Had upheld him in life, and preserved him from many dangers in the wilderness; and had continued him not only in life, but in health to that day, according to his promise to him, that he would bring him into the land of Canaan, and that he should see and possess it, Numb. xiv. 24. Deut. i. 36. *these forty and five years, even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, and while the* children of *Israel wandered in the wilderness*; not that the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness 45 years, but it was while they were in the wilderness this word or promise, concerning Caleb, was spoken by the Lord to Moses; and it was in the second year of their coming out of Egypt, after which they wandered in the wilderness 38 years, so that they had now been in the land of Canaan seven years; and from hence the Jewish chronologers' gather, that the land was seven years in subduing, and which their commentators in general take notice of. Maimonides[1] seems to be displeased with the Arabs for calling the wilderness, through which the Israelites travelled, *the desert of wandering*; but it appears from hence to be a very proper epithet of it; and Kadesh the place where they were first threatened, that they should be wanderers in the wilderness for such a time, had the additional name of Barnea, which signifies the son of a wanderer: *and now, lo, I am this day 85 years old*; being 40 years of age when sent a spy into the land, ver. 7. 38 years he was with Israel in the wilderness, and seven years more since they entered into the land, in all 85: there is no necessity of understanding it that this was his precise birth-day, but that about this time, or that he was now completely of such an age, which was more by 15 years than the age of man in common at that time, see Psal. xc. 10.

Ver. 11. *As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me*, &c.] To spy the land, 45 years ago; suggesting that he was as sound in his mind, understanding, judgment and memory, and as hale, strong, and robust in his body now, as he had been so long ago; which was a wonderful instance of the care of divine Providence over him in upholding him in life, and continuing him in vigour and health at such an age, when the carcasses of so many thousands had pined away and fell in the wilderness: *as my strength was then, even so is my strength now for war*; he had the same strength of body and courage of mind to engage in warlike enterprises as he had so many years ago; and this he the rather mentions, to prevent any objection Joshua might make to the giving of Hebron to him, since being inhabited by giants, it required a large share of strength and courage to attempt the conquest of it: but Caleb had strength *both to go out, and to come in*; to do any civil business, to preside over his tribe, or to govern any city, and its appendages, that should be put into his hands.

Ver. 12. *Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof the Lord spake in that day*, &c.] The mountainous part of the country, the hill-country of Judea, in which Hebron, Debir, and other cities were; for it was not one particular city only that Caleb requested, but a large tract of ground: *for thou heardest in that day how the Anakim were there, and that the cities were great and fenced*: that the giants, called Anakim, dwelt in the mountainous country, and their cities, Hebron, Debir, and Anab, were very large, and well fortified; this Joshua heard at the time the spies were sent into the land, he being one of them; and this he heard, not from the report of the spies, but from the people of the country, and therefore must know that to conquer these men, and subdue their cities, was an arduous undertaking; but since he had strength and courage, he hoped his request would be granted: *if so be the Lord will be with me*; which he spake not as doubting of his presence and power to be with him, and assist him, but as placing his confidence therein, and distrusting his own power and ability, having no dependence on that, but believing that the Lord, or, as the Targum, the Word of the Lord, would be with him for his help:

' Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 31.

[1] Moreh Nevochim, par. 3. c. 50. p. 512.

then, says he, *I shall be able to drive them out, as the Lord said*: that is, to drive the Anakim out of their cities, or out of the mountains, the caves and dens there, to which they betook themselves, since the taking of Hebron, Debir, and Anab, by Joshua, ch. xi. 22. and he relied upon the promise of God to enable him to do this, and not upon his natural strength and courage, or the number and prowess of the warlike tribe of Judah, of which he was prince.

Ver. 13. *And Joshua blessed him*, &c.] By granting him his request, congratulating him upon it, and praying for and wishing him success in his attempt to drive out the giants, and possess their country: *and gave unto Caleb, the son of Jephunneh, Hebron for an inheritance*; being satisfied of the justness of his suit, of its being the will of God, and the order of Moses, that he should have this for an inheritance, which he had heard himself, had knowledge of, and well remembered: this is to be understood not of the city of Hebron itself, for that was given to the Levites, and was a city of refuge, but the country round about in the fields and villages annexed to it, as appears from ch. xxi. 12.

Ver. 14. *Hebron therefore became the inheritance of Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite unto this day*, &c.] The time of the writing of this book: *because he wholly followed the Lord God of Israel*: as in ver. 8, 9. Hebron signifies fellowship or communion; and this in a spiritual sense is very desirable by all the people of God, as Hebron was by Caleb, even communion with God, Father, Son and Spirit, with angels and saints, both now and hereafter; and they are willing to engage with their spiritual enemies in the name and strength of Christ, though ever so potent, may they but enjoy this blessing, and which is more or less granted to all the hearty, sincere, and faithful followers of Christ; see John xiv. 21—23. 1 John i. 3, 7.

Ver. 15. *And the name of Hebron before* was *Kirjath-arba*, &c.] According to Jerom [a], it had its name of Hebron from a son or grandson of Caleb of that name, 1 Chron. ii. 42. and if so, then it is here, and in some other places, so called by anticipation: Kirjath-arba may be rendered *the city of the four*; and had its name, as some think, from the four couple buried there, or near it, Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah; or from four eminent persons, who formerly dwelt there, Aner, Eshcol, Mamre, and Abraham; or rather from four persons that more lately dwelt there, Anak and his three sons, Sheshai, Ahiman, and Talmai; or Arba is the name of some great man, to whom this city belonged, and so was called the city of Arba, which is the sense of our version, as appears by the following supplement: which Arba was *a great man among the Anakim*: both in stature and in dignity, and in authority, which some take to be Anak himself, the father of the Anakim; so Jarchi and Kimchi: *and the land had rest from war*: as is observed in ch. xi. 23. after Joshua had finished his conquest; and here again it is remarked just before the division of the land, as being now a proper time for it.

CHAP. XV.

IN this chapter are related the boundaries of the lot of the tribe of Judah, ver. 1—12. and the assignment of Hebron to Caleb, from whence he drove out the giants, and of Debir, which was taken by Othniel his brother, to whom, on that account, he gave his daughter in marriage, who made a further request to her father, which was granted, ver. 13—19. and then follows an account of the several cities by name, which fell to the tribe of Judah, ver. 20—63.

Ver. 1. *This then was the lot of the tribe of the children of Judah by their families*, &c.] The land of Canaan was divided by lot to the several tribes, and the tribe of Judah had its lot first; of the manner of casting lots, see the notes on Numb. xxvi. 55. It seems as if the lot was first cast for the tribes of Judah and Joseph, when the former had the southern, and the latter the northern part of the land for their portion, which was done in Gilgal; after this lots were cast in Shiloh for the other seven tribes, who had the land divided among them, which lay between Judah and Joseph, or between the southern and northern parts of the land, see ch. xviii. 1. &c. and it seems that not only the land was divided to the tribes by lot, but that the portion of land which belonged to each tribe was divided in the same way to the several families and households belonging thereunto; as is here suggested, with respect to the tribe of Judah, whose lot reached even *to the border of Edom*; or Idumea, which lay to the south of the land of Canaan: *the wilderness of Zin southward* was *the uttermost part of the south coast*; the same with Kadesh, and lay upon the borders of Edom; see Numb. xxxiii. 36. and xxxiv. 3.

Ver. 2. *And their south border was from the shore of the salt sea*, &c.] Sometimes called the dead sea, the sea of Sodom, and the lake Asphaltites, which, as Jarchi observes, was south-east of the land of Israel: *from the bay that looketh southward*; or the *tongue*, as the Hebrew, which the Targum and Kimchi interpret of a rock or promontory, the point that ran out into the sea, looking to the south-east.

Ver. 3. *And it went out to the south side of Maaleh-acrabbim*, &c.] Or the ascent of Akrabbim, as it is called, Numb. xxxiv. 4. see the note there: *and passed along to Zin, and ascended upon the south side unto Kadesh-barnea*: which perfectly agrees with the southern border of the land, as described in Numb. xxxiv. 4. *and passed along to Hezron, and went up to Adar*: which two places being near to one another, as is very likely, are put together, as if one place, and called Hazar-addar, Numb. xxxiv. 4. and mention is made of Hezron, which is Hazar, ver. 25. but not of Adar: *and fetched a compass to Karkaa*; which

[a] De loc. Heb. fol. 87. F.

Jerom [w] calls Acchara, a village in the wilderness; and if the same with Carcaria, it was according to him a day's journey from Petra in Idumea; but that is not likely; see Judg. viii. 10.

Ver. 4. From thence *it passed towards Azmon, and went out unto the river of Egypt*, &c.] In like manner is this coast described, Numb. xxxiv. 5. it is called by Jerom [x] Asemona, and said to be a city in the desert, to the south of Judah, dividing Egypt, and the lot of the tribe of Judah, leading to the sea: *and the outgoings of that coast were at the sea;* the Mediterranean sea; or to the west, as the Targum; this was the utmost border of the tribe of Judah this way: *this shall be your south coast;* of the lot that fell to the tribe of Judah.

Ver. 5. *And the east border was the salt sea, even unto the end of Jordan*, &c.] To the place where Jordan fell into it; so that this border was the whole length of the salt sea, which Josephus says [y] was 580 furlongs; and, according to Pliny [z], 100 miles: *and their border in the north quarter was from the bay of the sea, at the uttermost part of Jordan:* this northern border began where the eastern ended, at the bay or creek of the sea, where Jordan fell into it.

Ver. 6. *And the border went up to Beth-hoglah*, &c.] A place in the tribe of Benjamin, mentioned along with Jericho, and probably near it, ch. xviii. 21. Jerom [a] speaks of a place called Betagla, in his time, which was three miles from Jericho, and two from Jordan, and perhaps is this same place: *and passed along by the north of Beth-arabah:* another city which belonged to Benjamin, ch. xviii. 22. and lay in a desert, as its name shews; or in a plain, as the Targum: *and the border went up to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben:* by whom, or on whose account, it was placed, either as a sepulchral stone, he being buried there, or in memory of some famous exploit done by him there, he being one of those of the tribe of Reuben, that came with Joshua to assist in the war against the Canaanites; or it was set for a sign of the border, as Kimchi thinks, it being the boundary between Judah and Benjamin, ch. xviii. 17. Bunting says [b] it is near Bahurim, in the valley just in the king's way, and is of an extraordinary greatness, shining like marble.

Ver. 7. *And the border went up towards Debir*, &c.] This was neither the Debir in the tribe of Gad, on the other side Jordan, ch. xiii. 26. nor that in the tribe of Judah near Hebron, ver. 15. but a third city of that name, and was not far from Jericho: *from the valley of Achor;* where Achan was put to death, and had its name from thence; which, according to Jarchi, lay between the stone of Bohan and Debir: *and so northward, looking towards Gilgal:* not the place where Israel were encamped when this lot was made, but it seems to be the same that is called Geliloth, ch. xviii. 17. *that is, the going up to Adummim:* which, Jerom says [c], was formerly a little village, now in ruins, in the lot of the tribe of Judah, which place is called to this day Maledomim; and by the Greeks *the ascent of the red ones*, because of the blood which was there frequently shed by thieves: it lies on the borders of Judah and Benjamin, as you go from Jerusalem to Jericho, where there is a garrison of soldiers for the help of travellers, and is supposed to be the place where the man fell among thieves in his way from the one to the other, Luke x. 30. It was four miles distant from Jericho to the west, according to Adrichomius [d], and was a mountain, and part of the mountains of Engaddi: *which is on the south side of the river;* which some take to be the brook Cedron; but that is not very likely, being too near Jerusalem for this place: it may be rendered *the valley*, so Jarchi, either the valley of Achor, before mentioned, or however a valley that ran along by the mount or ascent of Adummim, which lay to the south of it: *and the border passed to the waters of En-shemesh:* or the *fountain of the sun*; but of it we have no account what and where it was. It might be so called, because dedicated to the sun by the idolatrous Canaanites, or because of the sun's influence on the waters of it. Our city, Bath, is, by Antoninus [e], called *aquæ solis*, the waters of the sun; though there is a fountain in Cyrene, so called, for a reason just the reverse, it being, as Mela [f] and Pliny [g] affirm, hottest in the middle of the night, and then grows cooler by little and little; and when it is light is cold, and when the sun is risen is colder still, and at noon exceeding cold; and, according to Vossius [h], it is the same with the fountain of Jupiter Ammon; and so it appears to be from Herodotus [i], by whom it is also called the *fountain of the sun*, and which he places in Thebes, though Pliny distinguishes them: *and the goings out thereof were at En-rogel;* which signifies *the fountain of the fuller;* so the Targum renders it, and probably was a fountain where fullers cleansed their clothes; and was called Rogel, as Jarchi and Kimchi say, because they used to tread them with their feet when they washed them. This was a place near Jerusalem, as appears from 1 Kings i. 9. near to which perhaps was the fuller's monument, at the corner tower of Jerusalem, Josephus [k] speaks of, as there was also a place not far from it called the fuller's field, Isa. vii. 3. according to Bunting [l], it had its name from travellers washing their feet here.

Ver. 8. *And the border went up by the valley of the son of Hinnom*, &c.] Which belonged to a man of that name formerly, and was near Jerusalem, placed by Jerom [m] to the east of it; but Reland [n] rather thinks it is to the south. It was infamous for the sacrifices of children to Moloch in it, by burning them, or causing them to pass through fire: hence, in allusion to it, hell-fire is often in the New Testament called Geenna; this border from the salt sea, and from

[w] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. E. 90. C.
[x] Ib. fol. 87. K.
[y] De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 4.
[z] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 16.
[a] De loc. Heb. fol. 87. G.
[b] Travels, &c. p. 144.
[c] Ib. fol. 89. E. F.
[d] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 14.
[e] Vid. Cambden's Britannia, p. 141.

[f] De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 8.
[g] Nat. Hist. l. 2. c. 103.
[h] Observat. in Pompon. Mel. ut supra.
[i] Melpomene, sive, l. 4. c. 181.
[k] De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.
[l] Travels, p. 148.
[m] De loc. Heb. fol. 99. B.
[n] Palest. Illustrat. tom. 1. p. 253.

Jordan, is all along said to *go up*, because from hence to Jerusalem was an ascent, that lying on higher ground: *unto the south side of the Jebusite*; of the place the Jebusite inhabited: *the same is Jerusalem*; which was formerly called Jebus, from the inhabitants of it; yea, Jebusi, as here, and so may intend not the inhabitants, but the place, see ch. xviii. 28. Judg. xix. 10. and here the Jebusites lived, at least in some part of it, until the time of David, 2 Sam. v. 6, 7, 8. *and the border went up to the top of the mountain that* lieth *before the valley of Hinnom westward*: which is generally supposed to be the mount Moriah: *which is at the end of the valley of the giants, northward*; the valley of Rephaim, as it is called 2 Sam. v. 18. and here. Mount Moriah, as it was to the west of the valley of Hinnom, it was to the north of the valley of Rephaim; which valley, as Josephus [n] says, was not far from Jerusalem, 20 furlongs from it. Some late travellers [o] tell us it lies in the way from Jerusalem to Beth-lehem, and is not above two hours' ride from the former. From this account it appears, as Jarchi remarks, that Jerusalem was not within the line, and was not in the border of Judah, but of Benjamin, which tribe lay to the north of Judah: it seems indeed to have been one part of it in the tribe of Judah, and the other in the tribe of Benjamin; though the Jews frequently say it did not belong to either tribe.

Ver. 9. *And the border was drawn from the top of the hill*, &c.] Mount Moriah, and went round in a circuit, so Jarchi and Kimchi: *unto the fountain of the water of Nephtoah*; which lay at the bottom of it; which, according to the Jewish writers, is the same with the fountain of Etam, from whence a stream flowed to the dipping-room in the water-gate of the temple, where the high-priest for the first time dipped himself on the day of atonement [p]: *and went out to the cities of Mount Ephron*; Jerom [q] speaks of an Ephron in the tribe of Judah, which was a very large village in his time, and went by the name of Ephræa, and was 20 miles from Ælia or Jerusalem to the north; and which Eusebius better places eight miles from it; and Jarchi observes, that the line went to the north side, and the border enlarged to this place; near to this mountain were cities, and it is not improbable that one of them might have its name from it; but whether this, or what mountain is here meant, is uncertain: some have thought of Ephraim, with its towns, mentioned in 2 Chron. xiii. 19. which seems to have been in the tribe of Ephraim; though Reland [r] places it in the tribe of Benjamin: *and the border was drawn to Baalah, which* is *Kirjath-jearim*; called Kirjath-baal, or the city of Baal, ver. 60. where it is probable there was a temple of Baal; and when it came into the hands of the Israelites, they changed its name to Kirjath-jearim, or the city of the woods, because of the great number of trees which grew about it; for which reason it might have been pitched upon by the Heathens for their idolatrous service; it was one of the cities of the Gibeonites, ch. ix. 17. and, according to Eusebius and Jerom [s], it was nine or ten miles from Jerusalem, as you go to Lydda; it is also called Baalah in 1 Chron. xiii. 6. and Baale of Judah, 2 Sam. vi. 2.

Ver. 10. *And the border compassed from Baalah westward unto Mount Seir*, &c.] Not that in Idumea, so famous for its being the seat of Esau, which lay remote from hence, but a third of that name near Kirjath-jearim; and which Adrichomius [t] places on the borders of Azotus and Ascalon: this compass is fetched from the north to the west: *and passed along unto the side of the mount Jearim, which is Chesalon, on the north side*; that is, on the north side of the mount, which went by both those names; and which Jerom [u] places on the borders of Ælia or Jerusalem; but it seems to be at a distance from thence, and near to Kirjath-jearim, and had its name, as that, from the multitude of trees that grew on it: *and went down to Beth-shemesh*; there were several cities of this name; but this, according to Jerom [w], was a Levite's city in the tribe of Benjamin, and in his day was shewn as you go from Eleutheropolis to Nicopolis or Emmaus, 10 miles to the east; according to Burchard [x], it was five miles from Kirjath-jearim to the south; and Bunting [y] places it four miles from Jerusalem westward, taking it for a city in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xxi. 16. see 1 Sam. vi. 12. *and passed on to Timnah*; which, in Jerom's time, was a large village on the borders of Lydda, as you go to Jerusalem, in the tribe of Judah, or Dan [z]; it is placed in the tribe of Judah, ver. 57. though thought to be afterwards given to Dan; here Judah sheared his sheep, Gen. xxxviii. 12. see the note there.

Ver. 11. *And the border went out unto the side of Ekron northward*, &c.] Which was one of the principalities of the Philistines; and which, though it fell to the lot of Judah, ver. 45. was not possessed by them: *and the border was drawn to Shicron, and passed along to Mount Baalah*; of which places we have no account elsewhere: *and went unto Jabneel*; which Masius makes no doubt was one of the Jamnias, and particularly that which was a sea-port; which Strabo says [a] was distant from Azotus and Ascalon about 200 furlongs, or 25 miles: *and the goings out of the border were at the sea*; the Mediterranean sea; here the northern border ended.

Ver. 12. *And the west border was to the great sea, and the coast* thereof, &c.] The western border of the tribe of Judah went along by the Mediterranean sea, which lay west to the land of Canaan; and this border reached from Jabneel to the river of Egypt, where the southern border ended, ver. 4. *this is the coast of the children of Judah round about according to their families*; but being too large, some part of it was afterwards given to Simeon, and some particular cities of it were given to Dan and Benjamin: it was bounded on the west by the tribes of Simeon and Dan towards the Me-

[n] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 1. & 12. 4.
[o] Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 370.
[p] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 31. 1. & Gloss. in ib. & T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 54. 2. Kimchi in loc.
[q] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. A.
[r] Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 765.
[s] Apud ib. tom. 1. p. 462.

[t] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 24.
[u] De loc. Heb. fol. 90. F.
[w] Ib. fol. 89. H.
[x] Apud Masium in loc.
[y] Travels, p. 124.
[z] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. C.
[a] Geograph. l. 16. p. 522.

diterranean sea, and by the tribe of Benjamin on the north, and by the wilderness of Paran on the south, and by the dead sea and Jordan on the east.

Ver. 13. *And unto Caleb the son of Jephunneh he gave a part among the children of Judah*, &c.] That is, Joshua gave it to him. This account is inserted before the cities in the lot of the tribe of Judah were enumerated, to shew what was to be excepted from them, and which had been given to Caleb previous to the lot: *according to the commandment of the Lord to Joshua*; for as he had declared this to Moses, Deut. i. 36. so it seems he also gave the same order to Joshua, who, it is not improbable, might consult the Lord about it when Caleb made his request, ch. xiv. 12. even *the city of Arba the father of Anak, which* city is *Hebron*; see the note on ch. xiv. 15.

Ver. 14. *And Caleb drove thence the three sons of Anak*, &c.] Some think this was after the death of Joshua, and is here inserted by some other person divinely inspired, and thoroughly acquainted with this fact, that the gift and the possession of this place might appear in one view: but it rather seems to be done before: *Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai, the children of Anak*; the very same giants Caleb saw at Hebron, when he was sent a spy into the land, Numb. xiii. 22. for these may as well be supposed to have lived to this time as himself, unless it can be thought that they were the sons of those men, called by their fathers' names; and though they were driven out when Joshua took Hebron, yet while he was engaged in making other conquests, or however before he died, they regained the possession of that city, and of the parts adjacent to it, from whence Caleb, with the help of his tribe, expelled them, conquered, and slew them, Judg. i. 10.

Ver. 15. *And he went up from thence to the inhabitants of Debir*, &c.] Having conquered Hebron, and got possession of that, Caleb marched to Debir, a city not many miles from Hebron, and seems to have been in the country, and part of the land, which was given him; of which see the note on ch. x. 38. *and the name of Debir before* was *Kirjath-sepher*; or *the city of books*; either a place of literature, a sort of an academy, or where was a public library; the Targum calls it Kirjath-arche, or the city of the archives, in which were laid up the public records of the Canaanites; the same is called Kirjath-sannah for the like reason, ver. 49. see the note there.

Ver. 16. *And Caleb said, he that smiteth Kirjath-sepher, and taketh it*, &c.] Which he ordered to be proclaimed through the army that was under his command; and which was done not so much on the account of the difficulty of taking the place, through the number of the inhabitants of it, and its fortifications, which it seems had fallen again into the hands of the Canaanites, since it was taken by Joshua; nor through inactivity, diffidence, and timorousness in himself; but that others, who were officers, and men of valour under him, might gather some laurels as well as himself; and chiefly being under a divine impulse, he ordered this declaration to be made, whereby his brother Othniel, who was to be a judge in Israel, might appear a great man, and fit for such an office; and as an encouragement, he promises as follows: *to him will I give Achsah my daughter to wife*; and to be married into the family of the chief prince of the tribe of Judah was a very great honour, as well as no doubt a very large dowry might be expected, and was given with her, and very probably the city of Debir was promised that should be taken. This Achsah seems to be a daughter of Caleb by a concubine, 1 Chron. ii. 48, 49.

Ver. 17. *And Othniel the son of Kenaz, the brother of Caleb, took it*, &c.] The relation of Othniel to Caleb is a little intricate, and, as it is understood, occasions objections to the marriage of Caleb's daughter to him; it seems, at first sight, that he was Caleb's own brother, a younger brother, and so uncle to his daughter, and such marriages were forbidden, Lev. xviii. 14. Jarchi thinks he was the brother of Caleb by his mothers's side; Kimchi, both by father and mother's side; but not to observe, that besides the word *brother* sometimes signifies only a kinsman, or near relation, and not precisely a brother; it is not Othniel that is called the brother of Caleb, but Kenaz, who was the father of Othniel; so that Caleb was Othniel's uncle, and Achsah and Othniel were brothers' children, or own cousins, between whom marriage was allowed of: *and he gave him Achsah his daughter to wife*; according to the tenour of his proclamation, and the promise he made.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, as she came* unto him, &c.] To her husband, being conducted from her father's house to his, in order to consummate the marriage, just as we may suppose when she was got to her husband's house, before she lighted off the beast on which she rode: *that she moved him to ask of her father a field*; or persuaded him to make such a request to him, or that he would give her leave to make it: that is, Achsah put Othniel her espoused husband upon it, to entreat her father Caleb, or suffer her to use her interest with him to obtain a field of him, over and above, and something better, than what he had already given: *and she lighted off* her *ass*; she leaped off, or threw herself from it; or bowing herself, she fell off on her feet, as Jarchi interprets it, and in an humble manner made her obeisance to her father; though De Dieu, from the use of the word in the Ethiopic language, gives a different sense, as if she continued on her ass, and did not alight, waiting the success of her husband's request; or that her father, taking notice of this, might ask the reason of it, which would give her an opportunity of asking the favour of him, which she judged was a proper time of doing it; and there are some versions which seem to countenance this sense; the Septuagint version is, "she cried from off the ass;" and the Vulgate Latin version, "she sighed as she sat "upon the ass:" *and Caleb said unto her, what wouldest thou?* what wouldest thou have? what is thy request? for he perceived, by the posture she put herself in, that she had something to say to him.

Ver. 19. *Who answered, give me a blessing*, &c.] By which she meant not a paternal benediction, or that he would wish and pray for a blessing on her; nor food, or a maintenance, as Jarchi, that her husband would provide for her; but rather an inheritance or possession, as the Targum; or a gift, as Abendana, a present, or something over and above what he had already given her; or an addition to her portion, as

Kimchi: the word is sometimes used for a fish-pool, as well as a blessing, and so glances at what she had in view, pools of water, or a well-watered land: *for thou hast given me a south land*: a dry land, as the Jewish writers[a] generally interpret this word, otherwise all the land belonging to the tribe of Judah was south land, and Caleb could give her no other; but Debir, as Hebron was, was in the hill-country, was mountainous, and so dry, and wanted watering: *give me also springs of water*; she means land in which there were springs of water; for unless she was possessed of the land in which they were, she would have no command of the springs, and so have little or no use of them: *and he gave her the upper springs, and the nether springs*: such as were in the higher grounds, and such as were in the lower ones, that she might have a sufficiency to water all her lands and fields; or as she moved her husband to ask a field, and he put her on doing the same, Caleb gave her a field, in the upper part of which were springs, and also in the lower part; though he seems to have given more than she requested.

Ver. 20. *This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Judah, according to their families.*] The general description of which is given in the preceding part of the chapter, as the particular cities belonging to it are enumerated in the following part; the account of the gift of Hebron to Caleb, and the taking of Debir by Othniel, with the request of Achsah, and the grant of it, are inserted between them, and stand as it were in a parenthesis.

Ver. 21. *And the uttermost cities of the tribe of the children of Judah*, &c.] That is, those cities which were the outward part of the tribe of Judah, the southern border of it; for the midland cities are not in this part of the description reckoned, which reaches from hence to the end of ver. 32: *toward the coast of Edom southward*: it begins about the dead sea, and goes on in that part of the land of Canaan which bordered on Idumea, and so proceeds on westward towards Gaza, and the Mediterranean sea: the cities in this part of the tribe were Kabzeel, called Jekabzeel, Neh. xi. 25. and was the native place of Benaiah, one of David's mighty men, 2 Sam. xxiii. 20: *and Eder and Jagur*: of which we have no mention elsewhere.

Ver. 22. *And Kina, and Dimonah, and Adadah.*] The first of these we read of nowhere else; the second is thought to be the same with Dibon, Neh. xi. 25. and Jerom[b] observes, that a place elsewhere was indifferently called in his time Dibon and Dimon; and the last of these is nowhere met with.

Ver. 23. *And Kedesh, and Hazor, and Ithnan.*] The first of these seems to be Kadesh-barnea, which was to the south of the land, and on the borders of Edom, from whence the spies were sent; and Hazor is another city from that which is mentioned, ch. xi. 1. and was in the tribe of Naphtali; and Ithnan, which Jerom[c] calls Jedna, was, according to him, six miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Hebron; the Greek version joins this and the former city together, and makes them one.

Ver. 24. *Ziph, and Telem, and Bealoth.*] Ziph was of the tribe of Judah in the south, on the borders of Eleutheropolis, as Jerom says[d], and was eight miles from Hebron to the east; and in his time a village was shewn, where David was hid; but that Ziph seems to be in another part of this tribe near Carmel, and from whence a wilderness had its name; see ver. 55. 1 Sam. xxiii. 14. and Telem is supposed to be the same with Telaim, 1 Sam. xv. 4. of Bealoth we read nowhere else.

Ver. 25. *And Hazor, Hadattah, and Kerioth, and Hezron, which is Hazor.*] According to the Targum, two cities only are here meant, which reads, *and Hazor-hadattah, and Kerioth-hezron, which is Hazor*; and this reading seems to be right; there were three Hazors in this tribe, one in ver. 23, and two more here, which are distinguished; the first is called Hazor-hadattah, or new Hazor; of which Jerom says[e], there is a village at this day called Asor, in the borders of Ascalon, to the east of it, which fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah; the Scripture makes mention of it, calling it new Asor, to distinguish it from the old; and Kerioth-hezron is the same with Hezron, ver. 3. and had also the name of Hezron. From this place Judas Iscariot is thought to have his name, being Ishceriot, a man of Keriot.

Ver. 26. *Amam, and Shema, and Moladah*, &c.] Of Amam we read nowhere else. Shema is thought by some to be the same with Sheba, though wrongly, given afterwards to the tribe of Simeon, as was also Moladah, mentioned with it, ch. xix. 2. it is also spoken of in 1 Chron. iv. 28. Neh. xi. 25. and seems to be the same with Malathi or Malatis, about 20 miles from Hebron[f].

Ver. 27. *And Hazar-gaddah, and Heshmon, and Beth-palet.*] The first of these, it is probable, is the same, Jerom[g] calls Gadda, in the tribe of Judah, which was in his day a village in the extreme borders of Daroma to the east, hanging over the dead sea; Heshmon is met with nowhere else; Beth-palet is in Neh. xi. 26. where it is called Beth-phelet.

Ver. 28. *And Hazar-shual, and Beer-sheba, and Bizjoth-jah.*] The first of these seems to have its name from an haunt of foxes here, and was given to the tribe of Simeon, ch. xix. 3. and is mentioned as here with Beer-sheba, 1 Chron. iv. 28. Neh. xi. 27. which was a city well known in the extreme border of the land of Canaan southward; hence the phrase *from Dan to Beer-sheba*, of which Jerom says[h], Bersabee, in the tribe of Judah or Simeon, is at this day a large village, 20 miles from Hebron to the south, in which there is a Roman garrison; and from hence the borders of the land of Judea begin, and go on to Dan, which is by Paneas; of the latter city no mention is made elsewhere.

Ver. 29. *Baalah, and Iim, and Azem.*] Baalah and Azem were given to the tribe of Simeon, ch. xix. 3. for Baalah is the same with Balah there, as it is with Bilba, 1 Chron. iv. 29. though according to the Jerusalem Talmud[i] it is the same with Baalah, given to the

[a] So Jarchi and Kimchi in loc. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 34. 1.
[b] Comment. in Esaiam, c. 15. 9.
[c] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. H.
[d] Ibid. fol. 93. G.
[e] Ibid. fol. 88. B.
[f] Vid. Reland. Palest. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 885, 886.
[g] Ut supra, fol. 92. B.
[h] Ibid. fol. 89. E. F.
[i] Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 3.

tribe of Dan, ch. xix. 44. and was one of those places whose houses were in Judah and their fields in Dan; and Azem is the same with Ezem there; of him we read nowhere else.

Ver. 30. *And Eltolad, and Chesil, and Hormah.*] The first of these is called Tolad, 1 Chron. iv. 29. and the next seems to be the same with Bethul and Bethuel, ch. xix. 4. 1 Chron. iv. 30. and here the Greek version calls it Baithel; and Hormah is the same with Zephath, Judg. i. 17. all these three cities were given to the tribe of Simeon, ch. xix. 4.

Ver. 31. *And Ziglag, and Madmannah, and Sansannah.*] Ziglag was also given to the tribe of Simeon, ch. xix. 5. it was in the hands of the king of Gath, in the times of David, who gave it to him; it bordered on the Amalekites, and is placed by Jerom [k] in Daroma, on the south of the lot of Judah or Simeon. Madmannah, according to the same writer [l], was in his time called Menois, a town near the city Gaza; of Sansannah no mention is made elsewhere.

Ver. 32. *And Lebaoth, and Shilhim, and Ain, and Rimmon, &c.*] Whether Lebaoth is the same with Beth-lebaoth, given to the tribe of Simeon, ch. xix. 6. is not certain; Shilhim is nowhere else spoken of. Ain seems to be the same with that in Numb. xxxiv. 11. see the note there; and Rimmon the place Jerom [m] calls Eremmon, which he says was a large village of the Jews, 16 miles from Eleutheropolis to the south, in Daroma; this and the preceding are joined together as one, and called En-rimmon, Neh. xi. 29. It is probable they were near to each other, and in process of time the buildings of each might increase, so as to meet and join each other: *all the cities* are 29, *with their villages;* but according to our version, and as we point them, they are 38; some make them 36, others 37; the Jews generally make 38 of them, as we do, and account for the difference of number thus; that 9 of these cities were given to the tribe of Simeon, ch. xix. and these being taken out of the 38, there remain 29; so Jarchi and Kimchi account for it; but as the number of the cities is uncertain, and this account is given before the separation of the 9, and they are all reckoned together, this does not seem to be satisfactory; rather, as Abarbinel observes, the 29 of the places enumerated were cities, and the other were villages, unwalled towns, or not of so much note as the 29.

Ver. 33. And *in the valley, &c.*] From hence to the end of ver. 47 are enumerated the several cities belonging to the tribe of Judah which lay in the valley. Jerom [f] says, that now all the plain and champaign country near Eleutheropolis, which verges to the north and west, is called *Sephela*, or the valley: *Eshtaol, Zoreah, and Ashnah;* the two first of these seem to be given afterwards to the tribe of Dan, ch. xix. 41. between these two places Samson was born and buried, Judg. xiii. 2, 25, and xvi. 31. they were both at the same distance from Eleutheropolis, according to Jerom; of Eshtaol he says [g], it is shewed to this day 10 miles from Eleutheropolis, to the north, as you go to Nicopolis or Emmaus; and of Zoreah, which he calls Saara, he says [h] it is a village on the borders of Eleutheropolis, as you go to Nicopolis, about 10 miles of it in the tribe of Dan or Judah; as for Ashnah no mention is made of it elsewhere; there was another place of the same name, but different from this, ver. 43.

Ver. 34. *And Zanoah and En-gannim, and Tappuah, and Enam;* the first of these, Jerom says [i], is in the borders of Eleutheropolis, as you go to Ælia (or Jerusalem); there is at this day a village called Zanua; and En-gannim, which signifies a fountain of gardens, is now (according to the same writer [k]) a village near Beth-el. Tappuah was a royal city, of which see ch. xii. 17. Enaim, in the tribe of Judah, Jerom says [l] in his day was the village Beth-enim, about the turpentine-tree, or oak of Mamre; but that seems to be the same with Ain, ver. 32. of which he says the same under that word, and makes it to be two miles from the oak, and four from Hebron. Masius thinks it is the same with Enam, near to Timnath, of which see the note on Gen. xxxviii. 14. it following Tappuah one would be tempted to think with Jarchi it was the same with En-tappuah, but that that was on the borders of Manasseh, ch. xvii. 7. it has an ה prefixed to it, and may be read *that Enam*, as pointing out some known and remarkable place, though now unknown.

Ver. 35. *Jarmuth, and Adullam, Sochoh, and Azekah.*] The two first of these were royal cities, of which see ch. x. 3. and xii. 15. Jerom says [m] there were two little villages in his day of the name of Socho, as you go to Ælia (or Jerusalem), from Eleutheropolis, in the ninth mile on the public way, one in the mountain, and the other in the plain, (the same with this,) both of which were called Socoth: of this place was Antigonus, president of the sanhedrim, and successor of Simeon the just, called in the Misnah [n] a man of Socho; of Azekah, see the note on ch. x. 10. It appears to be near to Sochoh from 1 Sam. xvii. 1. where the Philistines are said to pitch their camp between them.

Ver. 36. *And Sharaim, and Adithaim, and Gederah, and Gederothaim, &c.*] Sharaim seems to be the Saara of Jerom, which he describes as a village on the borders of Eleutheropolis, to the north as you go to Nicopolis (or Emmaus), about 10 miles from it in the tribe of Dan or Judah [o]; there was a place called Beth-shaaraim, where the sanhedrim sometimes sat [p], and where R. Judah was buried [q]. This seems to be the same with Shaaraim in 1 Sam. xvii. 52. and Jerom observes [r], under the word Adithaim, that there is a village called Adia, near Gaza, and another Aditha, near Diospolis (or Lydda), to the east, which seems to be

[k] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. I.
[l] Ibid. fol. 93. E.
[m] Ibid. fol. 91. C.
[f] Ibid. fol. 94. M.
[g] Ibid. fol. 91. C.
[h] Ibid. fol. 94. I.
[i] Ibid. fol. 95. G.
[k] Ibid. fol. 91. E.

[l] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. E.
[m] Ibid. fol. 94. I.
[n] Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 3.
[o] Ut supra.
[p] T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 31. 2.
[q] Gloss. in T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 47. 1.
[r] Ut supra, fol. 88. F.

the same he calls Gaddera, in the tribe of Judah [s], now, he says, called a village belonging to the country of Ælia (or Jerusalem), by the name of Gadera, about the turpentine-tree. Of Gederothaim we nowhere else read; Kimchi thinks Gederah and Gederothaim were one city: 14 *cities with their villages:* but, upon counting them, it will appear there are 15, which may be reduced to 14, if with Kimchi we take the two last to be but one, who in this way reconciles it; or with Jarchi make Tappuah and Enam to be one also, called En-tappuah, which is the way he takes to solve the difficulty; but perhaps the case is this, that one of the places in the account was not a city, but a village.

Ver. 37. *Zenan, and Hadashah, and Migdal-gad.*] Here begins another list or catalogue of the cities in the valley or plain. Zenan perhaps is the same with Zaanan, Mic. i. 11. and Hadashah was so small a city in Judea in the times of the Misnic doctors, that they say [t] it had but fifty dwellings in it; and Jerom speaks [u] of a place called Adasa, in the tribe of Judah, in his times a village near Guphna; it should be Taphna. Of Migdal-gad we nowhere else read; some think it had its name from some famous exploit done here by one of the tribe of Gad, who came over with Joshua to assist in the war, as the stone of Bohan the Reubenite, ver. 6.

Ver. 38. *And Dilean, and Mizpeh, and Joktheel.*] Of the first and last of these nothing is to be said; Mizpeh, of which name there were cities in other tribes; this in the tribe of Judah was in the times of Jerom [w] called Mapha, on the borders of Eleutheropolis to the south, as you go to Ælia, or Jerusalem.

Ver. 39. *Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon.*] Lachish and Eglon were royal cities, of which see ch. x. 3. the other city is called Boscath, of which place was the mother of King Josiah, 2 Kings xxi. 1. some take it to be the same with Bascana, 1 Maccab. xiii. 23.

Ver. 40. *And Cabbon, and Lahmam, and Kithlish.*] Cities of which we can give no account, not being mentioned elsewhere.

Ver. 41. *And Gederoth, Beth-dagon, and Naamah, and Makkedah,* &c.] Gederoth is reckoned among the cities of the low country, and south of Judah, 2 Chron. xxviii. 18. Beth-dagon, in it very probably was a temple of Dagon, which was a principal deity of the Philistines, 1 Sam. v. 2. Jerom says [x] in his time was shewn a large village called Capher-dagon, between Diospolis and Jamnia; of Naamah, the same writer says nothing, only that it was a city of the tribe of Judah; of Makkedah, see ch. x. 10. it was a royal city, ch. xii. 16. *sixteen cities with their villages;* and is the exact number of them, as before enumerated.

Ver. 42. *Lebnah, and Ether, and Ashan.*] Here begins another division or list of the cities of Judah, in the valley or plain. Lebnah is the same with Libnah, a royal city; see ch. x. 29. and xii. 15. Ether was given to the tribe of Simeon, ch. xix. 7. and under Ether of the lot of Simeon, Jerom writes [y], there is now a very large village called Jethira, in interior Daroma, near Malatha, 20 miles from Eleutheropolis. Ashan also was given to the tribe of Simeon, ch. xix. 7. and the above writer relates [z], that there was in his times a village called Beth-asan, belonging to Ælia, or Jerusalem, 15 miles from it.

Ver. 43. *And Jiphta, and Ashnah, and Nezib.*] Jiphta is nowhere else mentioned; there was another Ashnah of this tribe, and which was in the vale also, met with already in ver. 33. Nezib was in Jerom's [a] times called Nasib, 7 miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go to Hebron.

Ver. 44. *And Keilah, and Achzib, and Mareshah,* &c.] The first of these is a well-known city, which David saved from the hands of the Philistines, 1 Sam. xxiii. 1, *&c.* In Jerom's time it was a little village to the east of Eleutheropolis, about 8 miles from it, as you go to Hebron; in which was shewn the sepulchre of the Prophet Habakkuk [b]. Achzib is said to be on the borders of Asher, ch. xix. 29. is supposed the same with Cezib, Gen. xxxviii. 5. and the Ecdippa of Josephus and others, and now called Zib; see the note on Mic. i. 14. Of Mareshah, Jerom says [c], only the ruins of it were to be seen two miles from Eleutheropolis: *nine cities with their villages;* which is just their number.

Ver. 45. *Ekron, with her towns and her villages.*] One of the five principalities of the Philistines, which with two more next mentioned, though they fell to the lot of the tribe of Judah, were never possessed by them; for which reason perhaps Gath and Ascalon are not mentioned, and these are put for the rest; see ch. xiii. 3.

Ver. 46. *From Ekron even unto the sea,* &c.] The Mediterranean sea, or the west, as the Targum: *all that* lay *near Ashdod, with their villages;* this is the Azotus of the New Testament, another of the principalities of the Philistines, of which and Ekron see the notes on Amos i. 8. and Zeph. ii. 4.

Ver. 47. *Ashdod with her towns and her villages, Gaza with her towns and her villages,* &c.] Gaza was another of the principalities of the Philistines, of which see the notes on Amos i. 7. Zeph. ii. 4. Acts viii. 26. these, with the two other principalities not mentioned, Gath and Ascalon, were in the western border of the tribe of Judah, which reached from Ekron, the first that is mentioned, *unto the river of Egypt;* of which see ver. 4. *and the great sea, and the border thereof:* the Mediterranean sea, called so in comparison of the lesser seas in Judea, the salt sea, and the sea of Tiberias; whose border was its shore, and the cities upon it, and not the isles in the sea, as Jarchi.

Ver. 48. *And in the mountains,* &c.] The hill-country of Judea, as it is called Luke i. 39, 65. in which were the following cities: *Shamir and Jattir, and Sochoh;* the Alexandrian copy of the Greek version reads Sophir as the name of the first of these cities; and Jerom says [d], there was a village of this name in the mountainous parts, situated between Eleutheropolis and Ascalon in the tribe of Judah; see Mic. i. 11.

[s] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. B.
[t] Misn. Eruvim, c. 5. sect. 6.
[u] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. F.
[w] Ibid. fol. 93. D.
[x] Ibid. fol. 89. F.
[y] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. C. & 92. I.
[z] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. G.
[a] Ib. fol. 92. I.
[b] Ibid. fol. 90. A.
[c] Ibid. fol. 93. E.
[d] Ibid. fol. 94. I.

Jattir the same writer calls Jether, in the tribe of Judah; and says[e] there was in his time a very large village called Jethira, 20 miles from Eleutheropolis, the inhabitants of which were then all Christians: it was situated in interior Daroma, near Malatha; and Sochoh is different from Sochoh in ver. 35. that was in the plain, this in the mountain; see the note there.

Ver. 49. *And Dannah and Kirjath-sannah, which is Debir.*] Dannah is not mentioned elsewhere, and Kirjath-sannah had three names, this and Debir, and Kirjath-sepher ver. 15. see the note there; all which are of much the same signification; for Sanna with the Arabs[f], and so with the Phœnicians, signifies law, doctrine, and manner of life; and with the Mahometans the secondary law to the Koran, and answers to the Jewish Misnah; and the Greek version interprets this name *the city of letters.* Jerom[g] calls it Daenna, and seems to confound it with Dannah.

Ver. 50. *And Anab, and Ashtemoth, and Anim.*] Of Anab see the note on ch. xi. 21. Ashtemoth is what Jerom calls[h] Astemech, a village in the tribe of Judah, and belongs to the Jews in Daroma, and is to the north of a place called Anem, perhaps the same with Anim here, which he says is the village Anea, near another of the same name; which he places to the south of Hebron, as he does this to the east, the inhabitants of which in his time were all Christians.

Ver. 51. *And Goshen, and Holon, and Giloh,* &c.] Of Goshen in the land of Canaan, see the note on ch. x. 41. of Holon there is no other mention; Giloh was the city of Ahitophel, 2 Sam. xv. 12. *eleven cities with their villages*: the number agrees; this is the first division of cities in the mountains; a second follows.

Ver. 52. *Arab, and Dumah, and Eshean.*] Arab is the same Jerom[i] calls Ereb, and was in his time a village in the south, and was called Heromith; and Duma, Jerom says[k], was a large village in the south, also on the borders of Eleutheropolis, seventeen miles from it; of Eshean we have no account.

Ver. 53. *And Janum, and Beth-tappuah, and Aphekah.*] Under the word Janum, Jerom writes[l], there is a village called Janua, three miles from Legion to the south, but seems not to be what is written; Beth-tappuah is by him called Bethaphu[m], and said to be a village in the tribe of Judah, 14 miles beyond Raphia, as you go to Egypt, which is the border of Palestine; and he speaks[n] of a large castle in his time called Apheca, near the town of Palestine; there were several places of the name of Aphek; see the notes on ch. xii. 18. and xiii. 4. As for Beth-tappuah, it seems to be a place which was dedicated to a deity to which apples were sacred, in memory of the apple by which mankind was seduced; there was in after-times a goddess called Pomona from hence.

Ver. 54. *And Humtah, and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron and Zior,* &c.] Of Humtah we nowhere else read; of Kirjath-arba frequently; see the note on ch. xiv. 15. Jerom says[o], that in his time there was a village shewn by the name of Sihor, between Ælia (or Jerusalem) and Eleutheropolis, in the tribe of Judah: 9 *cities with their villages*; which is exactly their number, as expressed; here ends the second division, or list of the cities in the hill-country of Judea; a third follows.

Ver. 55. *Maon, Carmel, and Ziph, and Juttah.*] Maon was the dwelling-place of Nabal the Carmelite, whose possessions were in Carmel, and were not far from one another, 1 Sam. xxv. 2. It gave name to a wilderness near where David hid himself from Saul, 1 Sam. xxiii. 25. Jerom[p] places it to the east of Daroma, who also informs[q] us, that there was in his time a village that went by the name of Carmelia, 10 miles from Hebron towards the east, and where was a Roman garrison. Ziph, according to the same writer[r], was eight miles from Hebron to the east; and there was a village shewn in his time where David was hid; this gave name to a wilderness also, 1 Sam. xxiii. 14. Juttah, which Jerom calls[s] Jeshan, was in his time a large village of the Jews, eighteen miles from Eleutheropolis, to the southern part in Daroma. Reland[t] conjectures that this was the native place of John the Baptist; and that, instead of a city of Judah, it should be read the city Juta, Luke i. 39.

Ver. 56. *And Jezreel, and Jokdeam, and Zanoah.*] This Jezreel in the tribe of Judah is different from that which was once a royal seat of some of the kings of Israel, and from whence the famous valley of Jezreel or Esdraelon had its name: of this we have no other account elsewhere, nor of Jokdeam; and this Zanoah is a distinct place from the city of the same name in the valley, ver. 34.

Ver. 57. *Cain, Gibeah, and Timnah,* &c.] Cain, or Hakain, *that Cain*, we nowhere else read of: whether the name was given it by the old Canaanites, in memory of Cain, the son of Adam, is not certain: there were other places that went by the name of Gibeah; there was a Gibeah in Benjamin, and another in the same tribe called Gibeah of Saul, to distinguish it from that; but this was in the tribe of Judah. Masius conjectures it is the same with that in 1 Sam. xxiii. 19. which was near Ziph; and not amiss. Jerom[u] makes mention of Gabaha and Gabatha, little villages to the east of Daroma; and of another Gabatha, near Beth-lehem, in the tribe of Judah; but whether either of these are meant it is doubtful; of Timnah, see the note on ver. 10. *ten cities with their villages*; the number agrees with the names of them.

Ver. 58. *Halhul, Beth-zur, and Gedor.*] Here begins a fourth division, or list, of the cities in the mountains. Halhul Jerom calls Ehul, and says[w]

[e] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. I.

[f] سنة mos vivendi, lex, Golius, col. 1221. Castell. col. 2567. Vid. Bochart. Canaan, l. 2. c. 17. col. 771.

[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 90. I.

[h] Ibid. fol. 88. G.

[i] Ibid. fol. 91. B.

[k] Ibid. fol. 90. K.

[l] Ibid. fol. 92. I.

[m] Ibid. fol. 89. F.

[n] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. D.

[o] Ibid. fol. 94. H.

[p] Ibid. fol. 93. E.

[q] Ibid. fol. 92. C.

[r] Ibid. fol. 95. G.

[s] Ibid. fol. 92. I.

[t] Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 870.

[u] Ut supra, fol. 92. C.

[w] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. B.

there was in his time in the country belonging to Ælia (or Jerusalem) a village by the name of Ahula, near Hebron; and Beth-zur, he says[x], was then called Beth-seron, a village as you go from Ælia to Hebron, in the 20th mile, near which was a fountain at the bottom of a mount, where it is said the eunuch was baptized by Philip: he makes mention of another village called Bethsur in the tribe of Judah, a mile from Eleutheropolis. In 2 Maccab. xi. 5. it is said to be but five furlongs from Jerusalem, but it must have been at a greater distance; of Gedor, see the note on ch. xii. 13.

Ver. 59. *And Maarath, and Beth-anoth, and Eltekon,* &c.] Of these cities we have no account elsewhere; only mention is made of Eltekeh, in the tribe of Dan, ch. xix. 44. *six cities with their villages;* these were all in the mountainous part of Judea, as were the two following.

Ver. 60. *Kirjath-baal, (which is Kirjath-jearim,) and Rabbah,* &c.] Of Kirjath-baal, and its several names, see the note on ver. 9. of Rabbah we nowhere else read; for this is a very different city from the Rabbah of the children of Ammon, 2 Sam. xii. 26. *two cities with their villages;* why these are reckoned by themselves is not certain.

Ver. 61. *In the wilderness,* &c.] The wilderness of Judea, which was not a desert and uninhabited place, but had many cities and villages in it, particularly those that follow: *Beth-arabah, Middin, and Secacah;* the first of these seems to be in the borders of Judah and Benjamin, and so is ascribed to both; see ver. 6. and ch. xviii. 22. Of the two last we read nowhere else, only in Judg. v. 10. what we translate *ye that sit in judgment,* Kimchi interprets, *ye that dwell by Middin,* and says it is the name of a place in Joshua, and mentions this passage.

Ver. 62. *And Nibshan, and the city of Salt, and En-gedi,* &c.] Of Nibshan no mention is made elsewhere; some take *the city of Salt* to be Zoar, so called because near the salt sea, or where Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt, Gen. xix. 22, 26. but rather this city might be so called, because salt was made here. Engedi or Engaddi is a well-known place, near the salt sea; see Ezek. xlvii. 10. and the note there. Jerom says[y], there was a very large village of Jews in his time called Engaddi, near the dead sea, from whence comes the opobalsam; the same place is called Hazazon-tamar, from the palm-trees which grew there, 2 Chron. xx. 2. It was famous for vineyards also, Cant. i. 14. it lay, according to Josephus[z], 300 furlongs from Jerusalem: *six cities with their villages;* the sum-total agrees with the particulars.

Ver. 63. *As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem,* &c.] From whom the city was called Jebus, Judg. xix. 10. The Jews say, that these Jebusites were not those of the seven nations; but there was a man whose name was Jebus, and he was of the Philistines, of the seed of Abimelech, and the place was called by his name Jebus; and the men of that family that dwelt at Jerusalem, their names were called Jebusites, having their descent from him; so Araunah, the Jebusite, was king of that place; and the fort of that place was Zion, which was at Jerusalem: so Kimchi relates from their Rabbins, and with whom Jarchi agrees, but without any foundation; there is no doubt to be made of it, that these Jebusites were Canaanites: *the children of Judah could not drive them out;* according to the above Jewish writers they could have done it, but it was not fit and proper they should, because of the oath of Abraham to Abimelech, from whom they suppose these Jebusites sprung; but the case was this; though Joshua slew the king of this place, and took his land with the rest, ch. x. 1, 23, 26, 42. and though the men of Judah retook it after his death, it having been got into the hands of the Jebusites again, Judg. i. 8. yet either the fort of Zion was never taken by either of them, or if taken, the Jebusites got possession of it again, and held it until the times of David; see 2 Sam. v. 6—9. *but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem unto this day;* the one in the fort of Zion, and the other in the city of Jerusalem, properly so called, and thus they continued unto the writing of this book; by which it should seem, that the Jebusites were not dispossessed of their fort, or a part of the city, by Joshua; or this might be added and inserted by some inspired man afterwards; or however it must be done before the times of David: and from the whole it appears, that the city of Jerusalem, at least a part of it, belonged to the tribe of Judah, as another part did to that of Benjamin, to which it is ascribed, ch. xviii. 28. see Judg. i. 21.

CHAP. XVI.

THIS chapter gives us an account of the lot of the children of Joseph, Ephraim, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, one half having settled on the other side Jordan; and first the borders of the whole lot in general are given, ver. 1—4. and then the borders of the tribe of Ephraim in particular, ver. 4—8. and it is observed, that this tribe had besides separate cities among the children of Manasseh, and that there were some Canaanites, particularly in Gezer, not driven out by the Ephraimites, ver. 9, 10.

Ver. 1. *And the lot of the children of Joseph fell,* &c.] Or, *went out*[a]; of the pot or urn, this being the next lot that was drawn to that of Judah, the government being Judah's, and the birthright Joseph's, 1 Chron. v. 2. and by his children are here meant the tribe of Ephraim, and the tribe of Manasseh: or the line and border according to the lot went forth *from Jordan by Jericho unto the water of Jericho on the east;* by which it appears, that this was the southern border of the lot; for the tribe of Benjamin, in which Jericho

[x] De loc. Heb. fol. 89. G.
[y] Ibid. fol. 91. B.

[z] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 1. sect. 2.
[a] ויצא & egressa est, Pagninus, Montanus; exivit, Piscator.

was, lay between Judah and Ephraim, and the border began at Jordan, where it flowed near Jericho, and proceeded to a water which belonged to that city, and is generally thought to be the waters Elisha healed, 2 Kings ii. 19—22. *to the wilderness that goeth up throughout Mount Beth-el*: this was the wilderness of Beth-aven, ch. xviii. 12. Jarchi interprets it of the border that went up through Mount Beth-el; which is true, and so might the wilderness also, for which the Targum is express; mention is made of a mountain on the east of Beth-el, Gen. xii. 8.

Ver. 2. *And goeth out from Beth-el to Luz*, &c.] For though these two places in time became one, yet they were originally distinct. Beth-el, at which Jacob stopped, and who gave it its name, was a field adjacent to the city of Luz, Gen. xxviii. 11, 19. and therefore with propriety may be, as they here are, distinguished: *and passeth along unto the borders of Archi to Ataroth*; or to Archi-ataroth; these two words being the name of one and the same place, and to be joined as they are, in the Greek version, and others; and is the same with Ataroth-addar, ver. 5. and ch. xviii. 13. Ataroth was its proper name, but it had these additional epithets to distinguish it from another Ataroth; see ver. 7. Jerom[b] makes mention of Atharoth by Ramma, in the tribe of Joseph, and of another in the tribe of Ephraim, now a village at the north of Sebaste, or Samaria, 4 miles from it, called Atharus; the former is here meant.

Ver. 3. *And goeth down westward to the coast of Japhleti*, &c.] This place is now unknown, though no doubt well known to the sons of Joseph, when this lot fell to them, and its border was described: *unto the coast of Beth-horon the nether*; so called to distinguish it from Beth-horon the upper, ver. 5. this was about 12 miles from Jerusalem; see the note on ch. x. 10. *and to Gezer*; which was about a day's journey from Beth-horon, as appears from 1 Maccab. vii. 39, 40, 45. Jerom[c] says in his time it was a village called Gazara, 4 miles from Nicopolis, or Emmaus. It is the same with Gadara, as it is sometimes called by Josephus, who says[d], the tribe of Ephraim took in the land from the river Jordan to Gadara; this was a royal city; see ch. x. 33. *and the outgoings thereof are at the sea*; the Mediterranean sea.

Ver. 4. *So the children of Joseph, Manasseh and Ephraim, took their inheritance.*] As it fell to them by the lot; by Manasseh is meant the half-tribe of Manasseh, one half of that tribe having been settled by Moses on the other side Jordan; and next follows an account of the borders of the inheritance of Ephraim in particular, as that of the half-tribe of Manasseh is given in the next chapter.

Ver. 5. *And the border of the children of Ephraim, according to their families, was thus*, &c.] Or what follows is the description of it: *even the border of their inheritance on the east side was Ataroth-addar, unto Beth-horon the upper*; the first was on the south of the inheritance, and the latter on the north, as Masius has placed them: who has given us a type of this description, by which it appears that this lot is here described in its breadth from south to north.

Ver. 6. *And the border went out towards the sea*, &c.] The Mediterranean sea: *to Michmethah on the north side*; of the border, the same on which Beth-horon was, from whence the border proceeded on to this place, of which we have no other account but in ch. xvii. 7. by which it appears to have been near Shechem, and in sight of it: *and the border went about eastward unto Taanath-shiloh*; this seems to be the same Jerom[e] calls Thenath in the tribe of Joseph; and who observes there was in his day a village of this name ten miles from Neapolis (or Shechem) to the east, as you go down to Jordan: *and passed by it on the east to Janohah*; which the above writer[f] wrongly calls Janon, and says, that in his time a village of this name was shewn in the country of Acrabatena, twelve miles to the east from Neapolis or Shechem; the border passed by Taanath on the east of it, and went on to this place.

Ver. 7. *And it went down from Johanah to Ataroth, and to Naarath*, &c.] This is different from Ataroth before mentioned; there were several places of this name, as before observed; this seems to be that which Jerom places four miles from Sebaste or Samaria, see the note on ver. 2. the same writer[g] says, that Naarath was in his time called Naorath, a village of the Jews, five miles from Jericho; and is the village Josephus[h] calls Neara, where was a water, half of which Archelaus turned, and led to the field planted with palm-trees, near Jericho; and, according to the Jewish writers[i], there was a place called Noaran near to Jericho, which seems to be this: *and came to Jericho*; where it ended this way, which was eastward.

Ver. 8. *The border went out from Tappuah westward*, &c.] Which was different from the Tappuah in the tribe of Judah; this was in the tribe of Ephraim on the border of Manasseh, ch. xvii. 8. *unto the river Kanah*; supposed by some to be the brook Cherith, by which Elijah hid himself, 1 Kings xvii. 3, 5. though objected to by others; it seems to have had its name from the reeds which grew in it, or on the banks of it: *and the goings out thereof were at the sea*; if the river Kanah was the brook Cherith, this must be the dead or salt sea: but that is never called *the sea*, rather the Mediterranean sea is meant, and consequently Kanah could not be Cherith, which was at too great a distance from this sea: *this is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Ephraim by their families*: that is, this is the description of the border of it; for the cities within are not mentioned, and the descriptions in general are very obscure.

Ver. 9. *And the separate cities for the children of Ephraim*, &c.] The tribe of Ephraim, being much larger than the half-tribe of Manasseh, besides the lot that fell to it, described before by its boundaries, had several particular and distinct cities given to it: which

[b] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. G.
[c] Ibid. fol. 92. A.
[d] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.
[e] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. C.
[f] Ibid. fol. 92. I.
[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. I.
[h] Antiqu. l. 17. c. 15. sect. 1.
[i] Vajikra Rabba, sect. 23. fol. 164. 3. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 9. 3. Echa Rabbati, fol. 50. 4.

were *among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh*: some that were upon the borders of Ephraim, and within the territory of Manasseh, and it may be where it jetted out in a nook or corner, see ch. xvii. 8, 9. *all the cities with their villages*; not the separate cities only, but the little towns adjacent to them.

Ver. 10. *And they drove not out the Canaanites which dwelt in Gezer*, &c.] Which was the border of their tribe length-way, and was near the sea, ver. 3. in this they did not obey the command of God, and either they did not drive them out, because they could not, God not delivering them up into their hands, because of their sins; or through their slothfulness, or it may be through covetousness, being willing to make some advantage to themselves by them, being a trading people, which seems to be intended in the next clause: *but the Canaanites dwelt among the Ephraimites unto this day*: which Joshua, the writer of this book, might truly say, and be no objection to it, since the same is observed after his death, Judg. i. 29. and indeed they continued to dwell there until the times of Solomon, when it was taken by Pharaoh king of Egypt, and given as a present to his daughter, the wife of Solomon, 1 Kings ix. 15—17. and though this clause does not furnish out an argument against the writing of this book by Joshua, yet, from the instance given, it appears it must have been written before the times of Solomon, and so not by Ezra, as some: *and serve under tribute*; so that they were under their power, and therefore could have driven them out, or slain them, as by the command of God they should; but they spared them for the sake of the tribute they received from them, which seems to agree with the character of the Ephraimites, Hos. xii. 8.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter gives an account of the lot that fell to the half-tribe of Manasseh, to the male children of Manasseh, and to the daughters of Zelophehad, ver. 1—6. and describes the coast of that lot, ver. 7—13. and relates the requestof the sons of Joseph, to have their lot enlarged, which was granted, ver. 14—18.

Ver. 1. *There was also a lot for the tribe of Manasseh*, &c.] As well as for the tribe of Ephraim: *for he was the first-born of Joseph*; and therefore ought to have his part and share in the lot of the children of Joseph, though Ephraim was preferred before him in the blessing of Jacob. Some think this is given as a reason why he had a double portion, one on the other side Jordan, and another in the land of Canaan: to wit, *for Machir, the first-born of Manasseh, the father of Gilead*; who was the only son of Manasseh, and so through him, and by his son Gilead, the whole tribe sprung from that patriarch: *and because he was a man of war, therefore he had Gilead and Bashan*; which were given to his posterity by Moses, and lay on the other side Jordan, see Deut. iii. 13, 15. This Machir very likely had shewn his warlike disposition and courage in Egypt, and had fought under the kings there against the common enemy of that country; for it is highly probable he was dead before the children of Israel came out from thence, but the same warlike spirit continued in his posterity; they had their part assigned them on the other side Jordan, to defend that country, whilst the tribes of Reuben and Gad attended to the care of their flocks and herds.

Ver. 2. *There was also* a lot *for the rest of the children of Manasseh by their families*, &c.] For such that had no part in Gilead and Bashan on the other side Jordan, even for the other half-tribe, whose families are particularly mentioned, as follows: *for the children of Abiezer*; who is called Jeezer in Numb. xxvi. 30. and was a son of Gilead, the son of Machir, as the rest that follow were: *and for the children of Helek, and for the children of Asriel, and for the children of Shechem, and for the children of Hepher, and for the children of Shemida*; hence the families of the Jeezerites, Helekites, Asrielites, Shechemites, Hepherites, and Shemidaites, mentioned in Numb. xxvi. 30—32. and for which families was the lot here spoken of: *these were the male children of Manasseh the son of Joseph by their families*; which is observed for the sake of, and to lead unto what follows, otherwise in common none but males inherited; but the following is an excepted and remarkable case.

Ver. 3. *But Zelophehad, the son of Hepher, the son of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, had no sons, but daughters*, &c.] The descent of this man is particularly given, to shew the truth and reality of it, upon which his daughters made their request, and that granted and now claimed: *and these are the names of his daughters, Mahlah, and Noah, Hoglah, Milcah, and Tirzah*; by the same names, and in the same order they are called in Numb. xxvi. 33. and xxvii. 1. the order is a little different in ch. xxxvi. 11.

Ver. 4. *And they came near before Eleazar the priest, and before Joshua the son of Nun, and before the princes*, &c.] The ten princes, who, with Eleazar and Joshua, were appointed to divide the land, Numb. xxxiv. 17—29. and were now met together for that purpose, ch. xiv. 1. *saying, the Lord commanded Moses to give us an inheritance among our brethren*: those of the same tribe with them; for upon their application to Moses he inquired of the Lord, who ordered him to grant their request, Numb. xxvii. 1—7. *therefore according to the commandment of the Lord he gave them an inheritance among the brethren of their fathers*: that is, to the half-tribe of Manasseh, the lot which fell to it was divided into ten parts: according to the Jewish writers, the six families before mentioned had six parts, and the daughters of Zelophehad had four parts; one on the account of Zelophehad their father, two on the account of their grandfather Hepher, who they say was the first-born, and one on account of their uncle, their father's brother, who died in the wilderness without children; so Jarchi and Kimchi relate from the Tal-

mud[k]; but the true case seems to be this, there were six portions for the six families, but there being no sons in Hepher's family, his part was divided into five, and given to the five daughters of Zelophehad: *beside the land of Gilead and Bashan, which* were *on the other side Jordan*; which were given to the other half-tribe, as before observed.

Ver. 6. *Because the daughters of Manasseh had an inheritance among his sons*, &c.] Which occasioned such a number of portions; the daughters of Zelophehad are meant, who descended from Manasseh: *and the rest of Manasseh, some had the land of Gilead*: that is, those besides the six families before expressed, namely, the two families of the Machirites and Gileadites, Numb. xxvi. 29.

Ver. 7. *And the coast of Manasseh was from Asher*, &c.] Not from the border of the tribe of Asher, as Kimchi, in which he is followed by Vatablus; for that was at too great a distance; but a city of the tribe of Manasseh; and in Jerom's[l] time a village of this name was shewn 15 miles from Neapolis or Shechem, as you go from thence to Scythopolis, near the public road: *to Michmethah, that lieth before Shechem*: the same place mentioned in the description of the border of Ephraim, ch xvi. 6. see the note there: *and the border went along on the right hand, unto the inhabitants of En-tappuah*; that is, leaving this place, and its inhabitants to the right, which was a place in the land of that name, next mentioned; and seems to be so called from a fountain in it, or near it, as well as from a multitude of apples growing there, and with which perhaps the country abounded, of which in the following verse.

Ver. 8. Now *Manasseh had the land of Tappuah*, &c.] The whole territory that went by that name, from a city of note in it, next mentioned; all the fields and villages in it belonged to the tribe of Manasseh: *but Tappuah on the border of Manasseh belonged to the children of Ephraim*: and was one of those separate cities they had among the inheritance of the children of Manasseh; though it seems they had only the city, not the territory adjacent to it, and which was named from it.

Ver. 9. *And the coast descended unto the river Kanah, southward of the river*, &c.] The same mentioned in the account of the coast of Ephraim, ch. xvi. 8. which was north of that river, as Manasseh was to the south of it: *these cities of Ephraim are among the cities of Manasseh*: that is, the cities before mentioned, Asher, Michmethah, En-tappuah, and Tappuah; though they were in the tribe of Manasseh, yet they were inhabited by the Ephraimites: *the coast of Manasseh also was on the north side of the river*: of the river Kanah, as well as on the south of it; it had cities there, though possessed by the tribe of Ephraim: *and the outgoings of it were at the sea*: the Mediterranean sea.

Ver. 10. *Southward it was Ephraim's, and northward it was Manasseh's*, &c.] As Ephraim lay to the south of Manasseh, Manasseh lay to the north of Ephraim: *and the sea is his border*: the Mediterranean sea was their boundary on the west: *and they met together in Asher on the north*: that is, on the north-west towards the Mediterranean sea, as at Mount Carmel: *and in Issachar on the east*; towards Jordan.

Ver. 11. *And Manasseh had in Issachar, and in Asher, Beth-shean, and her towns*, &c.] As Ephraim had cities in Manasseh, so had Manasseh cities in these two tribes, which in some parts bordered on it, before described, even the cities following, and the first that is named is Beth-shean: this lay in the tribe of Issachar, and was the uttermost border of Manasseh that way; it was, as Josephus[m] says, called Scythopolis; but not from the Scythians, as Pliny[n] suggests, but from Succoth, a place where Jacob resided, and which was not far from it, Gen. xxxiii. 17. 1 Kings iv. 12. and vii. 46. it lay before the great plain of Jezreel, and was at the entrance into it, 1 Maccab. v. 52. and was 600 furlongs, or 75 miles, from Jerusalem, according to 2 Maccab. xii. 29. and was one of the cities of Decapolis, from whence our Lord had hearers, Matt. iv. 25. It was such a pleasant place, that it is said in the Talmud[o], that if the garden of Eden was in the land of Israel, Beth-shean was the gate of it; on which the gloss says, that its fruits were the sweetest in the land of Israel: *and Ibleam and her towns*; it seems to be the same with Bileam, by a transposition of the two first letters, 1 Chron. vi. 70. and was a place not far from Megiddo, after mentioned, as appears from 2 Kings ix. 27: *and the inhabitants of Dor and her towns*; this had been a royal city, ch. xi. 2. and xii. 23. see the notes there: *and the inhabitants of Endor and her towns*; this place became famous for a witch there in the times of Saul, 1 Sam. xxviii. 7. in the times of Jerom[p] it was a large village near Mount Tabor, four miles to the south, which he calls Aendor, of or in Jezreel; and elsewhere[q] he speaks of Endor, as near the town of Naim, where our Lord raised the widow's son from the dead, and is about Scythopolis: *and the inhabitants of Taanach and her towns*; this had been a royal city, see the note on ch. xii. 22: *and the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns*: this was another royal city mentioned with the former, ch. xii. 21. see the note there: even *three countries*: the three last cities, with their towns, that are mentioned, Endor, Taanach, and Megiddo; all which perhaps belonged to Dor, and may be the Naphoth-dor spoken of ch. xi. 2. and xii. 23. where the same word is used as here; so Jarchi interprets it.

Ver. 12. *Yet the children of Manasseh could not drive out* the inhabitants of *these cities*, &c.] Mentioned in the preceding verse; they had not strength at first to do it, or either were negligent and slothful, and suffered them to dwell among them, and did not take the advantage they might have done; and afterwards it was too late, they became too strong and numerous for them, at least for a time: *but the Canaanites would dwell in the land*; whether they would or no.

Ver. 13. *Yet it came to pass, when the children of Israel were waxed strong*, &c.] Increased in numbers, and became superior to the Canaanites, not only those of

[k] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 118. 2. & 119. 1.
[l] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. G.
[m] Antiqu. l. 12. c. 8. sect. 5.
[n] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18.
[o] T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 19. 1.
[p] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. L.
[q] Ibid. fol. 91. E.

the tribe of Manasseh, but of the other tribes also: *that they put the Canaanites to tribute;* they did not take away their lives, as they were commanded to do, but made them tributaries to them, which seems to arise from a covetous disposition, and done for the sake of gain: *but did not utterly destroy them out;* which they were ordered to do, and could now have done; for if they were able to make them pay tribute to them, they had power sufficient to drive them out, or destroy them, and therefore broke the commandment of God, Deut. vii. 1, 2. and xx. 16, 17.

Ver. 14. *And the children of Joseph spake unto Joshua,* &c.] Which some understand of the children of Manasseh only; and, indeed, the complaint and arguments used, as well as some circumstances in the account, best agree with them; yet certain it is, that the children of Ephraim accompanied the children of Manasseh, and were present at this interview, as appears from ver. 17. and if they did not join with them in the request and complaint expressly, they countenanced and encouraged the same by their presence: *why hast thou given me* but *one lot and one portion to inherit;* this seems to suit better with one than both; for there was a lot for the tribe of Manasseh also, as well as for Ephraim, ver. 1. by which it should seem that there were two, and if both made this expostulation, it was not fact; but it may be, that the inheritance which came to them by lot was not as yet divided, and so they called it one lot and one portion, and then it might with propriety be said by them both; and their sense be, that the lot or portion assigned them was only sufficient for one of them, and not for both: *seeing I am a great people;* as especially both tribes put together were; *forasmuch as the Lord hath blessed me hitherto?* this best agrees with the tribe of Manasseh, which, since their coming out of Egypt, was increased 20,500, whereas the tribe of Ephraim was decreased; compare Numb. i. 33, 35. with ch. xxvi. 34, 37. Now it might have been expected by them, that as Joshua was of the tribe of Ephraim, that he would have favoured their cause on that account, and that they should have obtained the grant of an addition by that means; but Joshua was impartial in his administration, and shewed no favour and affection on that score, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 15. *And Joshua answered them,* &c.] By retorting their own argument upon them: *if thou be a great people:* which he does not deny, as they were for numbers and power: then *get thee up to the wood-country;* which was near them, and within their borders, and lay on hills and mountains, perhaps the mountains of Gilboa, and therefore are bid to go up: *and cut down for thyself there;* cut down the trees of the wood, clear the ground of them, and so make it habitable, and by that means enlarge the places of their habitation: *in the land of the Perizzites, and of the giants;* or Rephaim; the former of these were one of the seven nations of the Canaanites, who from their name seem to have dwelt not in the cities, and walled towns, but in villages, and scattered houses, in desert places, and among the woods, where also the giants had retired and dwelt after Joshua had driven them out of the cities; and by driving these out of their present habitations, they would gain more room to dwell in, and would find their lot sufficient for them: *if Mount Ephraim be too narrow for thee;* either meaning all Ephraim, and even the whole lot of the sons of Joseph, or rather the mount particularly so called; for the words may be rendered, *for Mount Ephraim hastens for thee*[q]; was clear or open for thee; ready to be delivered to thee, and thou mayest possess it at once.

Ver. 16. *And the children of Joseph said, the hill is not enough for us,* &c.] Meaning either Mount Ephraim, and all included in it; or it may be rather the wood-country on the hills and mountains they were bid to go up to; signifying, that if they could gain that out of the hands of the Perizzites and giants, and clear it of the wood, and make it habitable, even that would not be sufficient for them; or that hill and mountain cannot be *found by us*[r], or obtained and possessed by us; we are not able to get it into our hands, there being a valley between us and that: *and the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron;* not chariots made of iron, but chariots with iron scythes fastened to the sides, or axle-trees of them, which when driven with great force and fury, would cut down the infantry in battle, as grass is cut down with scythes, see Judg. iv. 2, 3. both they *who are of Beth-shean and her towns, and* they *who are of the valley of Jezreel;* both which belonged to the tribe of Manasseh, or were on the borders of it, though as yet they had not got possession, see ver. 11. and this circumstance seems to favour the notion, that the tribe of Manasseh were at least chiefly concerned in this address.

Ver. 17. *And Joshua spake unto the house of Joseph, even to Ephraim and to Manasseh,* &c.] From whence it is clear that some of both were present; and they being brethren, and their interests united, and their cities intermixed, it would be to their mutual advantage to have an enlargement; which the tribe of Manasseh wanted more especially, more of their cities that fell to their lot being in the hands of the Canaanites, than of any other: *saying, thou art a great people, and hast great power;* were very numerous, and so able to contend with the Canaanites, and make themselves more room: *thou shalt not have one lot* only; or only have what they were possessed of, but should have more; and, as they wanted more, they were able enough to get more; and if they exerted their power, relying on the providence of God, through his blessing on their endeavours, they would certainly have an increase of their portion.

Ver. 18. *But the mountains shall be thine,* &c.] Or *for*[s] it shall be thine; thou shalt get the possession of it, though attended with difficulties that seem insuperable: *for* or *if, though*[t] *it is a wood;* the habitation of the Perizzites, and giants, and so dangerous to go up to it, and full of trees, and so seems unprofitable and

[q] Vid Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 21.

[r] לא ימצא לנו non invenietur nobis, Montanus; non possumus montem istum assequi, Tigurine version; non obtinebitur a nobis, Masius.

[s] כי quia, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Gussetius, p. 378.

[t] כי si, Junius & Tremellius, licet, Ar. vers. Lat.

useless: *and thou shalt cut it down*; both the inhabitants of it, and the trees of it, and clear it of both, and make it both safe and commodious to dwell in, which would be a fine enlargement for them: *and the outgoings of it shall be thine*: all it produces when cultivated, and all the parts adjacent to it: *for thou shalt drive out the Canaanites*; this Joshua assures them of, to encourage them to attempt it: *though they have iron chariots, and though they be strong*; be not afraid of their chariots, though terrible, nor of their giants and mighty men, God will be on your side, and you have nothing to fear from them, see Josh. xi. 4, 6. whether the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh took this advice of Joshua is not said.

CHAP. XVIII.

THIS chapter informs us of the setting up of the tabernacle at Shiloh, ver. 1. of the notice Joshua took, that seven tribes had not received their inheritance, ver. 2. of the instructions he gave them to send three men out of each tribe, and describe the land not yet disposed of, and bring the account to him, which was accordingly done, ver. 3—9. and then he cast lots for them, and the first lot came up for Benjamin, ver. 10, 11. the borders of whose lots are described, ver. 12—20. and the several cities in it enumerated, ver. 21—28.

Ver. 1. *And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh*, &c.] The whole body of the people, men, women, and children, as well as the camp, ver. 9. at least all that had not received their inheritances in the land. Hither they came from Gilgal, where the camp and tabernacle had been ever since their passage over Jordan; but now the land being in the main subdued, that was too far off both for the camp and tabernacle, and therefore they moved further into the land, and nearer Jerusalem, where in time the tabernacle was to be placed. The place they assembled at, Shiloh, was in the tribe of Ephraim, of which tribe Joshua was, and whose lot and inheritance was now fixed, and it was not far from Jerusalem, about two leagues. Jerom says[w] it was ten miles from Neapolis or Shechem, in the country of Acrabatena; and that there were scarce any ruins of it to be seen in his day, only an altar demolished was shewn[x]. It seems to have its name from the peaceable condition the land was now in, and very likely was now given it on that account: *and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there*; no doubt by the appointment and direction of God, signified to Eleazar the high-priest, either by a voice, or by Urim and Thummim; and the removal of it seemed necessary, partly that because several camps which surrounded it were now broken up and settled in their cities, as Reuben, Judah, and Ephraim; and partly that it might be near where Joshua, the governor of Israel, resided, Ephraim being his tribe; and also since Gilgal, on the borders of the land, was too far off for the people to resort to the tabernacle, and therefore it was proper it should be more in the heart of the country: when this was done, cannot certainly be determined; Kimchi says it was 14 years after the Israelites came into the land of Canaan; and so says[z] their chronology; but it is highly probable it was before that time, and not longer than seven or eight years at most; here the tabernacle continued, according to the Jewish writers[y], 369 years, even unto the times of Samuel, when for the sins of the sons of Eli it was removed. Eupolemus[a], an Heathen writer, speaks of the holy temple being fixed at Shiloh by Joshua: *and the land was subdued before them*; the far greater part of it, and all so as to have no disturbance from, or war with, the inhabitants.

Ver. 2. *And there remained among the children of Israel seven tribes*, &c.] Which were those of Benjamin, Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, and Dan: *which had not yet received their inheritance*; and for which the lots were not cast.

Ver. 3. *And Joshua said unto the children of Israel*, &c.] To those of the seven tribes: *how long are you slack to go to possess the land which the Lord God of your fathers hath given you?* not that they might have taken possession of it of themselves, without having it assigned to them by lot; that they did not do this, is not what is complained of, and they stand reproved for; but that when two tribes and a half had received their inheritance, these seemed indifferent to it, shewed no inclination and disposition towards it, and much less eagerness to have a settlement, and did not apply to the court for it; which dilatoriness might arise from the present affluence of all good things they enjoyed through the spoils of the enemy; and partly through slothfulness, being tired of the war, and perceiving that they must be involved in it again to dispossess the Canaanites of some of the cities that would fall to their lot; and, perhaps, their slackness might be the more increased, by observing the dissatisfaction of the tribes with the lot they had received, and therefore waited till things were adjusted to greater satisfaction.

Ver. 4. *Give out from among you three men for each tribe*, &c.] That is, for each of the seven tribes, in all 21; though some think they were to be taken out of all the nine tribes and a half, and were 36; and so Josephus[b] seems to understand it; but then he makes but one out of each tribe to be sent, and but ten in all, which is a great oversight in that historian: *and I will send them*; Joshua would not take upon him to name the persons, but left it to their own choice for their greater satisfaction; but when chosen and presented to

[w] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. I.
[x] Comment. in Soph. c. 1. fol. 94. I. Epitaph. Paul. fol. 59. L.
[z] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 32.
[y] Maimon. in Misn. Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 6. Bartenora in ib. sect. 7. Seder Olam Rabba, ut supra.
[a] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.
[b] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 21.

him, he would give them a commission and directions what to do: *and they shall rise;* gird themselves, and prepare for their journey, and set out: *and go through the land of Canaan;* not the whole of it, but that part which as yet was not disposed of; though some think they were to go through and describe the whole land; but I see no reason for that, for what was described was to be divided into seven parts only, and what belonged already to Judah and Joseph, seem plainly to be excepted in the following verse: *and describe it according to the inheritance of them;* take the dimensions of it, and divide it into seven parts, according to the number of the tribes that had not received their inheritance. Jarchi thinks this description and division were not to be made equally, but according to the largeness and smallness of the tribes; but this could not be done by the measurers, since the inheritance of each depended on the lot that was afterward to be cast, which by this means would have been rendered needless: *and they shall come* again *to me:* which seems to be not only a precept or instruction to them, that when they had done their business, they should come to Joshua and give him an account of it; but an assurance also of their safety, that they should receive no disturbance nor hurt from the remaining Canaanites, but should return safe and well.

Ver. 5. *And they shall divide it into seven parts,* &c.] According to the number of the seven tribes not yet settled; and this they were to describe and divide was all the land subdued, or not subdued, only the following excepted: *Judah shall abide in their coast on the south;* on the south of the land of Canaan, where their lot fell, so that needed not to be measured and described; and this tribe was to retain what they were possessed of, unless it should appear they had too much, and others wanted, and they willing to part with some of it to their brethren, as they afterwards did to the tribes of Simeon and Dan: *and the house of Joseph shall abide in their coast on the north;* on the north of the tribe of Judah; not of the land of Canaan, for some other tribes lay more northerly.

Ver. 6. *Ye shall therefore describe the land* into *seven parts,* &c.] Or ye shall describe the land, even the seven parts of it when divided; it seems as if they were first to describe in general all the land not disposed of, and then divide it into seven parts, and make a particular description of each part, or form a plan, or draw a map of every part: *and bring* the description *hither to me;* not by word of mouth, but as written in a book, or marked out in a map, and laid before him, see ver. 9. *that I may cast lots for you here before the Lord your God;* in Shiloh, at the door of the tabernacle, and so before the Lord who dwelt in it, at whose disposal the lot was, and by which every one of the seven tribes would have their part and portion assigned them, most fitting and convenient for them, according to the will and counsel of God, in which it became them to acquiesce.

Ver. 7. *But the Levites have no part among you,* &c.] And so needed not to send any men out of their tribe to measure the land on their account, and is a reason why the remaining part of the land was to be divided into seven parts only: *for the priesthood of the Lord is his inheritance;* not only the office, but what appertained to it, all the perquisites of it, the tithes, first-fruits, parts of the sacrifices, *&c.* see ch. xiii. 14: *and Gad, and Reuben, and half the tribe of Manasseh, have received their inheritance beyond Jordan on the east, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave them;* and so had no share in the division of the land of Canaan, being sufficiently provided for.

Ver. 8. *And the men arose, and went away,* &c.] The seven tribes took the advice of Joshua, chose three men out of each tribe, and presented them to him, who gave them their commission and instruction to go and describe the land of Canaan, not yet disposed of, and whether subdued, or not subdued; upon which they prepared for their journey, and took it, after he had given them the following charge: *and Joshua charged them that went to describe the land;* before they departed from him: *saying, go and walk through the land;* and take particular notice, and an exact survey of it, both of the quality and the quantity of it: *and describe it;* its cities and towns, hills and dales, the goodness and badness of the soil, and put it down in a book, or lay it out in a map, that it may be discerned by the eye what number of cities, and what space of ground it contains, and what parts are hilly and woody, and what otherwise: *and come again to me;* to make a report of it: *that I may cast lots for you before the Lord in Shiloh;* that is, for the several tribes which they belonged to, and by whom they were chosen for this purpose.

Ver. 9. *And the men went and passed through the land,* &c.] Undisturbed by the inhabitants that remained; the fear of the Israelites being still upon them, and the providence of God restraining them, so that the men passed through the whole country, and took a survey of it without any molestation: *and described it by cities, into seven parts, in a book;* or map, or rather made seven maps of it, and set down the several cities in each division, with the places adjacent, hills and vales, and marked out a plain and exact chorography of the whole, by which it appears they must be men well skilled in geometry. Josephus[b] says, that Joshua added to them some that understood geometry; but doubtless the persons each tribe chose and sent were such whom they knew were well versed in that art, and so fit for the business; and which they had, no doubt, learnt in Egypt, this being one part of the wisdom and learning of the Egyptians, who boasted of it as an invention of theirs, as Diodorus Siculus[c] relates; and indeed they were obliged to study it, their country being divided into several nomes, and these into lesser districts, and which also were subdivided, and according thereunto were the king's taxes levied upon them; and what with the confusion frequently made by the overflowings of the Nile, they were frequently obliged to measure their land over again; and hence they became expert in this science, which is commonly believed took its rise from them, and passed into Greece, as Herodotus[d], and Strabo[e], and other authors relate;

[b] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 21.
[c] Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 63.

[d] Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 109.
[e] Geograph. l. 17. p. 541, 542. Vid. Suidam in voce Γεωμετρία.

however, it is certain from this instance in the time of Joshua, that geometry was not the invention of Anaximander, about 500 years before Christ, as some have asserted[f]: *and came again to Joshua to the host at Shiloh;* where the camp, as well as the people in common, and the tabernacle, were; they returned, as Josephus[g] says, at the end of seven months; and to measure so much land, and make such divisions of it, and give the plans and maps of each division, must take up a considerable time.

Ver. 10. *And Joshua cast lots for them in Shiloh before the Lord,* &c.] For the seven tribes, as he had for the two tribes and a half at Gilgal; of the manner of casting lots, see the note on Numb. xxvi. 55: *and there Joshua divided the land unto the children of Israel according to their division:* the land that was divided into seven parts, he distributed to the seven tribes, as the lot came up for them, and then divided these several parts according to the families and households in each tribe.

Ver. 11. *And the lot of the tribe of the children of Benjamin came up according to their families,* &c.] This was the first lot of the seven that came up; it was but a small lot, and therefore called *little Benjamin,* Psal. lxviii. 27. but the land was very pleasant and fruitful. Josephus[h] says, this lot was very strait, because of the goodness of the soil, for it took in Jericho, and the city of Jerusalem: *the coast of their lot came forth between the children of Judah and the children of Joseph;* having Judah on the south, and Joseph on the north; this was so ordered by the providence of God, that Benjamin should lie close to Joseph, being own brothers, and the only children of Rachel, Jacob's beloved wife; and that it should be next to Judah, with whom it was to unite, both in religious and civil affairs, and both met in and had a part of Jerusalem, the metropolis of Israel; and this lot fell exactly according to the prediction of Moses, and the order of it, who places Benjamin between Judah and Joseph, the tribe of Levi having no share in the division of the land, Deut. xxxiii. 7, 12, 13.

Ver. 12. *And their border on the north side was from Jordan,* &c.] Which was the eastern boundary of the tribe, and hence proceeded from east to west, and formed its northern border, which is described in like manner as the lot of the children of Joseph, ch. xvi. 1, 2: *and the border went up to the side of Jericho on the north side;* from Jordan it went to the north of Jericho, and so took in that place, which was within the tribe of Benjamin, ver. 21: *and went up through the mountains westward;* the mountains that were on the north of Jericho; for, as Strabo says[i], Jericho was surrounded with mountains, see ch. ii. 16, 22. through these mountains the coast went on towards the western border of the tribe: *and the goings out thereof were at the wilderness of Beth-aven:* a place near Beth-el and Ai, to which there was a wilderness adjoining, see ch. vii. 2. and viii. 20. here ended the northern border.

Ver. 13. *And the border went over from thence towards Luz,* &c.] From Beth-aven, where the northern border ended, the western began, and went on to Luz: *to the side of Luz, which is Beth-el, southward:* that is, passed along, leaving that city to the south, which formerly was called Luz, but now Beth-el, which though distinct places formerly, yet being very near, might in process of time be joined; see the note on ch. xvi. 2. and the border descended to Ataroth-adar, the same with Archi-ataroth, ch. xvi. 2, 5. see the note there: *near the hill that lieth on the south side of the nether Beth-horon;* so called to distinguish it from Beth-horon the upper, situated on an hill or mountain, ch. xvi. 5. this was rebuilt by Solomon, 1 Kings iv. 17.

Ver. 14. *And the border was drawn thence,* &c.] From Beth-horon: *and compassed the corner of the sea southward;* it is hard to say what sea is meant, or what by it. Fuller[k] conjectures, that as the Hebrews call any confluence of water a sea, as we call such a *mere,* the great waters in Gibeon may be meant, Jer. xli. 12. for it cannot mean the Mediterranean sea, for Dan lay between Benjamin and that; and yet if a sea is meant, no other can be; wherefore it is best to render it the *west quarter,* as it is in the latter part of this verse; and so the same word is translated, ver. 12. the *west,* and not the *sea,* as it sometimes is; for the border of Benjamin did not reach the sea any where; though Josephus[l] makes it to extend to it, and says, that the length of it was from the river Jordan to the sea: *from the hill that lieth before Beth-horon southward;* the hill that lay to the south of nether Beth-horon, as in the preceding verse: *and the goings out thereof,* the end of the western coast, *were at Kirjath-baal, which is Kirjath-jearim, a city of the children of Judah;* of which see ch. xv. 9, 60; *this* was *the west quarter;* as thus described.

Ver. 15. *And the south quarter was from the end of Kirjath-jearim,* &c.] Where the western quarter ended: *and the border went out on the west;* not directly south, but somewhat westerly. It is, in the original, *the sea,* and should be rendered, *from the sea,* or *from the west*[m]; and Jarchi confesses his ignorance, and says, I know not what sea it is; and well he might, for there was no sea here; but the Mediterranean sea, being to the west of the land of Israel, it is often used for the west in the Hebrew language, and so here: *and went out to the well of waters of Nephtoah:* see the note on ch. xv. 9.

Ver. 16. *And the border came down,* &c.] In the description of the border of Judah, hereabout, it is said to go up, ch. xv. 5. because there, as Jarchi observes, the measure was from east to west, but here from west to east: *to the end of the mountain that lieth before the valley of the son of Hinnom;* this south border of Benjamin is the same with the north border of Judah; and the same places are mentioned in the description of the one as of the other, see ch. xv. 8. The mountain is Mount Moriah, and *which is in the valley of the giants on the north;* on the north of the valley of Rephaim: *and descended to the valley of Hinnom;* the border from the end of Mount Moriah to that valley: *to the side of Jebusi on the south;* to the south side of Jerusalem, having that city on the south;

[f] Vid. Strabo. Geograph. l. 1. p. 5. Laert. l. 2. Vit. Anaximand.
[g] Ut supra.
[h] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.
[i] Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.

[k] Pisgah-Sight, B. 2. c. 12. p. 251.
[l] Ut supra.
[m] מימה a mari, Masius; ab occidente, Noldius, No. 1083. p. 279.

and descended to En-rogel; of which see the note on ch. xv. 7.

Ver. 17. *And was drawn from the north,* &c.] Turning northward, and looking that way from the west to the east: *and went forth to En-shemesh;* or the fountain of the sun, see ch. xv. 7: *and went forth toward Geliloth;* called Gilgal, ch. xv. 7: *which is over-against the going up to Adummim;* a place between Jerusalem and Jericho, see ch. xv. 7: *and descended to the stone of Bohan the son of Reuben;* see ch. xv. 6.

Ver. 18. *And passed along toward the side over-against Arabah northward,* &c.] The same with Beth-arabah, ch. xv. 6. and so it is called here in the Greek version: *and went down unto Arabah;* the same as before, and included it, for it is mentioned among the cities of this tribe, ver. 22.

Ver. 19. *And the border passed along to the side of Beth-hoglah northward,* &c.] Inclining somewhat toward the north, but not leaving the city to the north, for it is included in the lot of Benjamin, ver. 21. of which place see ch. xv. 6: *and the outgoings of the border were at the north bay of the salt sea;* here ended the southern border of Benjamin, even at the bay or creek of the salt sea, which looked northward, as the southern border of Judah began at that bay of it, which looked southward, ch. xv. 2: *at the south end of Jordan;* where it fell into the salt sea: *this was the south-coast;* as before described.

Ver. 20. *And Jordan was the border of it on the east side,* &c.] It had Jordan on the east, Dan on the west, Judah on the south, and Joseph or Ephraim on the north: *this was the inheritance of the children of Benjamin, by the coasts thereof round about, according to their families;* this is the general description of the limits of this tribe, the particular cities in it follow.

Ver. 21. *Now the cities of the tribe of the children of Benjamin, according to their families, were Jericho,* &c.] Which though destroyed, and not to be rebuilt as a city, was yet a place inhabited, and in future times was rebuilt, and in great splendour, and continued to the time of Christ; of which see ch. ii. 1. Beth-hoglah, where or near to which was the threshing-floor of Atad, at which lamentation was made for Jacob, Gen. l. 10. see the note there, and on Josh. xv. 6: *and the valley of Keziz;* or Emek-keziz; so the Greek version calls it Amecasis: it is highly probable it was in the valley or plain of Jericho, and perhaps might have its name from the incision of the balsam-tree there; which, as Pliny [p] says, was cut with glass or a stone, or with knives made of bone; if cut with iron, it kills it.

Ver. 22. *And Beth-arabah, and Zemaraim, and Beth-el.*] Of the first and last of these, see the notes on ch. vii. 2. and xv. 6. One of the sons of Canaan was named Zemari, Gen. x. 18. by whom this city Zemaraim might be built, or however have its name given it, in memory of him; there was a mountain of this name in the tribe of Ephraim, near to which this city might be, 2 Chron. xiii. 4.

Ver. 23. *And Avim, and Parah, and Ophrah.*] Of the two first of these we read nowhere else. Ophrah is not the same with Ophra in Judg. vi. 11. that belonged to the tribe of Manasseh, but rather that which was in the land of Shuah, 1 Sam. xiii. 17. Jerom calls this place Aphra, in the tribe of Benjamin, and says [q], in his time there was a village called Effrem, five miles from Beth-el to the east, which very probably is the same with this.

Ver. 24. *And Chephar-haammonai, and Ophni, and Gaba,* &c.] Of the two first of these no mention is made elsewhere. Gaba is the same with Gibeah, a well-known place, because of the foul fact committed there, which had like to have been the ruin of this tribe, Judg. xix. and for being the native place of King Saul, hence called Gibeah of Saul; it was about six or seven miles from Jerusalem, see the note on Hos. v. 8: *twelve cities with their villages;* which agrees with the account of them.

Ver. 25. *Gibeon, and Ramah, and Beeroth.*] Gibeon is the place from whence the Gibeonites came, who deceived Joshua, ch. ix. Jerom says [r], in his time there was a village shewn of this name, four miles from Beth-el to the east, near Ramah, next mentioned; and which the same writer relates [s] was six miles from Ælia or Jerusalem to the north, against Beth-el. Rauwolff, a traveller in those parts, says [t], that the town of Rama is situated on an ascent, in plain fields, which extend themselves for two leagues to the hill of the city of Jerusalem; these fields are very fruitful and well tilled, and sown with corn, cotton, and Indian millet; the town is pretty large, but very open, like unto a village, very pitifully built, where one may still see here and there some signs of old buildings. Beeroth was a city that belonged to the Gibeonites, ch. ix. 17. and Jerom says [u], in his time was shewn the village, seven miles from Ælia or Jerusalem, as you go to Neapolis or Shechem.

Ver. 26. *And Mizpeh, and Chephirah, and Mozah.*] Frequent mention is made of Mizpeh in Scripture; according to Fuller [v], it was about eight miles from Gibeah; it was near Ramathon, which Josephus says [w] was 40 furlongs from Jerusalem. Chephirah was one of the cities subject to Gibeon, ch. ix. 17. There was a place called Motza, near to Jerusalem, where they used to go to get willows at the feast of tabernacles [x].

Ver. 27. *And Rekem, and Irpeel, and Taralah.*] Of these cities there is no mention made elsewhere.

Ver. 28. *And Zelah, Eleph, and Jebusi, which is Jerusalem, Gibeath,* and *Kirjath,* &c.] Zelah was the burying-place of Saul and his family, 2 Sam. xxi. 14. Eleph is nowhere else mentioned; some join it with Zelah, and make one city of it, but then the number of cities given could not be completed; both Jarchi and Kimchi say they were two cities, as doubtless they were; of Jerusalem being called Jebusi, see ch. xv. 63. it belonged partly to the tribe of Judah, and partly to the tribe of Benjamin; Mount Zion belonged to Judah, and Moriah to Benjamin; Gibeath was a

[p] Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 25.
[q] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. H.
[r] Ibid. fol. 92. A.
[s] Ibid. fol. 94. B.
[t] Travels, par. 3. c. 1. p. 215. Ed. Ray.

[u] Vid. Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 618.
[v] Pisgah-Sight, B. 2. c. 12. p. 289.
[w] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 12. sect. 3.
[x] Misn. Succah, c. 4. sect. 5.

distinct city both from Gaba and Gibeon; by its being mentioned with Jerusalem, it should seem to be near it. Jerom [y] speaks of Gabaatha in the tribe of Benjamin, 12 miles from Eleutheropolis, where the grave of the Prophet Habakkuk was shewn; Kirjath signifies a city, but what city is meant is not known: *fourteen cities with their villages*: and just so many are mentioned by name: *this is the inheritance of the children of Benjamin according to their families*: these cities, with others perhaps not mentioned, were allotted to the tribe of Benjamin for their families to dwell in.

CHAP. XIX.

IN this chapter an account is given of the lots of the six remaining tribes, and the cities in them, as of Simeon, whose cities were chiefly within the tribe of Judah, ver. 1—9. of Zebulun, its border and cities, ver. 10—16. of Issachar, its border and cities, ver. 17—23. of Asher, its border and cities, ver. 24—31. of Naphtali, its border and cities, ver. 32—39. of Dan, its border and cities, ver. 40—48. and lastly of a gift of inheritance to Joshua, ver. 49, 50, 51.

Ver. 1. *And the second lot came forth to Simeon*, &c.] That is, the second of the seven lots, of which Benjamin's was the first; otherwise there were the two lots of Judah and Joseph, which preceded both these: even *for the tribe of the children of Simeon, according to their families*: for though many of their cities had been given by lot to the tribe of Judah, yet it seems as if there were others they had by a special lot cast for them, as many as were sufficient for their families: *and their inheritance was within the inheritance of the children of Judah*; which was done partly because this was but a small tribe, and particularly because the lot put up, which fell to the tribe of Judah, was too large for it, more than they could occupy, too much being put to this lot by the first measurers of the land; and partly to fulfil the prophecy of Jacob, that the Simeonites should be scattered in Jacob, and divided in Israel, Gen. xlix. 7. and hence it is that the lots of these two tribes lying together, and being so intermixed, that the tribe of Judah called upon that of Simeon to join them in fighting against the Canaanites, and taking out of their hands the cities that belonged to them, Judg. i. 3.

Ver. 2. *And they had in their inheritance Beer-sheba and Sheba*, &c.] Or, Beer-sheba, that is, Sheba; for so the particle *vau* is sometimes used [z], and must be so used here; or otherwise, instead of 13, it will appear that there are 14 cities, contrary to the account of them, ver. 6. so Kimchi and Ben Melech make them one city. And it may be observed, that in the enumeration of the cities of Simeon, 1 Chron. iv. 28. Sheba is left out, and only Beersheba is mentioned; which was a well-known place in the furthest border of the land of Israel southward, and the reason of its name is manifest, Gen. xxi. 31. see the note on ch. xv. 28. *and Moladah*; another of the cities of Judah, ch. xv. 26.

Ver. 3. *And Hazor-shual, and Balah, and Azem.*] Of these places see the notes on ch. xv. 28, 29. for Balah is the same with Baalah there, and with Bilha, 1 Chron. iv. 29. and Azem with Ezem there.

Ver. 4. *And Eltolad, and Bethul, and Hormah.*] These were all cities of Judah, ch. xv. 30. Eltolad is the same with Tolad, and Bethul with Bethuel, 1 Chron. iv. 29, 30. and with Chesil, ch. xv. 30. mentioned there along with Hormah; see the note there.

Ver. 5. *And Ziklag*, &c.] Another of the cities of Judah, ch. xv. 31. *and Beth-marcaboth, and Hazar-susah*; or Susim, as in 1 Chron. iv. 31. the one signifies a chariot-house, and the other a court or stable for horses, which made Bochart conjecture [a], that they were places where Solomon kept his chariots and horses; but it should be observed that these were the names by which these places went in the times of the old Canaanites; and seem to me rather where some of their kings had their horses and chariots; or rather where there were temples dedicated to the horses and chariots of the sun; see 2 Kings xxiii. 11.

Ver. 6. *And Beth-lebaoth, and Sharuhen*, &c.] Whether the first is the same with Lebaoth, a city of Judah, ch. xv. 32. and with the Bethleptepha of Josephus [b], and the Betholene of Pliny [c], is not certain: in this place seems to have been an idol-temple of the Canaanites, dedicated to lions, as in Egypt there was a city called Leontopolis, from whence was the Leontopolitan nome, the inhabitants of which worshipped lions [d]; and the Egyptians had temples dedicated to them, as Ælianus [e] relates. Both these places are thought to be the same with Beth-birei and Shaaraim in 1 Chron. iv. 31. of the latter of which see ch. xv. 36. Those who take Sheba, ver. 2. to be the same with Shema, ch. xv. 26. make but one city here, and take away the last, as the Greek version does, and render the word *and their fields*, and so the number still is as follows: *thirteen cities and their villages*; the sum-total of those enumerated above.

Ver. 7. *Ain, Remmon, and Ether, and Ashan*, &c.] Of the two first, which were cities of Judah, see the note on ch. xv. 32. and of the two last, see the note on ver. 42. *four cities and their villages*; Ain, Remmon, therefore, could not be one city, at this time, as it seems to have been in the times of Nehemiah, ch. xi. 29. or otherwise there would have been but three cities.

Ver. 8. *And all the villages that were round about these cities*, &c.] Not only the suburbs adjoining to

[y] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. C.
[z] Vid. Noldium, p. 280. No. 1200.
[a] Hierozoic. l. 2. c. 9. col. 158.
[b] De Jud. Bell. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 1.
[c] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 14.
[d] Strabo. Geograph. l. 17. p. 559.
[e] De Animal. l. 12. c. 7.

these cities which are mentioned before, but the several small distinct towns and villages, scattered up and down in the country: *to Baalath-beer, Ramath of the south*; this is the same with Baal in 1 Chron. iv. 33. and with Ramath of the south, or south Ramoth, as it is called 1 Sam. xxx. 27. all these are the names of one and the same city: *this is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Simeon, according to their families*; that is, the above-named cities fell to the lot of the inheritance of the Simeonites, and were divided among them according to the number of their respective families; at least, these were the chief and principal of them; for all that they possessed are not mentioned, particularly one called Tochen, 1 Chron. iv. 32. and another, the name of which is Etam there, unless that is thought to be the same with Ether here in the preceding verse. Josephus says[f], this tribe took by lot that part of Idumea which lay near to Egypt and Arabia.

Ver. 9. *Out of the portion of the children of Judah was the inheritance of the children of Simeon*, &c.] Which is the reason why no description is given of the border of their inheritance, because that is before given in the account of the lot of Judah: *for the part of the children of Judah was too much for them*: they had more cities than they could fill with people, and more land than they could cultivate; they had 114 cities with their villages: *therefore the children of Simeon had their inheritance within the inheritance of them*; the one being a small tribe, and the other large, and for the reasons given on ver. 1. see the note there.

Ver 10. *And the third lot came up for the children of Zebulun, according to their families*, &c.] Who, though younger than Issachar, has his lot before him, agreeably to the order in which his blessing is predicted, both by Jacob and Moses, Gen. xlix. 13. Deut. xxxiii. 18. *and the border of their inheritance was unto Sarid*: or *by Sarid*, as Masius, who takes this to be the south-west border of Zebulun, being near Carmel; in which he seems to be right.

Ver. 11. *And their border went up toward the sea*, &c.] Westward towards the Mediterranean sea, which fulfilled the prophecies of Jacob and Moses, that Zebulun should dwell by the sea, be an haven of ships, and suck of the abundance of the seas, as in the places before referred to; and so Josephus says, the Zebulonites took the land unto the lake of Gennesaret, by or about Carmel and the sea: *and Maralah*; which Jerom calls[g] the ascent of Zebulun; for from hence it went up from the sea, and reached to Dabbasheth; which Jerom calls Dasbath; the word signifies a bunch that is on a camel's back, Isa. xxx. 6. so called because when that is hurt by burdens it is cured with honey[h]: it seems to denote some place or city at a point of land or promontory, that stood out towards the sea, as that of Carmel; or some city on the back of Carmel, resembling a camel's bunch: *and reached to the river that is before Jokneam*; of Jokneam, see the note on ch. xii. 22. and this river was either the river Kishon, or Belus, sometimes called Pagida; from whence sand was taken to make glass of[k], and was near Carmel, as Jokneam was.

Ver. 12. *And turned from Sarid eastward*, &c.] This describes the southern border, going on from west to east: *towards the sun-rising, unto the border of Chisloth-tabor*; this Jerom places in the tribe of Issachar, it bordered on both tribes; and he says[l], that in his time there was a little village called Chaselus, eight miles from Diocæsarea, at the foot of Mount Tabor in the plains: *and then goeth out to Daberath*: which also was a city in the tribe of Issachar, given to the Levites, ch. xxi. 28. Jerom[m] speaks of a little village of the Jews by Mount Tabor, of the country belonging to Diocæsarea, called Dabira; this place is still in being. Mr. Maundrell says[n], at the bottom of Tabor westward stands Debarah, supposed by some to take its name from Deborah, the famous judge and deliverer of Israel: *and goeth up to Japhia*; this Jerom[o] says is the town called Sycamine, as you go from Cæsarea to Ptolemais, above the sea, because of Mount Carmel, called Epha, thought by some to be the Jebba of Pliny[p]. It seems, however, to be the Japha of Josephus[q], which he speaks of as being a strong fortified place both by nature and art.

Ver. 13. *And from thence passeth on along on the east to Gittah-hepher*, &c.] Which was the native place of Jonah the prophet, 2 Kings xiv. 25. and where Jerom says[r] his grave was shewn, and was a small village in his time two miles from Sippore, then called Diocæsarea, to Ittah-kazin; of this place we have no account elsewhere, but it was not far from the former: *and goeth out to Remmon-methoar to Neah*: where the eastern border ended. Some versions make Remmon-methoar distinct places; but where either of them were exactly is not known: some, as the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, render the word *Methoar which goes about*: that is, the border went about from Remmon to Neah, which by Jerom is called Anna, and who observes[s], that there is another village called Anna, 10 miles from Neapolis, as you go to Ælia; and by whom also Methoar is reckoned a distinct place, and called Amathar.

Ver. 14. *And the border compasseth it from the north side to Hannathon*, &c.] This is the northern border of the tribe, which took a circuit from the last place to this; of which and the following place we have no account; Jerom only makes mention of them as in the tribe of Zebulun: *and the outgoings thereof are in the valley of Jiphthah-el*: here the northern border ended, which, Masius conjectures, was part of the valley of Carmel.

Ver. 15. *And Kattath, and Nahallal, and Shimron, and Idalah, and Beth-lehem*, &c.] Of the two first of these we read nowhere else, but in ch. xxi. 34, 35. and in Judg. i. 30. Shimron was a royal city, the king

[f] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.
[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 90. K.
[h] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 154. 2.
[k] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19. & l. 36. c. 26.
[l] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. D. H.
[m] Ibid. fol. 90. I.
[n] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 115.
[o] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. K.
[p] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.
[q] De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 31.
[r] Præfat. in Jonam.
[s] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. H.

of which Joshua took and hanged, Josh. xi. 1. and xii. 20. Idalah is a place Bochart conjectures[t] where the goddess Venus was worshipped, Idalia being one of her names; and Beth-lehem is a different place from that which was the birth-place of our Lord, called Beth-lehem of Judah, to distinguish it from this: *twelve cities with their villages;* more are named, but some of them belonged to other tribes, and only lay on the borders of this; and others might not be properly cities, but small towns.

Ver. 16. *This is the inheritance of the children of Zebulun, according to their families,* &c.] Which was allotted to it and divided, according to the number of its families: *these cities with their villages;* before enumerated, excepting such as only bordered on them; though indeed there were other cities which belonged to them, or might be after given them, not here mentioned, as Kartah and Dimnah, ch. xxi. 34, 35.

Ver. 17. *And the fourth lot came out to Issachar,* &c.] The fourth of the seven drawn at Shiloh: *for the children of Issachar, according to their families;* among whom the inheritance that came to them by the lot was divided, according to the number of them.

Ver. 18. *And their border was towards Jezreel,* &c.] Which was a royal seat in the time of Ahab, 1 Kings xxi. 1. and according to Jerom was near to Maximianopolis; see the note on Hos. i. 5. and the same writer[u] says in his day a large village of this name was shewn in the great plain between Scythopolis and Legion (he means the plain of Jezreel), and it was the border of Issachar: *and Chesulloth and Shunem;* the first of these was different from the Chisloth-tabor, ver. 12. that, as Masius observes, was to the north, this to the south of Mount Tabor. Shunem is a place well known for being the dwelling-place of a certain woman in the times of Elisha, whose son the prophet raised from the dead, 2 Kings iv. 8. Jerom calls it Sonam, where was the Shunamite woman; but this city here seems to be what he calls Sulem, in the tribe of Issachar; and he adds, that there was shewn in his day a village by this name, 5 miles from Mount Tabor to the south[w]: according to Bunting[x], it was 48 miles from Jerusalem to the north, not far from Naim.

Ver. 19. *And Hapharaim, and Shion, and Anaharath.*] The first of these is by Jerom[y] called Aphraim, a city of the tribe of Issachar; and adds, there is at this day a village called Affarea, 6 miles from Legion to the north; and of Seon or Soen, the same with Shion here, he says[z], there was a village of this name shewn in his time near Mount Tabor; of the latter we have no account elsewhere.

Ver. 20. *And Rabbith, and Kishion, and Abez.*] The first of these Jerom calls[a] Rabboth in the tribe of Issachar; and Kishion, as Masius notes, seems to have given name to the river Kishon near it; some take it to be the same with Kedesh, 1 Chron. vi. 72. of Abez no mention is made elsewhere.

Ver. 21. *And Remeth and En-gannim, and En-haddah, and Beth-pazzez.*] Remeth seems to be the same with Jarmuth, ch. xxi. 29. and with Ramoth, 1 Chron. vi. 73. and En-gannim the same with Anem in the same place: there were several of this name, which seem to have been places full of gardens, and well watered; for the word signifies a fountain of gardens. En-gannim is now called Jenine, distant from Tabor 22 miles, a place of gardens, of water, and of pleasure, as a traveller[b] of ours tells us; who also declares[c], that, in his whole journey from Damascus to Jerusalem, he saw not more fruitful ground, and so much together, than he did in 22 miles' riding between Mount Tabor and En-gannim. This seems to be the same place Mr. Maundrell[d] calls Jeneen, a large old town on the skirts of Esdraelon. Dr. Lightfoot[e] is inclined to believe, that Nain, where the widow's son was raised to life, Luke vii. 11. is the same with En-gannim, for which he gives divers reasons. Jerom says, in his time[f] there was a village called Enadda, 10 miles from Eleutheropolis, as you go from thence to Ælia; but seems not to be the same with En-haddah here; but of Beth-pazzez no mention is made elsewhere. Beth signifies a house, and Pazzez in the Arabic tongue signifies silver; so this with the old Canaanites might be a treasure-city, like those in Egypt, Exod. i. 11. But where a word begins with Beth, as the name of a place, I always suspect there was an idol-temple there; now as the word in Hebrew signifies the same as Peor, opening, here might be a temple to that deity, or to one that was similar to the god of the Moabites, and design a Priapus, among the Canaanites like that; or as the word in the Syriac and Chaldee languages signifies to redeem, deliver, and save, this temple might be dedicated to some idol as their deliverer and saviour.

Ver. 22. *And the coast reacheth to Tabor, and Shahazimah, and Beth-shemesh,* &c.] Tabor was the name of a mountain in those parts; it is generally supposed to be the mountain on which our Lord was transfigured, though it is not sufficiently evident; see the note on Jer. xlvi. 18. There was a city of this name near it, 1 Chron. vi. 77. and which is meant here, and which either gave unto or received name from the mount. The Greeks call it Itabyrium, and it is described by Polybius[g] as situated on a hill rising in the form of a pap or breast, and has an ascent of more than fifteen furlongs, and he calls it a city. Shahazimah is not mentioned any where else; and there seem to have been several cities, at least more than one, of the name of Beth-shemesh; one in the tribe of Judah, ch. xxi. 16. and another in the tribe of Naphtali, ver. 38. which perhaps may be the same with this, it lying on the borders of both tribes. In this, and so in others of the same name, was a temple dedicated to the sun by the Heathens, as there was one of the same name in Egypt for the same reason, Jer. xliii. 13. *and the outgoings of their border were at Jordan;* here it ended: so Josephus says, that the border of this tribe in the length of it were Mount Carmel (at one end), and the

[t] Canaan, l. 1. c. 3. col. 356.
[u] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. I.
[w] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. K. L.
[x] Travels, p. 143.
[y] Ut supra, fol. 88. I.
[z] Ibid. fol. 94. K.
[a] Ib. B.

[b] Biddulph apud Lightfoot. Talmud. Exercitat. in John iv. 4.
[c] Ib. apud Fuller's Pisgah-Sight, p. 161.
[d] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 111.
[e] Chorograph. notes in Luke, p. 370.
[f] Ut supra.
[g] Hist. l. 5. p. 412.

river (*i. e.* Jordan, at the other); and at the breadth of it the mountain Itabyrium, or Mount Tabor: it had Jordan on the east, the sea on the west, Zebulun on the north, and Manasseh on the south: *sixteen cities with their villages*; which was the sum-total of them.

Ver. 23. *This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Issachar*, &c.] Which fell to them by lot, as before described: *according to their families*: was divided among them, according to the number of them: *the cities and their villages*; the cities before enumerated, and the villages adjacent to them.

Ver. 24. *And the fifth lot came out for the tribe of the children of Asher*, &c.] Which entitled them to an inheritance next described: *according to their families*: which was sufficient for them, and divided to them according to their number.

Ver. 25. *And their border was Helkath, and Hali, and Beten, and Achshaph.*] Halkath seems to be the same with Hukok, 1 Chron. vi. 75. and according to Masius it lay 10 or 12 miles above Ptolemais; of Hali we read nowhere else. Beten is by Jerom [h] called Bathne, and was in his time a village by the name of Bethebem, 8 miles from Ptolemais to the east. Reland [i] seems to think it might be the Ecbatana of Pliny [k], which he speaks of as near Mount Carmel, and not far from Ptolemais. Achshaph was a royal city, whose king was taken by Joshua, ch. xi. 1. see the note there.

Ver. 26. *And Alammelech, and Amad, and Misheal*, &c.] Of the two first of these there is no mention elsewhere. Misheal is the same with Mashal, 1 Chron. vi. 74. and is by Jerom [l] called Masan, and said to be near Carmel to the sea: *and reacheth to Carmel westward*: or, *to the sea*, as Carmel is called Carmel by the sea, Jer. xlvi. 18. see the note there: it is hereby distinguished from Carmel in the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 55. (Pliny [m] calls it a promontory): *and to Sihor-libnath*: the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions make two places of it: but the sum of the cities after given will not admit of it: more rightly Junius renders it Sihor by Libnath, and takes Sihor to be the river Belus, or Pagidus; so called either because of its likeness to the Nile, one of whose names is Sihor, Jer. ii. 18. or because its waters might be black and muddy; it was the river out of which sand was fetched to make glass of: and Libnath, which has its name from whiteness, the same writer thinks may be the Album Promontorium, or white promontory of Pliny [n], which he places near Ptolemais, between Ecdippa and Tyre, and is very probable.

Ver. 27. *And turneth towards the sun-rising*, &c.] Or eastward, to Beth-dagon; there was a city of this name in the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 41. see the note there. Dagon, being a god of the Phœnicians, had temples built for him in various places in Canaan: *and reacheth to Zebulun*: not the tribe of Zebulun, but a city so called, the same Josephus [o] calls a strong city of Galilee, which had the name of Men, perhaps from the populousness of it, and separated Ptolemais from Judea: *and to the valley of Jiphthah-el*; see ver. 14. *toward the north side of Beth-emek, and Neiel*: of Beth-emek no mention is made elsewhere: perhaps here was an idol-temple before dedicated to the god of the valleys: see 1 Kings xx. 28. the latter the Greek version calls Inael, of which Jerom says [p], it is a certain village called Betoaenea, 15 miles from Cæsarea, situated on a mountain to the east, on which are said to be wholesome baths: *and goeth out to Cabul on the left hand*; not the land of Cabul, 1 Kings ix. 13. but a city, which Josephus [q] calls a village on the borders of Ptolemais. The Jews [r] speak of a city of this name, destroyed because of contentions in it.

Ver. 28. *And Hebron and Rehob, and Hammon*, &c.] Hebron seems to be the same with Abdon, ch. xxi. 30. 1 Chron. vi. 74. ר and ד being changed, of which there are other instances; and hereby this is distinguished from another Hebron in the tribe of Judah, more commonly known, ch. xv. 54. In the time of Jerom [s], there was a village called Rooba, 4 miles from Scythopolis, and which he says was a city separated to the Levites, as this was, or one of the same name in this tribe; for there was another, ver. 30. see ch. xxi. 31. but whether either of them is the same with this is not certain; of Hammon we read nowhere else: *and Kanah, even unto great Zidon*; this Kanah is generally thought to be the same where Christ wrought his first miracle, Job ii. 1, 11. Jerom expressly says [t], there was a Cana in the tribe of Asher, where our Lord and Saviour turned water into wine, and from whence was Nathanael; and it is at this day, adds he, a town in Galilee of the Gentiles. Phocas [u] places Cana between Sippori and Nazareth, which is now shewn 6 Roman miles from Sippori to the west, a little inclining to the north; and there is also in the same tract Cephar Cana, 4 miles from Nazareth to the north, inclining to the east; and it is disputed which of these two is Cana of Galilee in the New Testament: with this account agrees pretty much what our countryman Mr. Maundrell [x] gives of his travels in those parts: "taking leave of Nazareth, " (he says,) and going at first northward, we crossed the " hills that encompassed the vale of Nazareth at that " side; after which we turned to the westward, and " passed in view of Cana of Galilee, the place signa- " lized with the beginning of Christ's miracles, John " ii. 11. in an hour and a half more we came to Sepha- " ria;" or Sippori: of great Zidon, and why so called, see the note on ch. xi. 8.

Ver. 29. *And then the coast turneth to Ramah*, &c.] Which was a city in the tribe of Naphtali, ver. 36. and on the borders of Asher; though Jerom [y] distinguishes them, and speaks of a Ramah in Asher, and another in Naphtali, as different cities of the same name; as there were several of this name, so called from their

[h] De loc. Heb. fol. 89. H.
[i] Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 617.
[k] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.
[l] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. E.
[m] Ut supra.
[n] Ibid.
[o] De Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 18. sect. 9.
[p] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. I.

[q] Vita ejus, sect. 43.
[r] Echa Rabbati, fol. 73. 4.
[s] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. A.
[t] Ibid. fol. 90. B.
[u] Apud Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 699.
[x] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 117.
[y] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.

being built on an eminence. Masius conjectures it is the same with Sarepta, Luke iv. 26. famous for its wine; and Bacchus, as the poet says, loves the hills: *and to the strong city Tyre*: it is thought this is not to be understood of the famous city, so much spoken of in other parts of Scripture, and in profane history; since, as it is observed, that is not mentioned in Scripture until the times of David; and though Homer makes frequent mention of Sidon, yet never of Tyre. The words signify the strong fortress of a rock, or a fortress on a high rock; so Kimchi and Ben Melech; and it might be a fortified city, which being built on a rock, might have the name of Zor or Tyre, and not be the famous city of that name. Jerom [z] renders it the fortified city of the Assyrians: *and the coast turneth to Hosah*; of which we nowhere else read: *and the outgoings thereof are at the sea*; the Mediterranean sea; where the coast ended this way: *from the coast to Achzib*: this Jerom [a] says is Ecdippa, 9 miles from Ptolemais, as you go to Tyre; and this is confirmed by a learned traveller of our own nation [b]; it is now called Zib; see the note on Mic. i. 14.

Ver. 30. *Ummah also, and Aphek, and Rehob*, &c.] Ummah is not mentioned any where else; of Aphek see the notes on ch. xii. 18. and xiii. 4. and of Rehob, ver. 28. *twenty and two cities with their villages*: there are more set down in the account, but some of them did not belong to the tribe, only were on the border of it.

Ver. 31. *This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Asher*, &c.] As before described, a goodly heritage; it was, according to the prediction of Jacob and Moses, Gen. xlix. 20. Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25. a very fruitful country. Josephus [c] says, the country from Carmel called the valley, because it was such, even all over-against Sidon, fell to the Asherites. Asher had Mount Libanus on the north, Naphtali on the east, Zebulun on the south and south-east, the sea on the west: *according to their families*; the number of them, so their lot was divided to them: *these cities with their villages*: before named.

Ver. 32. *The sixth lot came out to the children of Naphtali*, &c.] The tribe of Naphtali, and directed what should be the inheritance of this tribe: even *for the children of Naphtali, according to their families*; which was to be divided among them, according to the number of their families.

Ver. 33. *And their coast was from Heleph*, &c.] That is, their northern coast, reaching from west to east, as appears by the ending of it at Jordan; the Alexandrian copy of the Greek version calls it Mlepeh, the Targum Meheleph, and Jerom Mealeb, which he calls the border of Naphtali; which, though to the north, cannot be expressly said what and where it was: *from Allon to Zaanannim*: or rather from the oak, or from the plain in Zaanannim [d]; for it seems to be the same with the plain of Zanaaim, Judg. iv. 11. *and Adami, Nekeb*: some make these to be but one city, and the latter only an epithet of the former; but the Talmudists [e] make them two, as we do, and call the first Damin, and the latter Ziadetha; but what and where either of them were exactly is not known; for Adami cannot be the same with Adam, ch. iii. 16. as some think; for that was in Peræa, on the other side Jordan; see the note there: *and Jabneel, unto Lakum*: Jabneel is different from that which was on the borders of Judah, ch. xv. 11. and is called by the Jews [f] since Cepher-jamah; and of Lakum we nowhere else read: *and the outgoings thereof were at Jordan*; here the coast ended this way.

Ver. 34. *And then the coast turneth westward to Aznoth-tabor*, &c.] This was the southern border, reaching from east to west; it began at Aznoth-tabor, which Jerom [g] says was a village in his time belonging to the country of Diocæsarea, in the plains; there is another place called Chisloth-tabor, on the borders of Zebulun, ver. 12. *and goeth out from thence to Hukkok*; there the southern border ended, which was in the border of Asher, and is the same with Helkath, ver. 25. with which compare 1 Chron. vi. 75. *and reacheth to Zebulun on the south side, and reacheth to Asher on the west side and to Judah upon Jordan towards the sunrising*; so that as it was bounded by Lebanon on the north, near to which some of the cities were, mentioned in the preceding verse, it had Zebulun on the south, Asher on the west, and Jordan to the east; for by Judah is not meant the tribe of Judah, from which Naphtali was at a great distance, but a city so called, as Fuller [h] seems rightly to conjecture.

Ver. 35. *And the fenced cities are Ziddim, Zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Cinnereth.*] The later name of Ziddim, according to the Talmud [i], was Cephar-chitiya, or the village of wheat, perhaps from the large quantity or goodness of wheat there. Zer is called by Jerom [k] Sor, and interpreted Tyre, the metropolis of Phœnicia, very wrongly, and in the tribe of Naphtali. Hammath probably was built by the youngest son of Canaan, Gen. x. 18. or had its name in memory of him; it lay to the north of the land of Israel; see Numb. xxxiv. 8. Rakkath, according to the Jewish writers [l], is the same with Tiberias, as Cinnereth with Gennesaret, from whence the lake or sea of Tiberias, and the country and lake of Gennesaret, had their names, often mentioned in the New Testament. Gennesaret was a most delicious and fruitful spot, and fulfilled the prophecy of Moses, Deut. xxxiii. 23. concerning Naphtali.

Ver. 36. *And Adama, and Ramah, and Hazor.*] Adamah is different from Adami, ver. 33. and may seem to confirm the notion of some, that Nekeb there is an epithet of it, and so distinguishes it from Adamah here; of Ramah, as there were several places of this name, see the note on ver. 29. and on ch. xviii. 25. Hazor was a royal city, of which see ch. xi. 1.

Ver. 37. *And Kedesh, and Adrei, and En-hazor.*] This is Kedesh in Galilee, in Mount Naphtali, to distinguish

[z] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.
[a] Ibid. fol. 88. I.
[b] Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 53.
[c] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.
[d] Ab querceto in Tzahanannimis, Junius & Tremellius; so Piscator.
[e] T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 70. 1.
[f] T. Hieros. Megillah, fol. 70. 1.
[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. I.
[h] Pisgah-Sight, B. 2. c. 4. p. 104.
[i] Ut supra.
[k] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. A.
[l] T. Hieros. ut supra.

it from others of the same name; it was one of the cities of refuge, ch. xx. 7. Jerom says [l] in his day it was called Cidissus, and was 20 miles from Tyre by Paneas; see the note on ch. xii. 22. Edrei is a different place from one of that name in the kingdom of Og, Numb. xxi. 23. and of En-hazor we read nowhere else.

Ver. 38. *And Iron, and Migdal-el, Horem, and Beth-anath, and Beth-shemesh*, &c.] Of Iron no mention is made elsewhere; Migdal-el, which Jerom calls Magdiel, he says [m] was shewn a small village, 5 miles from Dara, as you go to Ptolemais; and who also relates [n], that Bathana, in the tribe of Naphtali, was a village that went by the name of Bethanea, 15 miles from Cæsarea. Beth-shemesh was another city, in which was a temple dedicated to the sun, when inhabited by the Canaanites; see ver. 22. and so in Beth-anath there might be a temple dedicated to some deity, though now uncertain what: *nineteen cities with their villages*; there are more mentioned, but some of them might be only boundaries, and so belonged to another tribe.

Ver. 39. *This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Naphtali*, &c.] Which Josephus [o] thus describes; "the country to the east, as far as Damascus "the city, and upper Galilee, the Naphtalites took, "unto Mount Lebanon, and the fountains of Jordan, "which flow out of the mount, reaching the northern "border of the city Arce:" *according to their families*; which was divided among them, according to the number of their families: *the cities and their villages*; before enumerated.

Ver. 40. *And the seventh lot came out for the tribe of the children of Dan*, &c.] Which was the last lot drawn, and which appointed an inheritance to this tribe: *according to their families*; the number of them.

Ver. 41. *And the coast of their inheritance was Zorah, and Esh-taol, and Ir-shemesh.*] The tribe of Dan is not described by places the boundaries of it, as other tribes, but by its cities, which were chiefly, at least several of them, taken out of the tribe of Judah, as the two first of these most manifestly were; see ch. xv. 33. and the note there. Ir-shemesh signifies the city of the sun, as the Targum interprets it, and was so called very probably from a temple in it, dedicated to the idolatrous worship of the sun, but a different place from Beth-shemesh in other tribes; though those of that name, as this, had it for the like reason; and so Heliopolis, in Egypt, which signifies the same, where was a temple of the same kind; as there was another city of this name, between the mountains of Libanus and Antilibanus, now called Balbec [p], where the ruins of the temple are yet to be seen: but this was a different place, the Septuagint version calls it Sammaus, and it was, according to Jerom [q], the same with Emmaus, afterwards called Nicopolis; which, if the same Emmaus with that in Luke xxiv. 13. though some doubt it, was sixty furlongs from Jerusalem, or seven miles and a half.

Ver. 42. *And Shaalabbin, and Aijalon, and Jethlah.*] The first of these is the same with Shaalbim, Judg. i. 35. and which Jerom [r] calls Selab, in the tribe of Dan; and which he says was in his day shewn a large village on the borders of Sebaste, by the name of Selaba. Aijalon is famous for the standing still of the moon in its valley whilst Joshua pursued his enemies, ch. x. 12. see the note there; of Jethlah we read nowhere else.

Ver. 43. *And Elon, and Thimnathah, and Ekron.*] Of Elon no mention is made elsewhere; Thimnathah is a different place from Timnah in the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 10, 57. Jerom [s] speaks of the Thamnitic country, so called from the village Thamna, which seems to be this. Ekron was one of the five principalities of the Philistines, and never possessed by the Israelites; it first fell by lot to the tribe of Judah, and afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, ch. xv. 45.

Ver. 44. *And Eltekeh, and Gibbethon, and Baalath.*] Eltekeh was a city given to the Levites, ch. xxi. 23. and supposed by some to be the same with Eltekon in the tribe of Judah given to the Danites, ch. xv. 59. Gibbethon was in the hands of the Philistines in the reign of Asa, 1 Kings xv. 21. and xvi. 15. and in the same place Jerom [t] calls Gabatha a city of the strangers, or Philistines; and which he places near Beth-lehem in the tribe of Judah. Baalath is not the same with Baalah, ch. xv. 29. but the Baalath rebuilt by Solomon, 1 Kings ix. 18. called by Josephus [u] Baleth, and spoken of by him as near to Gazara in the land of the Philistines; of these two last cities, the Talmudists [w] say that their houses belonged to Judah, and their fields to Dan.

Ver. 45. *And Jehud, and Bene-berak, and Gath-rimmon.* Of Jehud no mention is made elsewhere; Bene-berak signifies sons of lightning; see Mark iii. 17. Jerom [x] speaks of this as the name of two places, Bane in the tribe of Dan, and Barach in the same tribe, and which was in his day near Azotus. This place was famous in later times among the Jews for being a place where one of their noted Rabbins, R. Akiba, abode and taught for some time [y]: and Gath-rimmon was in Jerom's [z] time a very large village, 12 miles from Diospolis, or Lydda, as you go from Eleutheropolis to it; it was a city given to the Levites, ch. xxi. 24.

Ver. 46. *And Me-jarkon, and Rakkon, with the border before Japho.*] Of the two first of these we read nowhere else. Japho is the same with Joppa, now called at this day Jaffa, a port in the Mediterranean sea, famous for being the place where Jonah took shipping, and where the Apostle Peter resided some time; see the notes on Jonah i. 3. Acts ix. 36, 38. It is not certain whether Joppa itself was in the tribe of Dan, or only on the borders of it; the coast of Dan reached *over-against* it, as it may be rendered, and included the villages and little cities that were near it; for such there were, as Josephus [b] testifies.

Ver. 47. *And the coast of the children of Dan went*

[l] Ut supra, fol. 90. B.
[m] Ibid. fol. 93. L.
[n] Ibid. fol. 89. H.
[o] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.
[p] See Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 120, 139.
[q] Comment. in Ezek. xlviii. fol. 261. A.
[r] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. K.
[s] Ibid. fol. 88. F.

[t] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. C.
[u] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 1.
[w] T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 18. 3.
[x] De loc. Heb. fol. 89. H.
[y] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 32. 2.
[z] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. C.
[b] De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 8. sect. 4.

out too little for them, &c.] Being a very numerous tribe, the cities allotted them were not sufficient for them; or rather, leaving out the supplement *too little*, the words will run, it *went out from them*; they lost part of it, being driven out of the valley into the mountain by the Amorites, Judg. i. 34, 35. which obliged them to seek out elsewhere for habitations: *therefore the children of Dan went out to fight against Leshem*; called Laish, Judg. xviii. where the whole story is related of their fighting against this place and taking it; which, though some time after the death of Joshua, is here recorded to give at once an account of the inheritance of Dan; and which is no argument against Joshua's being the writer of this book, as is urged; since it might be inserted by another hand, Ezra, or some other inspired man, for the reason before given: *and took and smote it with the edge of the sword, and possessed it, and dwelt therein*; being a Canaanitish city, they put all in it to the sword, as the Lord had commanded, and took possession of it for an habitation: *and called Leshem Dan, after the name of Dan their father*; this is the place which is always meant, where the phrase is used *from Dan to Beer-sheba*, this being at the utmost northern border of the land of Canaan, as Beer-sheba was at the further part of the southern coast of it. It was, according to Jerom [c], situated near Paneas, out of which the river Jordan flowed; and Kimchi on the text observes, their Rabbins [d] say, that Leshem is Pamias (*i. e.* Paneas), and that Jordan flows from the cave of Pamias, and had its name שיורד מדן because it descended from Dan; and so Josephus [e] says, that Panium is a cave under a mountain, from whence rise the springs of Jordan, and is the fountain of it; and Pliny also says [f], the river Jordan rises out of the fountain Paneas. This city was enlarged and beautified by Philip Herod, and he called it by the name of Cæsarea Philippi, both in honour of Tiberius Cæsar [g], and after his own name, by which name it goes in Matt. xvi. 13. Mark viii. 27. and is called in the Jerusalem Targum on Gen. xiv. 14. Dan of Cæsarea.

Ver. 48. *This is the inheritance of the tribe of the children of Dan, &c.*] Before described by its cities, which were in it. This tribe was bounded by Ephraim on the north, by Judah on the east, by Simeon on the south, and by the Mediterranean sea on the west. Josephus [h] says, the Danites enjoyed the vale which lies to the setting sun, bounded by Azotus and Doris, and all Jamnia and Getta, from Accaron (or Ekron) to the mountain from whence the tribe of Judah begins: *according to their families*: which inheritance was distributed according to the number of their families: *their cities with their villages*; before named.

Ver. 49. *And when they made an end of dividing the land for inheritance by their coasts, &c.*] That is, Eleazar, Joshua, and the ten men appointed for this purpose; when all the lots were drawn, and the several inheritances which came up to them were divided among the families of the respective tribes, this work being finished: *the children of Israel gave an inheritance to Joshua the son of Nun among them*; most interpreters observe the modesty of Joshua, that though the oldest and the greatest man in the nation, the chief governor, yet had his inheritance last of all; nor did he take any part to himself, it was given to him by the people, who had the whole land divided among them; in which he was a type of Christ; see 2 Cor. viii. 9. Phil. ii. 6, 7.

Ver. 50. *According to the word of the Lord, &c.*] Or mouth of the Lord; either according to the oracle of Urim and Thummim, which Eleazar consulted on this occasion; or according to what the Lord had said to Moses, at the same time that Hebron was ordered to Caleb, ch. xiv. 6. *and they gave him the city which he asked, even Timnath-serah in Mount Ephraim*; he chose a place in his own tribe, for he was of the tribe of Ephraim; and it seems that what he chose was none of the best of places; for Paula, as Jerom [i] relates, when she travelled into those parts, wondered that the distributor of the possessions of the children of Israel should choose such a rough and mountainous place for himself; of its situation, see ch. xxiv. 30. *and he built the city, and dwelt therein*; he rebuilt it, and fitted it for his own habitation, and for those that belonged to him.

Ver. 51. *These are the inheritances which Eleazar the priest, and Joshua the son of Nun, &c.*] The one the high-priest, and the other the chief governor of the nation: *and the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel*; the princes appointed for this service, whose names are given Numb. xxxiv. 18—28. the inheritances before described in the preceding chapters by their boundaries and cities, these the said persons *divided for an inheritance by lot in Shiloh*; and so has particular reference to the 7 lots drawn there for 7 of the tribes, by which their inheritances were assigned to them: and this was done *before the Lord, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation*: see ch. xviii. 1, 10. *so they made an end of dividing the country*; though it was not as yet wholly subdued.

CHAP. XX.

THE contents of this chapter are the renewal of the order to appoint cities of refuge for such that commit manslaughter ignorantly, to flee unto, and have shelter in from the avenger of blood, ver. 1—6. and the execution of this order, ver. 7, 8, 9.

Ver. 1. *The Lord also spake unto Joshua, &c.*] Out of the tabernacle, at the door of which he with the high-priest and princes were; the Lord had spoken to him before concerning dividing the land among the tribes, ch. xiii. 1—7. and this being done he speaks to him again: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 2. *Speak to the children of Israel, saying, &c.*]

[c] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. A.
[d] T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 6. 1. & Bava Bathra, fol. 74. 2.
[e] Antiqu. l. 15. c. 10. sect. 3. De Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 21. sect. 2. & l. 3. c. 9. sect. 7.
[f] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 15.
[g] Joseph. Antiqu. l. 18. c. 2. sect. 1.
[h] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 22.
[i] Epitaph. Paulæ, fol. 59. L.

whom the affair concerned the Lord spake to Joshua about, they having now the whole land divided among them: *appoint out for you cities of refuge:* of the same nature, use, and number of these cities, see the note on Numb. xxxv. 6. *whereof I spake unto you by the hand of Moses:* Numb. xxxv. Deut. xix.

Ver. 3. *That the slayer that killeth any person unawares, and unwittingly, may flee thither, &c.*] Who through mere accident, and without design, killed a person, friend or foe, one of his own kindred, or a stranger, without any malice against him, or intention to take away his life: *and they shall be your refuge from the avenger of blood:* from any of the relations of the deceased, who might be stirred up to avenge the blood of his kinsman on the slayer; see Numb. xxxv. 12.

Ver. 4. *And when he that doth flee unto one of those cities, &c.*] Any one of them, that was nearest to him: *shall stand at the entering of the gate of the city;* for he might not rush in without leave: *and shall declare his cause in the ears of the elders of that city:* lay before them the whole matter, how that he had killed a person unawares, by what means it came about, and that it was merely through error, without any malicious design, and was a mere accident: *they shall take him into the city unto them;* directly, lest the avenger of blood should come and seize on him, and kill him; and they were to take him into the city, not only to prevent that, but to examine him still more closely about the matter, and get further satisfaction; and being satisfied, were to continue him in it: *and give him a place, that he might dwell among them;* until his death, or the death of the high-priest, if that was first. Kimchi observes from their Rabbins, that he was not to hire a house all the time of his dwelling there, but was to have one freely, because it is said, *and give him, &c.*

Ver. 5. *And if the avenger of blood pursue after him, &c.*] To the city of refuge, whither he is fled, and demand him: *then they shall not deliver the slayer up into his hands;* to be slain by him, but shall protect him: *because he smote his neighbour unwittingly, and hated him not before-time;* see the notes on Numb. xxxv. 22, 23. and Deut. xix. 6.

Ver. 6. *And he shall dwell in that city until he shall stand before the congregation for judgment, &c.*] That is, until his cause was heard in the court of judicature in his own city, or in any other to which the avenger of blood should appeal: see Numb. xxxv. 24, 25. who if they found him guilty of death, they put him to death; but if only guilty of accidental manslaughter, then they delivered him up to his city of refuge for safety, where he was to abide *until the death of the high-priest that shall be in those days;* see Numb. xxxv. 25. *then shall the slayer return, and come unto his own city, and unto his own house, unto the city from whence he fled;* and live with his family in the enjoyment of his possessions and estates, honours, and privileges belonging to him, as before; see Numb. xxxv. 28.

Ver. 7. *And they appointed Kedesh in Galilee in Mount Naphtali, &c.*] Of which see ch. xix. 37. the appointment of this and the two cities following was made by the children of Israel at this time: *and Shechem in Mount Ephraim;* called Sichem, Gen. xii. 6. and Shechem from a prince of that name that possessed it, Gen. xxxiv. it fell to the lot of the tribe of Ephraim; its name in the New Testament is Sychar, John iv. 5. and it is now called Neapolis, or Naplouse: *and Kirjath-arba, which is Hebron, in the mountain of Judah;* it stood in the hill-country of Judea, Luke i. 39. 65. of which see ch. xiv. 15. and xv. 54. There seems to be a difficulty here, since this city was before given to Caleb, ch. xiv. 13, 14. and yet afterwards given to the Levites, and appointed a city of refuge. The Jews reconcile this by observing, that the city and suburbs were given to the Levites, and fixed for a city of refuge; but the villages and fields, and country around it, and belonging to it, were given to Caleb, ch. xxi. 12. and Abarbinel makes no doubt that the children of Judah gave something else to Caleb in lieu of it. As these cities of refuge were typical of Christ, as has been observed on Numb. xxxv. 29. their names are applicable to him. Kedesh signifies *holy* or *holiness;* Christ is holy in both his natures, divine and human; and so abundantly qualified to be the Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer; and is the fountain of holiness to his people, and is made sanctification to them, Psal. xvi. 10. Heb. vii. 26. 1 Cor. i. 30. and Shechem signifies the *shoulder;* and not only the government of the church and people of God is on the shoulder of Christ, but all their sins have been laid upon him, and bore by him; and every particular soul in conversion, every lost sheep, is looked up by him, and taken up and brought home on his shoulder, Isa. ix. 6. and liii. 6. Luke xv. 4. Hebron signifies *fellowship;* in effectual vocation, the saints are called into fellowship with Christ, and their fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ; through him they have access to God, and communion with him now, and shall have uninterrupted communion with him to all eternity, 1 Cor. i. 9. 1 John i. 3. Eph. ii. 18. John xvii. 24.

Ver. 8. *And on the other side Jordan by Jericho eastward, &c.*] In the country possessed by the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh: *they assigned Bezer in the wilderness, upon the plain, out of the tribe of Reuben, and Ramoth in Gilead out of the tribe of Gad, and Golan in Bashan out of the tribe of Manasseh;* of these places, and the signification of their names, and of the application of them to Christ, the antitype of the cities of refuge, see the note on Deut. iv. 43. These last cities were not appointed now, they were appointed in the times of Moses, and severed by him, Deut. iv. 41. nor are they here said to be appointed, but to be assigned or *given*[c]; they were now delivered up into the hands of the Levites for cities of refuge, for they were before severed for that use; they were not, according to the Jews[d], made use of as such, until the other three were appointed.

Ver. 9. *These were the cities appointed for all the children of Israel, &c.*] For the common use of them

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[c] [illegible] dederunt, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[d] Misn. Maccot, c. 2. sect. 4. Maimon. Hilchot Rotzeach, c. 8. sect. 2, 3.

all, and not for that tribe only in which they stood: *and for the stranger that sojourneth among them*: not only for the proselytes of righteousness, but for the proselytes of the gate also, as well as for the natives of Israel; Christ is a refuge for Jews and Gentiles, for all sinners that flee to him: *that whosoever killeth any person unawares might flee thither*; and find shelter and safety: *and not die by the hand of the avenger of blood*; getting thither before he could overtake him: *until he stood before the congregation*; either before the congregation, the elders of the city, or court of judicature in the city of refuge, or before the court of his own city, from whence he fled, if summoned thither.

CHAP. XXI.

THIS chapter contains the address of the Levites to the court, to have the cities and suburbs given them according to the command of God by Moses, ver. 1, 2. the grant of them by lot out of the several tribes, ver. 3—8. the particular cities out of the tribes of Judah and Simeon are mentioned by name, ver. 9—16. then those out of the tribe of Benjamin, ver. 17, 18, 19. next those out of the tribe of Ephraim, ver. 20, 21, 22. afterwards those out of the tribe of Dan, ver. 23—26. then those out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, ver. 27. and out of the tribe of Issachar, ver. 28, 29. and out of the tribe of Asher, ver. 30, 31. and of Naphtali, ver. 32, 33. and of Zebulun, ver. 34, 35. and of Reuben, ver. 36, 37. and of Gad, ver. 38, 39, 40. which in all made forty-eight, ver. 41, 42. and the chapter is concluded with observing, that God gave Israel all the land of Canaan, and rest in it, according to his promise, very faithfully and punctually, ver. 43, 44, 45.

Ver. 1. *Then came near the heads of the fathers of the Levites*, &c.] When the land was divided to the several tribes, and every one knew the cities that belonged to them, and what they could and should part with to the Levites, and when the six cities of refuge were fixed; the Levites came to put in their claim for cities of habitation, they having no share in the division of the land; and yet it was necessary they should have habitations; the persons that undertook to put in a claim for them were the principal men among them; the fathers of them were Kohath, Gershon, and Merari; the heads of those were the chief men that were then living: these came *unto Eleazar the priest, and unto Joshua the son of Nun*; the high-priest and chief magistrate: *and unto the heads of the fathers of the tribes of the children of Israel*; the princes appointed to divide the land with the two great personages before mentioned, Numb. xxxiv. 17—29.

Ver. 2. *And they spake unto them at Shiloh in the land of Canaan*, &c.] Where the tabernacle was fixed, at or near which the above persons met to cast lots for the division of the land to the seven tribes that had not received their inheritance: *saying, the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses to give us cities to dwell in, with the suburbs thereof for our cattle*; this command is extant in Numb. xxxv. 2—8.

Ver. 3. *And the children of Israel gave unto the Levites out of their inheritance*, &c.] Knowing full well there was such a command, made no objection to their motion, but freely gave them cities out of the portion of inheritance allotted to them; this they did *at the commandment of the Lord*, and in obedience to it, even gave *these cities and suburbs*; after mentioned: this was done by the tribes themselves; as there were a certain number fixed by the commandment of God, they agreed among themselves how many and what cities should be given out of each tribe; and then lots were cast for them by Joshua, what and which cities should be appropriated to their several divisions, as the Kohathites that sprang from Aaron, and the rest of them that did not, and the Gershonites and Merarites, as follows.

Ver. 4. *And the lot came out for the family of the Kohathites*, &c.] The first lot that was drawn out of the pot or urn was for the descendants of Kohath, a son of Levi: *and the children of Aaron the priest*, which were *of the Levites*; who descended from Amram, the eldest son of Kohath, and these were not only Levites, but priests: these *had by lot out of the tribe of Judah, and out of the tribe of Simeon, and out of the tribe of Benjamin, thirteen cities*; which are after mentioned by name; and as these were priests, whose business was to serve in the temple, and at the altar, the cities assigned them by the lot, were, by the wise disposal of divine Providence, ordered them out of those tribes which lay nearest to Jerusalem; the place God had chosen to put his name in, where the temple would be built, and the altars erected for sacrifices and incense.

Ver. 5. *And the rest of the children of Kohath*, &c.] Which did not descend from him in the line of Amram and Aaron, but of Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, who were not priests, but Levites: had *by lot out of the families of the tribe of Ephraim, and out of the tribe of Dan, and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, ten cities*: these other sort of Kohathites had their cities in tribes next to the other three where the Kohathites that were priests had theirs.

Ver. 6. *And the children of Gershon* had *by lot out of the families of the tribe of Issachar*, &c.] These were Levites who descended from Gershon, the eldest son of Levi, and had their cities by lot assigned them in tribes at a greater distance, not only out of Issachar, but *out of the tribe of Asher, and out of the tribe of Naphtali, and out of the half-tribe of Manasseh in Bashan*; which was the other half of the tribe beyond Jordan: *thirteen cities*: as many as were given out of the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin.

Ver. 7. *The children of Merari by their families*, &c.] The descendants of Merari, the third son of Levi: *had out of the tribe of Reuben, and out of the tribe of Gad*; which were both on the other side Jordan: *and out of the tribe of Zebulun, twelve cities*; in all 48, as the Lord commanded, Numb. xxxv. 7.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Israel gave by lot unto the*

Levites these cities with their suburbs, &c.] Reaching 2,000 cubits from the cities all around: these cities did not lie all together, and so could not be described by their cities, in the several tribes, and intermixed that they should be divided and scattered in Israel, Gen. xlix. 7. as well as it was so ordered for the benefit of the several tribes, that they might have the assistance of the priests and Levites, to instruct them in the knowledge of the laws and commandments of God, and all divine things: *as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses;* Numb. xxxv. 2.

Ver. 9. *And they gave out of the tribe of the children of Judah*, &c.] Here follows a particular account of the several cities which were given out of each tribe, and first out of this: *and out of the tribe of the children of Simeon;* which is joined with that of Judah, because the cities of it lay within it, ch. xix. 1. *these cities which are* here *mentioned by name;* ver. 13, 14, 15, 16.

Ver. 10. *Which the children of Aaron*, being *of the families of the Kohathites*, &c.] Who descending from Kohath, in the line of Aaron, were priests: who were *of the children of Levi, had;* they were Levites, as descending from Levi, but were priests also, as being of the stock of Aaron, and the cities hereafter mentioned in the said tribe fell to their portion; *for theirs was the first lot:* for being of the line of Aaron, and priests, they had the honour and privilege to have the first lot drawn for them, and out of the tribe for which the first lot was also drawn, the tribe of Judah; here they had their cities allotted them, for a reason before given.

Ver. 11. *And they gave them the city of Arbah, the father of Anak*, &c.] Which from him was called Kirjath-arbah, ch. xiv. 15. and Anak, according to Kimchi, is not the name of a man, but a general name, comprehending the Anakim, a race of giants, among whom Arbah was the chief and principal man, a prince and ruler over them, as Ben Melech: *which* city is *Hebron in the hill-country of Judah;* as in ch. xiv. 15. see Luke i. 39, 65. *with the suburbs thereof round about it;* as far as 2,000 cubits, which were to put their cattle in, and provision for them.

Ver. 12. *But the fields of the city, and the villages thereof*, &c.] Which lay beyond the 2,000 cubits: *gave they to Caleb the son of Jephunneh, for his possession;* as Moses had promised, and Joshua had confirmed to him; and now the children of Israel gave them to him, and put him in the possession of, ch. xiv. 6, 13. and xv. 13. and the same is to be observed of all the other cities given to the Levites, that they and their suburbs, extending to such a distance only, were given to them; but the fields and villages, which belonged to them, continued the inheritance of the tribes in which they were.

Ver. 13. *Thus they gave to the children of Aaron the priest*, &c.] The families of the Kohathites, that part of them which descended from him, and were priests: *Hebron with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer;* that had slain a person unawares, and without design; see on ch. xx. 3, 7. *and Libnah with her suburbs;* a royal city, of which see ch. x. 29, 30.

Ver. 14, 15, 16. *And Jattir with her suburbs, and Eshtemoa with her suburbs, and Holon with her suburbs, and Juttah with her suburbs, and Ain with her suburbs;* see the notes on ch. xv. 32, 48, [illegible] *Beth-shemesh with her suburbs;* which is not mentioned among the cities of Judah, ch. xv. only as in the borders of it, ver. 10. and perhaps is the same Beth-shemesh to which the ark was directed by the Philistines from Ashdod, 1 Sam. vi. 9, 12. in it formerly was a temple dedicated to the sun, from whence it had its name: *nine cities out of those two tribes;* and they seem all but one, which is Ain, to be of the tribe of Judah, and that originally belonged to it; and as that tribe had the largest number of cities in its lot, the more were given out of it to the Levites, according to a rule prescribed, Numb. xxxv. 8.

Ver. 17. *And out of the tribe of Benjamin, Gibeon with her suburbs, Geba with her suburbs.*] Of which see the notes on ch. xviii. 24, 25. from the former came the Gibeonites.

Ver. 18. *Anathoth with her suburbs*, &c.] This is not mentioned among the cities of Benjamin, ch. xviii. it was the native place of the Prophet Jeremiah, Jer. i. 1. see the note there; it lay about two or three miles north of Jerusalem; three, says Jerom[k]. Rauwolff[l] speaks of it as a small village, when he travelled into those parts, and as lying on a height or eminence, and which was within 20 furlongs of Jerusalem, as Josephus writes[m]: *and Almon with her suburbs;* this also is not mentioned among the cities of Benjamin, ch. xviii. it is called Alemeth, 1 Chron. vi. 60. Jarchi and Kimchi say it is the same with Bahurim, 2 Sam. iii. 16. where the Targum renders it by Almeth, and both words signify the same thing, *youth: four cities;* which were a large number for so small a tribe as little Benjamin to give.

Ver. 19. *All the cities of the children of Aaron, the priests*, &c.] Those of the Kohathites that came from him: *were thirteen cities with their suburbs;* and just so many are mentioned by name in the preceding verses.

Ver. 20. *And the families of the children of Kohath, the Levites*, &c.] Who were not priests: *which remained of the children of Kohath;* these are the children of Moses, as Jarchi says, and those that descended from Kohath in the lines of Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel, *even they had the cities of their lot out of the tribe of Ephraim;* and were as follow.

Ver. 21. *For they gave them Shechem, with her suburbs, in Mount Ephraim*, &c.] Of which see ch. xx. 7. *to be a city of refuge for the slayer;* which being on a mountain, was the more conspicuous, and the fitter for this purpose, as was Hebron in the hill-country of Judea, ver. 11, 13. this is the second city of refuge mentioned: *and Gezer with her suburbs;* a place from whence the Canaanites were not expelled; see the note on ch. xvi. 10.

Ver. 22. *And Kibzaim with her suburbs*, &c.] Which seems to be the same with Jokneam, 1 Chron. vi. 68.

k De loc. Heb. fol. 88. H.
l Travels, par. 3. c. 2. p. 216.
m Antiqu. l. 10. c. 7. sect. 3.

of it we read nowhere else; *and Beth-horon with her suburbs*; upper Beth-horon, for there were two, an upper and a nether: see ch. xvi. 3, 5. *four cities*; as mentioned by name.

Ver. 23, 24. *And out of the tribe of Dan, Eltekeh with her suburbs, Gibbethon with her suburbs, four cities*; on these four cities, see the notes on ch. xix. 42, 44, 45.

Ver. 25. *And out of the half-tribe of Manasseh, Taanach with her suburbs, &c.*] Of which see ch. xvii. 10. *and Gath-rimmon with her suburbs*, there was a city of this name in Dan, as in the preceding verse; nor was it unusual for cities to be called by the same name in different tribes: *two cities*; these are called Aner and Bileam in 1 Chron. vi. 70. in process of time cities changed their names; two cities were a proper proportion for this half-tribe; two more were given out of the other half-tribe on the other side Jordan, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 26. *All the cities were ten, with their suburbs, &c.*] Four out of Ephraim, four out of Dan, and two out of the half-tribe of Manasseh: which were *for the families of the children of Kohath that remained*; who were of the other branch of the Kohathites, and who did not descend from Aaron, and were only Levites, and not priests; see the note on ver 20.

Ver. 27. *And unto the children of Gershon, of the families of the Levites, &c.*] The descendants of the second son of Levi: *out of the other half-tribe of Manasseh*; that which was settled beyond Jordan: they gave *Golan in Bashan, with her suburbs, to be a city of refuge for the slayer*; see ch. xx. 8. this is the third city of refuge mentioned: *and Beeshterah with her suburbs*; called Ashtaroth, 1 Chron. vi. 71. which had been the royal city of Og, king of Bashan, where he had his palace, Deut. i. 4. Here seems to have been formerly a temple dedicated to the goddess Astarte; for Beeshterah is a compound of Beth and Ashterah, or Astarte; that is, the house or temple of Astarte, but now become a city of the Levites: *two cities*; two more having been before given out of the other half-tribe.

Ver. 28. *And out of the tribe of Issachar, Kishon with her suburbs, &c.*] From whence the river Kishon probably had its name, or the city from that; it is the same with Kishion, ch. xix. 20. and called Kedesh, 1 Chron. vi. 72. *Dabareh with her suburbs*; the same with Daberath on the border of Zebulun, ch. xix. 12. see the note there.

Ver. 29. *Jarmuth with her suburbs, &c.*] Called Ramoth, 1 Chron. vi. 73. very probably the same with Remeth, ch. xix. 21. *En-gannim with her suburbs*; called Anen, 1 Chron. vi. 73. *four cities*; so many are mentioned by name.

Ver. 30. *And out of the tribe of Asher, Mishal with her suburbs, &c.*] The same with Misheal, ch. xix. 26. called Mashal, 1 Chron. vi. 74. *Abdon with her suburbs*; not mentioned among the cities of Asher, unless the same with Hebron, ch. xix. 28.

Ver. 31. *Helkath with her suburbs, &c.*] The same with Hukok in 1 Chron. vi. 75. *and Rehob with her suburbs, four cities*; of which see the notes on ch. xix. 25, 26, 28.

Ver. 32. *And out of the tribe of Naphtali, Kedesh in Galilee with her suburbs, &c.*] Of which see ch. xx. 7. to be *a city of refuge for the slayer*; this is the fourth city of refuge mentioned: *and Hammoth-dor with her suburbs*, the same with Hammath, is thought by some to be Tiberias, so called from the hot baths in or near it: *and Kartan with her suburbs*, called Kirjath-aim, 1 Chron. vi. 76. but cannot be the Kirjath-aim in Numb. xxxii. 37. for that belonged to the tribe of Reuben, and was on the other side Jordan: *three cities*; this being a lesser tribe than some others gave fewer cities, according to the rule in Numb. xxxv. 8.

Ver. 33. *All the cities of the Gershonites, according to their families, &c.*] Which were divided among them, according to the number of their families: were 13 *cities with their suburbs*; two out of the half-tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, four out of Issachar, four out of Asher, and three out of Naphtali.

Ver. 34. *And unto the families of the children of Merari, the rest of the Levites, &c.*] The descendants of the youngest son of Levi, who were all that remained of the Levites unprovided of cities: *out of the tribe of Zebulun, Jokneam with her suburbs*; which lay near Carmel, and was a royal city; see the note on ch. xii. 22. *and Kartah with her suburbs*, perhaps the same same with Kattath, ch. xix. 15.

Ver. 35. *Dimnah with her suburbs, &c.*] Nowhere mentioned, unless the same with Rimmon, 1 Chron. vi. 77. *Nahalal with her suburbs*; see ch. xix. 15. *four cities*; only two are mentioned, 1 Chron. vi. 77. and they by different names; the one is Rimmon, before observed, and the other Tabor; perhaps the same with Chisloth-tabor, ch. xix. 12.

Ver. 36. *And out of the tribe of Reuben, Bezer with her suburbs, &c.*] Which was a city of refuge, and the fifth of them in this account, though not observed as such here, but is in the Greek version; see ch. xx. 8. *and Jahazah with her suburbs*; called Jahaz, Numb. xxi. 23. see the note there.

Ver. 37. *Kedemoth with her suburbs, &c.*] Near to which was a wilderness of that name; see Deut. ii. 26. *and Mephaath with her suburbs*; of which see the note on ch. xiii. 18. where the two preceding cities are mentioned along with it: *four cities*. This and the preceding verse are not in some ancient copies of the Hebrew Bible, as is noted by the Masorites; but are in some others, as Kimchi owns, and stand in the Targum, in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and in a manuscript referred to by Hottinger[a]; and the same words are to be found in 1 Chron. vi. 78, 79. and are absolutely necessary to be retained, since without them there would be but eight cities for the Merarites, whereas they are expressly said to be twelve, ver. 40.

Ver. 38. *And out of the tribe of Gad, &c.*] Which also, as that of Reuben, lay on the other side Jordan: *Ramoth in Gilead with her suburbs*; of which see ch. xx. 8. to be *a city of refuge for the slayer*; and is the sixth and last city of refuge in this account: *and Mahanaim with her suburbs*; here it was the angels met Jacob, which gave rise to the name of the place.

[a] Thesaur. Philolog. l. 1. c. 2. p. 191, &c.

Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. afterwards a city was built here, and was on the borders of the tribe of Gad, and belonged to it, ch. xiii. 26. mention is made of it in other places, 2 Sam. ii. 8. 1 Kings ii. 8.

Ver. 39. *Heshbon with her suburbs, &c.*] Which was formerly the royal city of Sihon king of the Amorites, and was first given to and rebuilt by the Reubenites, but was upon the border of the tribe of Gad; and appears from hence to have been one of their cities, Numb. xxi. 26. and xxxii. 37. Josh. xiii. 17, 21, 26. *Jazer with her suburbs;* sometimes called Jaazer, another city in the same country, and near Heshbon; see Numb. xxi. 32. *four cities in all;* which were Ramoth-gilead, Mahanaim, Heshbon, and Jazer.

Ver. 40. *So all the cities for the children of Merari by their families, &c.*] Which were distributed by lot to them, according to the number of their families, and were sufficient for them: *which were remaining of the families of the Levites;* the last division of them, besides those of the Kohathites, Levites, and the Gershonites: were *by their lot twelve cities;* four out of the tribe of Zebulun, four out of the tribe of Reuben, and four out of the tribe of Gad, whose names are before given.

Ver. 41. *All the cities of the Levites, within the possession of the children of Israel, &c.*] As comprised in one sum-total: were *forty-eight cities with their suburbs;* which is just the number that Moses from the mouth of God ordered to be given unto them, before they entered into the land, and before they were in possession of one city in it, Numb. xxxv. 7. which, as it is a proof of the omniscience, prescience, and predetermination of God; so of the sure and true prediction of Moses, who could not be otherwise certain than from the Lord of the Israelites being able to give so many cities to them, out of their several tribes: and it is to be observed, that this tribe of Levi, though it had no share in the division of the land, yet had more cities by lot given to it than any other, excepting the tribe of Judah; though indeed, in the account of some of the tribes, all the cities in them are not mentioned; and besides, they had only the cities they had with their suburbs round about them, but not the lands belonging to them, nor the villages; however, this shews that a large and liberal maintenance of the ministers of the Lord, that serve in his sanctuary, should be allowed and made for them, as in the legal, so under the Gospel dispensation.

Ver. 42. *These cities were every one with their suburbs round about them, &c.*] Which reached to the space of 2,000 cubits on every side; and such a space was assigned to every one of the above cities for their cattle, to keep them in and lay up provision for them: *thus were all their cities;* six of them cities of refuge, and forty-two for the priests and Levites to dwell in, and for the commodious use of their herds and flocks.

Ver. 43. *And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which he sware to give unto their fathers, &c.*] It was all given them by lot, whether subdued or not subdued, and the far greater part was actually put into their hands, and they had as much as they could for the present occupy and cultivate; and such as were in the hands of the Canaanites, were subject to pay tribute to them; and it was owing to their own slothfulness and sluggishness that they did not possess more hereafter; though it was the will of God that their enemies should be driven out by little and little, until the Israelites were so increased as to occupy the whole, lest any part of the land should lie waste and become barren, and lest the wild beasts of the field should multiply upon them: *and they possessed it, and dwelt therein;* each according to their lot in the several places assigned them, as many cities as they could at present people, and as much land as they could now manage.

Ver. 44. *And the Lord gave them rest round about, &c.*] Not only from their travels, with which they had been fatigued forty years in the wilderness, but from wars with the Canaanites they had been engaged in for some years past: *according to all that he sware unto their fathers;* not only to give them the land, but peace, rest, and safety in it: *and there stood not a man of all their enemies before them;* for whenever any rose up to oppose them, they were immediately cut off: this is to be understood whilst Joshua was living; for afterwards, sinning against God, they were again and again delivered up into the hands of their enemies: *the Lord delivered all their enemies into their hands*, that is, that made war with them.

Ver. 45. *There failed not ought of any good thing, &c.*] Not only every good thing in general, but every part and particular of that good thing; that, with all that was included in it, or were appendages to it, or circumstances of it: *which the Lord had spoken to the house of Israel;* as of their deliverance out of Egypt, and passage through the Red sea and wilderness, with all conveniences for them therein; so of their passage through Jordan, success of their arms, the conquest of their enemies, possession of their land, a land flowing with milk and honey: *all came to pass;* exactly, precisely, and punctually, even every thing relative to their temporal and spiritual good: so all that God promises to his spiritual Israel, with respect to their present comfort or everlasting happiness, all is exactly fulfilled, all his promises in Christ are yea and amen.

C H A P. XXII.

THE war with the Canaanites being ended, Joshua called to him the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who came over Jordan with him to assist in it, and commended them for their obedience to Moses and to himself, and to God by them; and then dismissed them, with some instructions to keep the ways and worship of God, and with his blessing upon them, ver. 1—8. upon which they returned to their country, and when they came to the borders of it set up an altar by Jordan, ver. 9, 10. which, when the children of Israel heard of, it gave them great offence, they fearing they were going to make a revolt from the pure worship of God, and therefore sent a deputation of princes to them, with

the son of the high-priest, to inquire into the matter, and expostulate with them about it, who did, ver. 11—20. and who received from them a very satisfactory answer, ver. 21—31. with which they returned and reported to the children of Israel, and which gave them pleasure, ver. 32, 33, 34.

Ver. 1. *Then Joshua called the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.*] The promise of God to Israel being fulfilled, the land of Canaan being for the most part subdued, the war at an end, and rest had on all sides from their enemies, and the land divided among the nine tribes and an half, and they settled in the quiet possession of their lots; Joshua sent for the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who had, at their own request, their portion allotted them on the other side Jordan, and who came over that river with him to assist their brethren in their wars with the Canaanites, and addressed them in the following respectable manner.

Ver. 2. *And said unto them, ye have kept all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you,* &c.] Which was, that they should leave their wives and children, and flocks, and herds, behind them in the land of Gilead, and pass over Jordan, with their brethren the children of Israel armed, and fight with them, and for them, until the Canaanites were subdued, and not return until their brethren were peaceably settled in the possession of their inheritances; all which they had punctually observed, and inviolably kept, as they agreed to, Numb. xxxii. *and have obeyed my voice in all that I commanded you*: as the generalissimo and commander in chief of the Israelitish forces; as what rank and position to be in, what part to take in an engagement, what attack to make, when and where, or on what expedition to go; wherever he ordered them to go, they went; and upon whatsoever and wheresoever he sent them, they readily and cheerfully obeyed, as they promised, ch. i. 16, 17. and approved themselves as good soldiers under him; for all which he commends them, and gives them military honour.

Ver. 3. *Ye have not left your brethren these many days unto this day,* &c.] For the space of 14 years, which is the commonly received notion of the Jews[f]; seven years according to them the land was subduing, and seven more spent in dividing it, and then these tribes were sent for and dismissed; all this time they stuck close by their brethren, and assisted them in their wars, and never offered to return to their wives and children, until they had an order from their general: *but have kept the charge of the commandment of the Lord your God*; for what both Moses and Joshua commanded them was from the mouth of the Lord; so that, in obeying them, they obeyed him.

Ver. 4. *And now the Lord your God hath given rest unto your brethren, as he promised them,* &c.] As in ch. xxi. 44. see Deut. xii. 9, 10. *therefore now return ye, and get ye unto your tents*; not their military tents in the army, from which they now came to Joshua, but their houses, as the Greek version, and their cities, as the Targum; they having been so long used to tents in the wilderness, and during the wars in Canaan, this was a familiar word for their dwellings: *and unto the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the Lord gave you, on the other side Jordan*; before his death, on condition of doing what they now had done; even the land of Gilead and Bashan, beyond Jordan.

Ver. 5. *But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law,* &c.] The ten commandments, and all other laws, both ceremonial and civil: *which Moses the servant of the Lord charged you*; in the name of the Lord, to keep and observe: *to love the Lord your God*: of which keeping the commands of God is an evidence, and which is the true principle and motive of hearty, sincere, and cheerful obedience to them: *and to walk in all his ways*: which he has prescribed, all his ways of worship, paths of duty, faith, truth, holiness, and righteousness: *and to keep his commandments*; whether moral, ceremonial, or judicial: whether of natural and moral obligation, or of positive institution: *and to cleave unto him*; and not depart from his ways, worship, word, and ordinances: *and to serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul*; in the most strict and affectionate manner. This advice Joshua thought proper to give them, and inculcate into them, now they were about to leave their brethren, and go on the other side Jordan; where they would be at a distance from the tabernacle, altar, and service of God, and might be under temptation to relinquish it, and set up another form of worship elsewhere.

Ver. 6. *So Joshua blessed them, and sent them away,* &c.] Dismissed them from his presence with a blessing, in order to go to their own country; this he did by wishing them well, praying to God for a blessing on them, their persons, and families, who had been so useful in assisting their brethren to get possession of the land of Canaan. Some think this blessing includes gifts and presents he bestowed on them: *and they went unto their tents*; here the word means their military tents in the camp of Israel, to which they returned, in order to take with them their goods, their substance and riches, their part of the spoil of the enemy, which of right belonged to them.

Ver. 7. *Now to the one half of the tribe of Manasseh Moses had given* possession *in Bashan,* &c.] The kingdom of Og, see Deut. iii. 13. *but unto the other half thereof gave Joshua among their brethren on this side Jordan westward*; of which an account is given, and the border of their lot described, ch. xvii. *and when Joshua sent them also unto their tents, then he blessed them*; it seems as if this half-tribe was separately dismissed and blessed, they being more nearly related to Joshua, who was of the tribe of Ephraim, and so had a more particular dismission and blessing; and he took his leave of them in a different and affectionate manner. Kimchi makes mention of a Derash, or Exposition of theirs, which says, that after they had taken leave they stayed two days, and returned and took leave a second time, and which he understands of them all, and not of the half-tribe only; but it is plainly the half-tribe that is only spoken of.

Ver. 8. *And he spake unto them,* &c.] To the half

[f] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 11. p. 32.

tribe of Manasseh only, though some think also to the other ten tribes: *saying, return with much riches unto your tents*; that is, return to their own land, and habitations there, with whatsoever riches they had got from the spoil of the enemy: *and with very much cattle*; they had taken from them, and fell to their share, and for which they had good pasturage in Gilead and Bashan, and therefore very proper to take with them. *with silver and with gold, and with brass, and with iron*; whether in massy pieces, or wrought up into vessels, which they found in the houses of the Canaanites when they plundered them: *and with very much raiment*; some no doubt very rich and costly, such as their kings, princes, nobles, and great personages among them wore: *divide the spoil of your enemies with your brethren*; according to Jarchi and Kimchi, this is spoken to the half-tribe of Manasseh, to divide their spoil with the tribes of Reuben and Gad; but it rather means the dividing the above spoil, when they came to their own country with their brethren they left behind; who as they were employed in guarding and defending their cities, their wives and children, herds and flocks, in their absence, they had a right to part of the spoil; and as in other instances it appears to be a common case for those that stayed at home to share in the spoil with them that went to war, see Numb. xxxi. 27. 1 Sam. xxx. 24, 25. Psal. lxviii. 12. though the notion of Abarbinel pleases me best, that by *their brethren* are meant the other half-tribe of Manasseh that remained in Canaan, and were settled there: when the spoil of the Canaanites was divided among all the tribes, the whole tribe of Manasseh had its share; and whereas now half of it were going to their own country on the other side Jordan, it was but reasonable they should have their part of the spoil to carry with them; and this seems to be the true reason of their being separately addressed, and dismissed and blessed.

Ver. 9. *And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, returned*, &c.] First to the camp to take their substance, and then set forward to their own land: *and departed from the children of Israel*; from the rest of them, for otherwise they were children of Israel also: *out of Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan*; for here the camp of Israel was, as well as the tabernacle: *to go unto the country of Gilead, to the land of their possession, whereof they were possessed*; Gilead is put for the whole country on the other side Jordan, as the land of Jazer, and the kingdom of Bashan, which the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, were possessed of: *according to the word of the Lord by the hand of Moses*; for when they moved to have that country, Moses, it seems, consulted the Lord about it, who declared it to be his will they should have it, on performing what they promised, see Numb. xxxii. 31.

Ver. 10. *And when they came unto the borders of Jordan, that are in the land of Canaan*, &c.] To the banks of it, or the sand-heaps, some take the word to signify, which were thrown up to restrain the waters from overflowing; some by Geliloth understand a place so called; and Jerom[g] says it was near Jordan, in the tribe of Benjamin: but rather the word signifies the meanders, windings, and turnings, of the river[h]; and such circuits and compasses it fetched near Jericho, as the same writer[i] observes, where we may suppose these tribes went over, and at a place where the river jetted out into the land of Canaan: *the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, built there an altar*; or *then*; that is, when they had passed over the river into their own country, for which Josephus is express[k]; and certain it is, that the altar was built not on the Canaan-side of Jordan, but on the opposite side, as is clear from the following verse: and indeed they had no right to build on any other ground than their own; and they pitched upon a spot where the river jetted out into the land of Canaan, as most proper to erect it on, to be a witness, that though separated from the rest of the Israelites by the river Jordan, yet were a part of them, and had a right to join them in the service of God, and bring their sacrifices to the altar of God in the tabernacle, as more fully appears in some after-verses: *a great altar to see to*; built up very high, so that it might be seen at a great distance.

Ver. 11. *And the children of Israel heard say*, &c.] Those that dwelt in the land of Canaan, for otherwise, as before observed, the two tribes and a half on the other side Jordan were Israelites also; and this is a further proof that the altar was built on their side, or those in the land of Canaan would have known of the building of it, and have seen them at it, and not come at the knowledge of it by hearsay only, as it seems they did, it being reported to them by some who had been in those parts, and had seen the structure: *behold, the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, have built an altar over-against the land of Canaan*; which cleary shews it was on the other side Jordan, though Noldius, who places it in the land of Canaan, renders the words, *in the neighbourhood of it*[l]; which will not much help him, since it might be in the neighbourhood of it, and yet not in it: *in the borders of Jordan*; on the banks of it, or in one of the meanders and windings of it, at a place where it ran out and fetched a compass in the land of Canaan: *at the passage of the children of Israel*; where they passed over when they first came into Canaan, and where those tribes also passed over at their return; supposed to be the Beth-abara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing, John i. 28.

Ver. 12. *And when the children of Israel heard of it*, &c.] Of the building the altar in the above place, namely, the nine tribes and a half settled in the land of Canaan: *the whole congregation of the children of Israel gathered themselves together at Shiloh*; where the tabernacle and altar of the Lord were, whose cause they undertook to avenge, being injured as they imagined by the altar the other tribes had built, and where they could consult the Lord by Urim and Thummim, if needful; hither they repaired from the several places around, where their tribes were settled; not the whole body of the people, but their heads and representatives: *to go up to war against them*; to consult about it, and to prepare for it, which they were obliged to do by

[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. C.
[h] Vid. Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 179, 573. Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 1. l. 1. c. 43. p. 274, 279.
[i] Ut supra, G.
[k] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 26.
[l] אל מול in vicinia, Noldius, No. 269. p. 20.

the law of God, as in the case of a city, so of a tribe drawn aside to idolatry; and which they imagined was the case of these tribes, or at least what they had done had a tendency to apostacy from the true worship of God, which they were zealous to defend at the hazard of their lives, and though it should issue in an extirpation of one or more of their tribes; see Deut. xiii. 12—16.

Ver. 13. *And the children of Israel*, &c.] In the land of Canaan: *sent unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead*; they were possessed of, and had now returned unto and dwelt in; hither they sent an embassy to them, to inquire into the truth of what they had heard, and the reason of it, before they went to war with them, or proclaimed it, or took any further steps towards it; and which they were obliged to do by the above law, when there was any suspicion of idolatry, and any good ground and reason for it, Deut. xiii. 14. and at the head of this deputation was *Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest*; a man zealous for the Lord of hosts, and his glory, of which there is an instance in Numb. xxv. 7, 11, 13. and so a fit person to be employed in this affair, who would be faithful, bold, and zealous, as well as capable of giving advice and counsel to both parties, if needful.

Ver. 14. *And with him ten princes, of each chief house a prince, throughout all the tribes of Israel*, &c.] The nine tribes and a half, so that the half-tribe of Manasseh sent a prince, as well as the whole tribes: *and each one was an head of the house of* their *fathers among the thousands of Israel*; that is, among the rulers of the thousands of Israel; and so the Greek version calls them Chiliarchs, rulers of thousands; for the people were divided into tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands, over whom there were distinct rulers, Exod. xviii. 25. Now these were among the chief of them, of the highest rank and authority; they were the chief princes, heads of several tribes; a very honourable deputation this! the son of the high-priest, and ten princes, the heads of the tribes; these were chosen and sent, partly in honour to their brethren beyond Jordan, and partly that they might carry the greater authority with them, and prevail upon them to hearken to them.

Ver. 15. *And they came unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the half-tribe of Manasseh, unto the land of Gilead*, &c.] The deputation came thither; they either sent for the chiefs among the two tribes and a half, to meet them at some place, or they, having a notion of their coming, assembled together to receive them, and hear what they had to say to them: *and they spake with them, saying*; as follows; very probably Phinehas was the mouth of the whole, for there could be but one speaker.

Ver. 16. *Thus saith the whole congregation of the Lord*, &c.] By whom they were sent, and whom they represented; and they don't call them the congregation of Israel, but of the Lord, because it was not on a civil but religious account they were come, and not to plead their own cause, but the cause of God; and not so much to shew a concern for their own honour and interest, as for the glory of God: *what trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel*; they took it for granted that they had committed a sin, and that so great, they were not able to express the greatness of it in all its aggravated circumstances, and plainly suggest it was idolatry; which was too premature, when as yet they had not inquired into it; but their zeal for God, and his honour, hurried them into this hasty step: *to turn away this day from following the Lord*; they intimate, that they had begun a revolt from the worship of God, which is aggravated by their falling into it so soon, having received so many favours from God, and had so lately seen such wonderful appearances of his power and goodness, and had just had such excellent instructions, exhortations, and cautions given them by Joshua, when he dismissed them: *in that ye have built you an altar*; which they supposed was to offer sacrifices upon; whereas there was to be but one altar, and that in the place which the Lord should choose to put his name in, and which he had now chosen, where all sacrifices were to be brought and offered up; see Exod. xx. 24. Lev. xvii. 3, 4. Deut. xii. 5, 6: *that ye might rebel this day against the Lord?* against the commandment of the Lord expressed in the places referred to, which they charge with rebellion against himself, a very high and heavy charge indeed! but they should first have inquired whether they were guilty of the trespass, or with what view they had built the altar, whether for sacrifice, or for some other us e; but they took it for granted it was for sacrifice.

Ver. 17. Is *the iniquity of Peor too little for us*, &c.] The worshipping of that idol, when in the plains of Moab; the history of which, see in Numb. xxv. 2, 3. was that so small a sin, that another must be added to it, or a greater committed? since building an altar seemed designed not for a single action of idolatrous worship, but for the continuance of it, whereas the sin of Peor was only committed at one time, and not continued in: *from which we are not cleansed until this day*; not cleared from the shame and disgrace of it, or the guilt of it expiated or removed; but it might be expected, as in the case of the golden calf, that God would still at times punish for it, when provoked by new crimes; or the sense is, that there were those among them that were infected with the same contagion, and whose inclinations were to commit t e same, or like sin of idolatry: *although there was a plag ie in the congregation of the Lord*; of which 24,000 died, Numb. xxv. 9.

Ver. 18. *But that you must turn away this day from following the Lord?* &c.] From the worship of the Lord, as the Targum, and so on ver. 16. not content with the former transgression, but must add this revolt unto it, and at a time which sadly aggravates it: *and it will be, that seeing ye rebel to-day against the Lord*; against the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, and so on ver. 16. *that to-morrow he will be wroth with the whole congregation*; or in a little time, if a stop is not put to this revolt, the whole body of the people will suffer for it: here they express a concern for the whole nation of Israel, as well as for the glory of God; for sometimes the whole congregation has been charged with the sins of individuals, and punished for it, as a case after mentioned shews; see ch. vii. 1, 5.

Ver. 19. *Notwithstanding, if the land of your possession be unclean*, &c.] That is, if it was judged to be so by them, because not cleansed from the sins of the

former inhabitants of it by sacrifice, or because there was no altar in it to offer up sacrifice for the expiation of sin: *then pass ye over unto the land of the possession of the Lord, wherein the Lord's tabernacle dwelleth*: if you repent of the choice you have made of a country to dwell in, quit it, and come over into the land of Canaan, which the Lord has taken possession of, and residence in, and where his tabernacle is fixed, the place of his presence and worship, and where an altar is erected to sacrifice upon: *and take possession among us*: they were willing to quit possession of their own, and make room for them in their several tribes, and even though they straitened themselves, and parted with much of their estates, rather than they should make a schism, or go into idolatrous practices; which was a brave, noble, spirit indeed, and shewed their great concern for the honour and glory of God, and his worship, and their love to their brethren, and affectionate regard for their spiritual welfare, above their own private, personal, and temporal good: *but rebel not against the Lord*: the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, either Christ the essential Word, the Angel of Jehovah's presence, or his word of command: *nor rebel against us*; by breaking off from us, and setting up another religion or form of worship: *in building you an altar beside the altar of the Lord our God*: which ought to be common to both, and no other to be set up against it, or used beside it.

Ver. 20. *Did not Achan the son of Zerah*, &c.] One that descended from Zerah the son of Judah, ch. vii. 18. *commit a trespass in the accursed thing*: in taking what was devoted to sacred uses: *and wrath fell on all the congregation?* and which was what was feared now; and this instance is brought to shew that such fears were not groundless: *and that man perished not alone in his iniquity*: which seems to confirm the notion of those who think that his children suffered with him; though it may be observed, that it was through his sin that 36 men were slain by the men of Ai, ch. vii. 5.

Ver. 21. *Then the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, answered*, &c.] By some person whom they appointed to deliver the answer in their name: *and said unto the heads of the thousands of Israel*: who were over those that were rulers of the thousands of Israel, persons of greater authority than they, being princes of the respective tribes to which they belonged.

Ver. 22. *The Lord God of gods, the Lord God of gods*, &c.] They first set out in their answer with asserting their firm belief of Jehovah, the God of Israel, being the supreme God, God over all; over all that are called gods, whether angels, of whom Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it; or civil magistrates and judges of the earth, who bare the same name; nor are the gods of the Gentiles to be spoken of with Jehovah, the God of Israel, who is the supreme Being, self-existent, the Being of beings, eternal and immutable, all which is contained in his name Jehovah; now this is repeated by them for the confirmation of their faith in this great article of it, and shews the steadiness of it, and to express their earnest and vehement affection for this truth, and to clear themselves from any imputation of idolatry, or thought of it, or doing any thing that might have a tendency to it: *he knoweth*; he is the omniscient God, the searcher of the hearts and the trier of the reins of the children of men; he knows our cordial belief of this truth, the integrity of our hearts, the intention of our minds, that we never had a thought in us of departing from his worship, and of setting up an altar beside his in opposition to it: *and Israel he shall know*; our brethren the Israelites that dwell in the land of Canaan, whose representatives you are, shall know, not only by our present declaration, but by our future conduct, and strict adherence to the pure worship of God in time to come, that it was never our view by what we have done to depart from it: *if it be in rebellion, or if in transgression against the Lord*; with a design to rebel against his word, and transgress his command: *save us not this day*; this is said with respect to God, and as an apostrophe to him, as Jarchi, Kimchi, and Abarbinel observe; as expressing their desire to have no mercy shewn them by him, but that vengeance might be taken on them by him, to whom all things were naked and open, and who full well knew whether they were guilty or not; or else the address is to Phinehas, and the princes, that they would rise up and put them to death by sword, if this appeared to be the case; or that all the other tribes would rise up, and make war against them, and cut them off with the edge of the sword, and not spare them.

Ver. 23. *That we have built us an altar, to turn from following the Lord*, &c.] That is, we desire, as we deserve, to be cut to pieces, and not saved, if it should appear to be our view, in building this altar, to revolt from the pure worship of God: *or if to offer thereon burnt-offering, or meat-offering, or if to offer peace-offerings*; even to the Lord himself: they declare that as they had no design to apostatize from God, and worship idols, so it was not their intention to offer any kind of sacrifice on the altar they had built, even to the Lord himself; and they take notice of every kind of offering, to remove every charge of this sort from them, and to purge themselves of every imputation of this nature: *then the Lord himself require it*; seek it out, who is the omniscient God, and revenge it, who is the Lord God Almighty, just and true.

Ver. 24. *And if we have not* rather *done it for fear of this thing*, &c.] So far they suggest were they from doing this, in order to turn from the pure worship of God, and introduce idolatrous worship, that it was to guard against every thing of that kind for the future; and through fear of it, and anxiety and distress of mind, lest some time or another there should be any temptation to it in their posterity, had they built this altar: *saying, in time to come your children might speak unto our children*: or to-morrow [m], in a short time after your heads, and ours, are laid in the grave, your posterity will accost us: *saying, what have you to do with the Lord God of Israel?* you are aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel, live in a foreign land, and not in the land of Canaan; are separated from us by the river Jordan, are a different people from us, and have nothing to do with the tabernacle of the Lord, and the service of it, or with the altar of

[m] מחר cras, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

the Lord, to offer sacrifice on it. Now as they returned to their own country, or when got there, such anxious thoughts and fears rose up in their minds, which they communicated to one another, and thought of this expedient to prevent what would be so fatal to their posterity. The Targum is, "you have no part in "the Word of the Lord God of Israel;" see John xiii. 8.

Ver. 25. *For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you*, &c.] And by it separated them from them, as if they were a distinct people; not that this was really the case, but so they feared it would be represented in time to come; for though Jordan was the border of the land of Canaan, strictly so called, eastward, Numb. xxxiv. 12. yet it did not exclude the land of the two tribes and a half from being part of the land of promise; for the Amorites, which before inhabited it, and were driven out of it, were Canaanites, and were one part of the people, whose land the Lord promised to Abraham, Gen. xv. 18—21. *ye children of Reuben, and children of Gad, have no part in the Lord*: in his covenant and promises, in his worship, word, and ordinances; these are things you have nothing to do with, being separated from us his peculiar people: or *have no part in the Word of the Lord*, as the Targum, the promised Messiah, being without, or separated from him, as the Gentiles are said to be, Eph. ii. 12. *so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord*: from worshipping the Lord, the fear of the Lord being often put for the whole worship of God, external and internal, Eccl. xii. 13. by behaving in the above manner towards them, they would be the cause and occasion of their apostacy from the true God, and it would be in effect to say to them, *go, serve other gods*, 1 Sam. xxvi. 19.

Ver. 26. *Therefore we said*, &c.] One to another, in order to prevent the apostacy of our children from God, their departure from his worship, and going into idolatry: *let us now prepare to build us an altar*: get materials ready, and set about it instantly, without any delay, whilst the thing dwells upon our minds: *not for burnt-offering, nor for sacrifice*: not for offerings of any kind required by the law, neither for sin-offerings nor trespass-offerings, nor any other not named.

Ver. 27. *But* that it may be *a witness between us and you, and our generations after us*, &c.] That we are one people, worship one God, and serve at one altar, of which this built was a resemblance, and would put them in mind of it: *that we might do the service of the Lord before him*: in the tabernacle, and at the altar, in the place where he had chosen to put his name and dwell: *with our burnt-offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our peace-offerings*: to be brought at stated times, or as occasion required: *that your children may not say to our children, in time to come, ye have no part in the Lord*: nor right to his altar, and so forbid them offering their sacrifices on it; or "have no part in "the Word of the Lord," as the Targum; the Messiah, whose sacrifice was typified by the sacrifices of the legal dispensation, and all such, who offered theirs in the faith of that, had a part in it, and their sins were expiated by it.

Ver. 28. *Therefore said we*, &c.] To prevent any such usage of our children, and that they might have a ready answer to give: *that it shall be, when they should so say unto us, or to our generations, in time to come*; as above suggested, that they were a separate people from them, and had no interest in the Lord, nor right to his altar, nor concern in his worship: *that we may say* again; in reply, that is, our posterity: *behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made*; which exactly agrees with the Mosaic altar, and which they could never have framed in so exact a manner if they had not seen it, and served at it; wherefore this was a plain proof of their being originally worshippers of the same God, partakers of the same altar, and were in the faith, fellowship, and communion of Israel. According to Gussetius *, this was not the altar the Reubenites, *&c.* built, which the children of Israel would be bid to behold, but the Mosaic altar at the tabernacle or temple, which was the archetype and exemplar, according to which that of the Reubenites was formed; and therefore say not, come and behold, but behold the altar present before them, that of Moses, and acknowledge that to be a type and exemplar, which they had related, and so confess it to be a testimony of their mutual fellowship: and what they had made in imitation of it, which exactly answered to it, was *not for burnt-offerings, nor for sacrifices*; of any sort, that was not the intention of erecting it: *but it is a witness between us and you*; that we worship the same God, and are of the same faith and fellowship.

Ver. 29. *God forbid that we should rebel against the Lord*, &c.] Against the command of the Lord, who ordered one altar to be made, to which all sacrifices were to be brought from the several parts of the land of Israel, and there to be offered on it; or "against "the Word of the Lord," as the Targum, Christ typified both by the altar and the sacrifices on it; and who is but one, one priest, one sacrifice, one altar, one Mediator and Saviour: *and turn this day from following the Lord*; apostatize from him, and from his worship: *to build an altar for burnt-offerings, for meat-offerings, or for sacrifices*; which was never our intention, or ever entered into our hearts to erect one for such a purpose: *besides the altar of the Lord our God, that is before his tabernacle*; it standing in the court of the tabernacle before the holy place.

Ver. 30. *And when Phinehas the priest*, &c.] For so he was, being the son of Eleazar the high-priest, and so the word *priest*, ver. 13. is to be joined, not to Eleazar but to Phinehas: *and the princes of the congregation*; the ten princes, who were sent by the congregation of Israel, one out of each tribe: *and heads out of the thousands of Israel*; these are the same with the princes, and this belongs to their title, who were heads of the Chiliarchs, or those who were rulers of thousands in Israel: *which* were *with him*; with Phinehas, who were joined with him in the embassy, and now present with him: *heard the words that the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and the children of Manasseh spake*; in defence of themselves, explaining the meaning and design of the altar they had built: *it pleased*

* Ebr. Comment. p. 135.

them; they were not only satisfied with their answer, but highly delighted with what they had done, as tending to preserve the common faith and fellowship of Israel.

Ver. 31. *And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest,* &c.] As the mouth of the deputation, and in their name: *said unto the children of Reuben, and to the children of Gad, and to the children of Manasseh*: the representatives of them assembled together on this occasion: *this day we perceive that the Lord is among us*; his Shechinah, as the Targum; his powerful Presence in preserving their brethren from committing a trespass, as they feared; his gracious Presence smiling upon them; and as the God of peace and order, and not of confusion, uniting and cementing their hearts in love to one another: *because ye have not committed this trespass against the Lord*; which they were fearful and jealous of they had, but they found that the Lord had been good and gracious in preserving them from it: *now ye have delivered the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord*; into which they would have fallen, had that been the case, and would have felt the effects of the divine resentment, but now they were secure from them.

Ver. 32. *And Phinehas the son of Eleazar the priest, and the princes,* &c.] Being fully satisfied with the relation of things that had been given them, and having taken their leave of the assembly: *returned from the children of Reuben, and from the children of Gad*; the Greek version adds, *and from the half-tribe of Manasseh*; which, though not in the Hebrew text, is undoubtedly meant: *out of the land of Gilead*: which, though only a part of the country these tribes inhabited, is put for the whole, and it is not improbable that the assembly might be held in it: *unto the land of Canaan, to the children of Israel*; the rest of the children of Israel who dwelt in the land of Canaan, properly so called: *and brought them word again*; reported the whole affair, related all that had passed, and acquainted them with the intention and design of their brethren erecting the altar, and what had been the issue of their embassy to them.

Ver. 33. *And the thing pleased the children of Israel,* &c.] They were quite satisfied with the account of things, and were pleased and delighted with what their brethren, the other two tribes, had done: *and the children of Israel blessed God*; returned thanks to him, that there was no trespass committed against him, and no schism like to be made among them, nor any wrath to come upon them: *and did not intend to go up against them in battle*; for though upon first hearing of their building an altar, which they supposed was for idolatry, they had intended to make war against them, but now understanding the design of that building, they laid aside all thoughts of that kind: *to destroy the land wherein the children of Reuben and Gad dwelt*; which they judged by the law in Deut. xiii. 12, they were obliged to do. The Greek version here adds also, *and the half-tribe of Manasseh*, and renders the last clause, and *they dwelt in it*; continued to dwell in it undisturbed by their brethren.

Ver. 34. *And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, called the altar Ed,* &c.] Which signifies *a witness*; they caused such an inscription to be put upon it, or this word to be engraved on it, that so the intention of erecting it might be known in future time; that it was not for sacrifice, but to be a testimony of their being one with their brethren on the other side Jordan, in worship, faith, and fellowship: *for it shall be a witness between us that the Lord is God*; is the one God, the God of them both, of all Israel, whether on the one or the other side of Jordan; to be worshipped by them in one and the same manner, and their sacrifices to be offered to him on his altar before the tabernacle.

CHAP. XXIII.

JOSHUA being old, convenes the states of Israel a little before his death, ver. 1, 2. and in his address to them observes what God had done for them, and would do, ver. 3, 4, 5. and exhorts them to keep the commandments of God, and cleave to him, and not to mix with the Gentiles, and join with them in idolatrous practices, and then it would be well with them, ver. 6—11. but otherwise should they join with them, and depart from the Lord, who had so faithfully and punctually performed every good thing he had promised them, they might expect all evils and calamities, utter ruin and destruction, to befall them, ver. 12—16.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass a long time after,* &c.] Or *after many days**, that is, years: *that the Lord had given rest unto Israel from all their enemies round about*; the greatest part of the land of Canaan was subdued, the whole divided by lot to the tribes of Israel, and they quietly settled in the respective portions assigned them, the Canaanites that remained giving them no disturbance, in which state of rest and peace they had now been for some years; and this may be reasonably supposed to be the last year of the life of Joshua, see ver. 14. *that Joshua waxed old* and *stricken in age*; and became feeble and decrepit, and greatly declined; for though he was ten years younger than Moses when he died, yet not so vigorous, strong, and robust as he, but was pressed and bore down with the infirmities of age.

Ver. 2. *And Joshua called for all Israel,* &c.] Summoned them together, whether at Timnath-serah, his own city, he being old and infirm, and not able to go elsewhere; or whether at Shechem, where it is plain they were afterwards convened, ch. xxiv. 1. or whether rather at Shiloh, where the tabernacle was, is not certain; and by *all Israel* cannot be meant the whole body of the people, unless it can be thought to be at one of the feasts, when all the males in Israel appeared before the Lord; though this seems to be not a stated convocation, but occasionally made, and to be understood of the representatives of the people called together, as explained in the following clause: and *for their*

* מימים רבים post dies multos, Pagninus, Masius, Tigurine version; exactis multis diebus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

elders, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers: the first *and* is supplied, and another word or words may be supplied, as *even*, or *that is*, or the like, and so explanative of all Israel, namely, *their elders*, both in age and office, especially the latter, the seventy elders, or who composed what in after-times was called the great sanhedrim; and the *heads* of their tribes, the chief princes of every tribe; and their *judges* in their several cities, who heard and tried causes, and administered justice and judgment to the people; and their *officers*, who attended on them to execute the judgment they pronounced: *and said unto them, I am old* and *stricken in age*: which he observes as a reason of his calling them together to give them some advice and instructions before his death, and in order to command greater reverence of him, and respect to him, and to excite attention to what he had to say to them.

Ver. 3. *And ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto all those nations because of you*, &c.] How he had destroyed them, and driven them out of their habitations to make room for them, meaning the seven nations of the Canaanites: *for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you*: Joshua does not attribute any of the things that were done to his own valour, nor theirs, nor so much as mentions himself or them as instruments, but wholly ascribes all to the Lord, who fought their battles for them, and conquered their enemies, and subdued them under them; the Targum is, "the Word of the Lord fought for you;" the Captain of the host of the Lord, ch. v. 14, 15.

Ver. 4. *Behold, I have divided to you by lot these nations that remain*, &c.] Who are unsubdued, not yet conquered, as well as those that are *to be an inheritance for your tribes*: to be possessed by them and their children for ever: *from Jordan, with all the nations I have cut off, even unto the great sea westward*: the phrase, *with all the nations I have cut off*, is to be read in connexion with *those nations that remain*; both those that were cut off by the sword of Joshua, and those that remained unconquered, being divided by lot to the tribes of Israel; and which reached from Jordan eastward, where Joshua and Israel entered into the land, to the Mediterranean sea, called the great sea in comparison of little ones in Canaan, as the dead sea, and the sea of Tiberias; and which great sea lay west to the land of Israel, or where the sun sets, as the phrase in the Hebrew text is.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord your God he shall expel them from before you*, &c.] That is, such of them as yet remained among them: *and drive them from out of your sight*: the same thing expressed by different words, for the confirmation of it: *and ye shall possess their land, as the Lord your God hath promised unto you*; all which is to be understood on condition of their good behaviour towards the Lord, and obedience to his commands; by which tenure they held the possession of the land when put into it, and for their disobedience did not possess the whole.

Ver. 6. *Be ye therefore very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses*, &c.] To observe which required spiritual strength, fortitude of mind, a holy courage, a firm and fixed resolution, and particularly to destroy the Canaanites required in that book, and to abstain from all communion and fellowship with them: *that ye turn not aside therefrom, to the right hand or the left*: see the note on ch. i. 7.

Ver. 7. *That ye come not among these nations, those that remain among you*, &c.] That remained unsubdued, or that were suffered to dwell among them, being tributaries to them; with these they were not to converse freely and familiarly, nor to carry on trade and commerce with them, nor enter into any alliances or marriages with them, and not even attend any of their feasts, and especially their idolatrous ones: *neither make mention of the name of their gods*; not in common conversation, and still less in any religious matters; never with any reverence of them, or in any respectable manner; but always with indignation and contempt, calling them dunghill-gods, and the like, as they often are in Scripture: *nor cause to swear* by them; neither swear by them themselves, nor cause others to swear by them, as Abarbinel; or a man his neighbour, as Kimchi; no, not a Gentile, as Ben Melech; so it is said in the Misnah [r], "he that vows in the name of an "idol, and confirms in his name, (which Bartenora "interprets, swears by his name,) transgresses a nega-"tive precept." Maimonides [s] also says, "he that "vows in the name of an idol, and swears by it, is to "be beaten—he that swears by it himself, or causes a "Gentile to swear by it; for it is forbidden to cause a "Gentile to swear by his fear (or idol), and even to cause "him to make mention of it, though not in the way of "an oath, it is forbidden:" *neither serve them*; by offering any sacrifice or incense to them, or by praying to them, or offering them praises on any account, or by performing any religious service in any instance or form whatever: *nor bow yourselves unto them*; give them any adoration or worship, external or internal.

Ver. 8. *But cleave unto the Lord your God*, &c.] To his word, worship, and ordinances; externally, by close adherence to them, and strict observation of them; and internally, by strong affection to him, hope, trust, and confidence in him, expectation of all good things from him, and constant application to him for help in all times of need, and a fixed dependence on him: *as ye have done unto this day*; that is, since they came into the land of Canaan, and had been under the government of Joshua; for otherwise, while in the wilderness, they frequently revolted from God, and murmured against him; and this is to be understood not of individuals, who doubtless were guilty of various failings and sins, but of the whole body, and with respect to any notorious offence, particularly idolatry, which they had not fallen into since they came into the land of Canaan, and had very lately shewn great zeal against it; not only the tribes on this side, but those on the other side Jordan, as the preceding chapter largely relates.

Ver. 9. *For the Lord hath driven out before you great nations and strong*, &c.] Especially as they were reckoned in those times, before any great monarchies had existed, as did afterwards; and indeed these were, considering the land they inhabited, very numerous and populous, and were very stout and able-

[r] Sanhedrin, c. 7. sect. 6.

[s] Hilchot & Obedeth Cochabim, c. 5. sect. 10.

bodied men, and some of a gigantic stature; and all dwelt in strong fortified cities, and were able to bring out large armies into the field, with chariots of iron, so that they were very formidable; but notwithstanding all this, the Lord drove them out of their strong holds, and put Israel into the possession of them, and of their land: *but as for you, no man hath been able to stand before you unto this day*; that is, of those that came out against them, and fought with them; these were all to a man cut off by them, or fled before them, and became tributaries to them; otherwise there were many, who as yet were not expelled by them; this the Lord had promised, and now had fulfilled, Deut. xi. 25. Josh. i. 5.

Ver. 10. *One man of you shall chase a thousand*, &c.] Here Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, that the future tense is put for the past, and that the sense is, one of them had chased a thousand in their war with the Canaanites; but Abarbinel disapproves of this observation, and thinks it refers to time to come, what they should be able to do if they cleaved unto the Lord; this was fulfilled in Samson, Judg. xv. 15. such a promise was made, Lev. xxvi. 8. *for the Lord your God he it is that fighteth for you*; and no wonder then that a thousand should be put to flight by one man; the Targum interprets it of the Word of the Lord, as in ver. 3. *as he hath promised you*; see Deut. i. 30. and iii. 22.

Ver. 11. *Take good heed therefore unto yourselves*, &c.] To be upon their guard, and to be watchful, were very necessary to them, that they might not be insnared by the Canaanites, and drawn aside by them into idolatry, and so apostatize from the Lord and his worship, since their temptations would be many: *that ye love the Lord your God*; which would the most strongly influence and engage them to serve and worship the Lord, and obey his commands, and be the best preservative against idolatry and false worship.

Ver. 12. *Else if ye do in any wise go back*, &c.] From the Lord and his worship, from his word and ordinances: *and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even those that remain among you*; in cities not taken, or in several which the Philistines were in possession of, or lived among them as tributaries to them, if they should take to them, and be free and familiar with them, which may lead on to nearer connexions in civil and religious matters: *and shall make marriages with them*; marry their daughters to the sons of Canaanites, or admit the daughters of Canaanites to be married to their sons: *and go in unto them, and they to you*: which is expressive of the consummation of marriage, and of the performance of the conjugal duty.

Ver. 13. *Know for a certainty that the Lord your God will no more drive out any of these nations from before you*, &c.] Or, *knowing ye shall know*[r]; or *know ye*; this may be taken for granted, or the fullest proof, and clearest demonstration, and strongest assurance will be given of it, that in case of such bad conduct, and disobedience to the will of God, no more of the nations of the Canaanites will be driven out of the cities in which they are: but *they shall be snares and traps unto you*: who by their bad examples would draw them both to idolatry and superstitious worship, and into all irreligion, profaneness, and immorality, as they did, Psal. cvi. 35—39. *and scourges in your sides*: who either, by insnaring them, would get an advantage over them, and distress them in their persons, families, and estates; or would be the means of the Lord's correcting and chastising them with the rod and stripes of men, for the iniquities these would draw them into; the allusion is to scourges and lashes laid on the sides of men, or to goads with which beasts are pushed on their sides and driven: *and thorns in your eyes*: very troublesome and distressing; for even a mote in the eye is very afflicting, and much more a thorn; see the note on Numb. xxxiii. 55. Jarchi interprets this word by *camps* surrounding them, as shields do the bodies of men, and which is approved of by Gussetius[s]: *until ye perish from off this good land, which the Lord your God hath given you*; by sword, famine, pestilence, or captivity, which has been their case.

Ver. 14. *And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth*, &c.] That is, about to die; not that precise day, but in a short time, of which the daily increasing infirmities of old age gave him notice. Death is a journey from this world to another, a man's going to his long home, a path trodden by all men, and but once[t]; a way in which all men without exception must and do walk, and even the best as well as the greatest of men, such as Joshua; no man is exempted from death, be he ever so great or good, ever so wise and knowing, ever so holy or so useful; see 1 Kings ii. 2. *and ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls*: in their consciences; it was a glaring truth, which none could deny; it had a testimony in every man's breast: *that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God hath spoken concerning you*; particularly concerning the good land, and the Lord's bringing them into it, removing the old inhabitants, and settling them in their room, and putting them in possession of all temporal good things and spiritual privileges, as the word and ordinances: *all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof*; see ch. xxi. 45.

Ver. 15. *Therefore it shall come to pass, that as all the good things are come upon you which the Lord hath promised you*, &c.] Of which there was full proof, and it could not be denied: *so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil things*; calamities and distresses, by his sore judgments of famine, sword, pestilence, evil beasts, and captivity, in case of disobedience to his commands: *until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the Lord your God hath given you*: for as he is faithful to his promises, so to his threatenings; and from his punctual performance of the one may be argued and expected the sure fulfilment of the other, and which has been abundantly verified in that people; see the notes on Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii.

Ver. 16. *When ye have transgressed the covenant of the Lord your God, which he commanded you*, &c.] The law, so called, and the several precepts of it, particularly those which relate to the faith and worship of the

[r] ידוע תדעו sciendo scietis, Montanus; sciendo scitote, Pagninus, Vatablus.

[s] Comment. Ebr. p. 737.

[t] ——— Sed omnes una manet nox,
Et calcanda semel via lethi. Horat. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 28.

one only true God; see Exod. xxiv. 7, 8. *and have gone and served other gods, and have bowed down yourselves unto them*; been guilty of idolatry, of having and worshipping other gods, which are no gods, with or besides the God of Israel, see ver. 7. *then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against you*; nothing being more provoking to him than idolatry, he being a jealous God of his honour and worship: *and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you*; as they did at the time of the Babylonish captivity, and at the last destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

CHAP. XXIV.

THIS chapter gives us an account of another summons of the tribes of Israel by Joshua, who obeyed it, and presented themselves before the Lord at Shechem, ver. 1. when Joshua in the name of the Lord rehearsed to them the many great and good things the Lord had done for them, from the time of their ancestor Abraham to that day, ver. 2—13. and then exhorted them to fear and serve the Lord, and reject idols, ver. 14. and put them upon making their choice, whether they would serve the true God, or the gods of the Canaanites; and they choosing the former, he advised them to abide by their choice, ver. 15—24. and made a covenant with them to that purpose, and then dismissed them, ver. 25—28. and the chapter is concluded with an account of the death and burial of Joshua and Eleazar, and of the interment of the bones of Joseph, ver. 29—33.

Ver. 1. *And Joshua gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem*, &c.] The nine tribes and a half; not all the individuals of them, but the chief among them, their representatives, as afterwards explained, whom he gathered together a second time, being willing, as long as he was among them, to improve his time for their spiritual as well as civil good; to impress their minds with a sense of religion, and to strengthen, enlarge, and enforce the exhortations he had given them to serve the Lord; and Abarbinel thinks he gathered them together again because before they returned him no answer, and therefore he determined now to put such questions to them as would oblige them to give one, as they did, and which issued in making a covenant with them; the place where they assembled was Shechem, which some take to be Shiloh, because of what is said ver. 26. that being as they say in the fields of Shechem; which is not likely, since Shiloh, as Jerom says[a], was ten miles from Neapolis or Shechem. This place was chosen because nearest to Joshua, who was now old and infirm, and unfit to travel; and the rather because it was the place where the Lord first appeared to Abraham, when he brought him into the land of Canaan, and where he made a promise of giving the land to his seed, and where Abraham built an altar to him, Gen. xii. 6, 7. where also Jacob pitched his tent when he came from Padan-aram, bought a parcel of a field, and erected an altar to the Lord, Gen. xxxiii. 18, 19, 20. and where Joshua also repeated the law to, and renewed the covenant with the children of Israel, quickly after their coming into the land of Canaan, for Ebal and Gerizzim were near to Shechem, ch. viii. 30—35. *and called for the elders of Israel, and for their heads, and for their judges, and for their officers*: see the note on ch. xxiii. 2. *and they presented themselves before God*: Kimchi and Abarbinel are of opinion that the ark was fetched from the tabernacle at Shiloh, and brought hither on this occasion, which was the symbol of the divine Presence; and therefore the place becoming sacred thereby is called the sanctuary of the Lord, and certain it is that here was the book of the law of Moses, ver. 26. which was put on the side of the ark, Deut. xxxi. 26.

Ver. 2. *And Joshua said unto all the people*, &c.] Then present, or to all Israel by their representatives: *thus saith the Lord God of Israel*; he spoke to them in the name of the Lord, as the prophet did, being himself a prophet, and at this time under a divine impulse, and spirit of prophecy. According to an Arabic writer[w] the Angel of God appeared in the form of a man, and with a loud voice delivered the following, though they are expressed by him in a different manner; perhaps he means the Captain of the Lord's host, ch. xv. 13, 14. and which is not unlikely: *your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time*; on the other side the river Euphrates; so the Targum, "beyond Perat;" *i. e.* Euphrates; in Mesopotamia and Chaldea; meaning not the remotest of their ancestors, Noah and Shem, but the more near, and who are expressly named: even *Terah the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor*; the Israelites sprung from Terah, in the line of Abraham, on the father's side, and from him in the line of Nachor on the mother's side, Rebekah, Leah, and Rachel, being of Nachor's family: *and they served other gods*; besides the true God, strange gods, which were no gods: *idols*; the idols of the people, as the Targum; so did Terah, Abraham, and Nachor; see the notes on Gen. xi. 26, 28. and xii. 1.

Ver. 3. *And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood*, &c.] The river Euphrates, as before: or *your father, to wit, Abraham*, as Noldius[x]; he took him not only in a providential way, and brought him from the other side of the Euphrates, out of an idolatrous country and family, but he apprehended him by his grace, and called and converted him by it, and brought him to a spiritual knowledge of himself, and of the Messiah that should spring from his seed, and of the covenant of grace, and of the blessings of it, and of his interest therein; which was a peculiar and distinguishing favour: *and led him throughout all the land of Canaan*; from the northern to the southern part of it; he led him as far

[a] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. I.
[w] Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 25.
[x] Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 119.

as Shechem, where Israel was now assembled, and then to Beth-el, and still onward to the south, Gen. xii. 6—9. that he might have a view of the land his posterity was to inherit, and, by treading on it and walking through it, take as it were a kind of possession of it: *and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac;* he multipled his seed by Hagar, by whom he had Ishmael, who begat twelve princes; and by Keturah, from whose sons several nations sprung; see Gen. xvii. 20. and xxv. 1—4. and by Sarah, who bore him Isaac in old age, in whom his seed was called; and from whom, in the line of Jacob, sprung the twelve tribes of Israel, and which seed may be chiefly meant: and the sense is, that he multiplied his posterity after he had given him Isaac, and by him a numerous seed; so Vatablus: Ishmael is not mentioned, because, as Kimchi observes, he was born of an handmaid; but Abarbinel thinks only such are mentioned, who were born in a miraculous manner, when their parents were barren, as in this and also in the next instance.

Ver. 4. *And I gave unto Isaac Jacob and Esau,* &c.] When Rebekah was barren, so that the children appeared the more to be the gift of God; though Esau perhaps is mentioned, for the sake of what follows: *and I gave unto Esau Mount Seir to possess it;* that Jacob and his posterity alone might inherit Canaan, and Esau and his seed make no pretension to it: *but Jacob and his children went down into Egypt;* where they continued many years, and great part of the time in bondage and misery, which is here taken no notice of; and this was in order to their being brought into the land of Canaan, and that the power and goodness of God might be the more conspicuous in it.

Ver. 5. *I sent Moses also and Aaron,* &c.] To demand Israel's dismission of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and to be the deliverers of them: *and I plagued Egypt according to that which I did amongst them;* inflicting ten plagues upon them for refusing to let Israel go: *and afterwards I brought you out;* that is, out of Egypt, with an high hand, and stretched-out arm.

Ver. 6. *And I brought your fathers out of Egypt,* &c.] Which more fully expresses the sense of the last clause of the preceding verse: *and you came unto the sea;* which respects some senior persons then present; for, besides Caleb and Joshua, there were many at this time alive who came to and passed through the Red sea, at their coming out of Egypt; for those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness were such as were more than twenty years of age at their coming out from Egypt, and who were the murmurers in the wilderness; and it may be reasonably supposed, that many of those who were under twenty years of age at that time were now living: *and the Egyptians pursued after your fathers, with chariots and horsemen, into the Red sea;* of the number of their chariots and horsemen, see Exod. xiv. 7, 9. with these they pursued the Israelites, not only unto, but into the Red sea, following them into it; the reason of which strange action is given in the next verse.

Ver. 7. *And when they cried unto the Lord,* &c.] That is, the Israelites, being in the utmost distress, the sea before them, Pharaoh's large host behind them, and the rocks on each side of them; see Exod. xiv. 10. *he put darkness between you and the Egyptians;* the pillar of cloud, the dark side of which was turned to the Egyptians, and which was the reason of their following the Israelites into the sea; for not being able to see their way, knew not where they were; see Exod. xiv. 20. *and brought the sea upon them, and covered them;* or *upon him, and covered him*[r]; on Pharaoh, as Kimchi; or on Egypt; that is, the Egyptians; or on every one of them, as Jarchi, none escaped; see Exod. xiv. 26, 27, 28. *and your eyes have seen what I have done in Egypt;* what signs and wonders were wrought there, before they were brought out of it, and what he had done to and upon the Egyptians at the Red sea; some then present had been eye-witnesses of them: *and ye dwelt in the wilderness a long season;* forty years, where they had the law given them, were preserved from many evils and enemies, were fed with manna, and supplied with the necessaries of life, were led about and instructed, and at length brought out of it.

Ver. 8. *And I brought you into the land of the Amorites, which dwelt on the other side Jordan,* &c.] The kingdoms of Sihon and Og: *and they fought with you;* the two kings of them, and their armies: *and I gave them into your hand, that ye might possess their land;* and which was now possessed by the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh: *and I destroyed them from before you;* the kings, their forces, and the inhabitants of their countries; the history of which see in Numb. xxi.

Ver. 9. *Then Balak the son of Zippor, the king of Moab, arose,* &c.] Being alarmed with what Israel had done to the two kings of the Amorites, and by their near approach to the borders of his kingdom: *and warred against Israel;* he fully designed it, and purpose is put for action, as Kimchi observes; he prepared for it, proclaimed war, and commenced it, though he did not come to a battle, he made use of stratagems and wiles, and magical arts, to hurt them, and sent for Balaam to curse them, that they both together might smite the Israelites, and drive them out of the land, Numb. xxii. 6. so his fighting is interpreted by the next clause: *and sent and called Balaam the son of Beor to curse you;* by which means he hoped to prevail in battle, and get the victory over them; but not being able to bring this about, durst not engage in battle with them.

Ver. 10. *But I would not hearken unto Balaam,* &c.] Who was very solicitous to get leave of the Lord to curse Israel, which he knew he could not do without; he had a good will to it, but could not accomplish it: *therefore he blessed you still;* went on blessing Israel to the last, when Balak hoped every time he would have cursed them; and Balaam himself was very desirous of doing it, but could not, being overruled by the Lord, and under his restraint; which shews his power over evil spirits, and their agents: *so I delivered you out of his hands;* both out of the hand of Balak, who was intimidated from bringing his forces against them, and out of the hand of Balaam, who was not suffered to curse them.

[r] עליו־ויכסהו super eum, & operuit eum, Munster, Vatablus, Pagninus, Montanus.

Ver. 11. *And ye went over Jordan*, &c.] In a miraculous manner, the waters parting to make way for the host of Israel: *and came unto Jericho*; the first city of any bigness and strength in the land, which was about seven or eight miles from Jordan; see the note on Numb. xxii. 1. *and the men of Jericho fought against you*; by endeavouring to intercept their spies, and cut them off; by shutting up the gates of their city against Israel; and it may be throwing darts, arrows, and stones, from off the walls of it at them. Kimchi thinks that some of the great men of Jericho went out from thence, to give notice and warning to the kings of Canaan of the approach of the Israelites, and in the mean time the city was taken; and that these afterwards joined with the kings in fighting against Joshua and the people of Israel: *the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites*; the seven nations of Canaan; this they did at different times, and in different places: *and I delivered them into your hand*; these nations and their kings.

Ver. 12. *And I sent the hornet before you*, &c.] Of which see the note on Exod. xxiii. 28. *which drave them out from before you*, even *the two kings of the Amorites*; who were Sihon and Og, and not only them, and the Amorites under them, but the other nations, Hivites, Hittites, *&c.* but *not with thy sword, nor with thy bow*; but by insects of the Lord's sending to them, which, as Kimchi says, so blinded their eyes, that they could not see to fight, and so Israel came upon them, and slew them; in which the hand of the Lord was manifestly seen, and to whose power, and not their own, the destruction of their enemies was to be ascribed.

Ver. 13. *And I have given you a land for which you did not labour*, &c.] Or, *in which* *, by manuring and cultivating it, by dunging, and ploughing, and sowing: *and cities which ye built not, and ye dwell in them*; neither built the houses in them, nor the walls and fortifications about them; in which now they dwelt safely, and at ease, and which had been promised them, as well as what follows; see Deut. vi. 10, 11. *of the vineyards and oliveyards, which ye planted not, do ye eat*; thus far an account is given of the many mercies they had been and were favoured with, and thus far are the words of the Lord by Joshua; next follow the use and improvement Joshua made of them.

Ver. 14. *Now therefore fear the Lord*, &c.] Since he has done such great and good things, fear the Lord and his goodness, fear him for his goodness-sake; nothing so influences fear, or a reverential affection for God, as a sense of his goodness; this engages men sensible of it to fear the Lord, that is, to worship him both internally and externally in the exercise of every grace, and in the performance of every duty: *and serve him in sincerity and in truth*; in the uprightness of their souls, without hypocrisy and deceit, and according to the truth of his word, and of his mind and will revealed in it, without any mixture of superstition and will-worship, or of the commands and inventions of men: *and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt*; that is, express an abhorrence of them, and keep at a distance from them, and shew that you are far from giving in to such idolatries your ancestors were guilty of, when they lived on the other side Euphrates, in Chaldea, or when they were sojourners in Egypt; for it can't be thought that the Israelites were at this time guilty of such gross idolatry, at least openly, since Joshua had bore such a testimony of them, that they had cleaved to the Lord unto that day, ch. xxiii. 8. and their zeal against the two tribes and a half, on suspicion of idolatry, or of going into it, is a proof of it also: *and serve ye the Lord*; and him only.

Ver. 15. *And if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord*, &c.] Irksome and troublesome, a burden, a weariness, and not a pleasure and delight: *choose you this day whom you will serve*; say if you have found a better master, and whose service will be more pleasant and profitable: *whether the gods your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood*; the river Euphrates; these may bid fairest for antiquity, but then they were such their fathers had relinquished, and for which undoubtedly they had good reason; and to take up with the worship of these again was to impeach their wisdom, judgment, and good sense: *or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell*; but then these were such as could not preserve their worshippers in the land, or the Israelites had not dwelt in it, and therefore no dependence could be had upon them for future security. The Amorites are only mentioned, because they were a principal nation, some of which dwelt on one side Jordan, and some on the other, and indeed there were of them in the several parts of the land: *but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*; be your choice as it may be: this was the resolution of Joshua, and so far as he knew the sense of his family, or had influence over it, could and did speak for them; and which he observes as an example set for the Israelites to follow after; he full well knowing that the examples of great personages, such as governors, supreme and subordinate, have great influence over those that are under them.

Ver. 16. *And the people answered and said*, &c.] To Joshua, upon his proposal to them, the option he gave them to serve the Lord or idols, and which was only done to try them: *God forbid that we should forsake the Lord, to serve other gods*; they speak with the utmost abhorrence of idolatry, as a thing far from their hearts and thoughts, as the most abominable and execrable that could be thought or spoken of; to forsake the word, and worship, and ordinances of God, and serve the idols of the Gentiles, strange gods, whether more ancient or more recent, such as their fathers worshipped in former times, or the inhabitants of the land they now dwelt in, for which they were spewed out of it.

Ver. 17. *For the Lord our God, he it is that brought us up, and our fathers, out of the land of Egypt*, &c.] When Pharaoh, the king of it, refused to let them go, yet he wrought such wonders in it, and inflicted such plagues on it, as obliged Pharaoh and his people to dismiss them: *from the house of bondage*; where they were held in the greatest thraldom and slavery, and their lives made bitter and miserable: *and which did*

* בה in qua, V. L. Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

those great signs in our sight: meaning the wonders and marvellous things wrought before Pharaoh and his people, and in the sight of Israel, Psal. lxxviii. 11, 12, 43. though Abarbinel is of opinion it refers to what had been done in their sight of late in the land of Canaan, as the dividing of the waters of Jordan, the fall of the walls of Jericho, the standing still of the sun in Gibeon; but this seems not so well to agree with what follows: *and preserved us in all the way wherein we went:* in the wilderness from serpents and scorpions, and beasts of prey, and from all dangers from every quarter: *and among all the people through whom we passed;* through whose borders they passed, as the Edomites, Moabites, and Amorites; though the above writer seems to understand it of preservation from the dangers of their enemies in the land of Canaan.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord drave out from before us all the people,* &c.] The seven nations of the land of Canaan: *even the Amorites which dwelt in the land;* the strongest and most populous of the nations, Amos ii. 9. or especially the Amorites, so Vatablus; or *with the Amorites,* as others; those that lived on the other side Jordan, over whom Sihon and Og reigned: therefore *will we also serve the Lord;* as well as Joshua and his house, for the reasons before given, because he had done such great and good things for them: *for he is our God;* that has made and preserved us, and loaded us with his benefits, and is our covenant-God, and therefore will we fear and serve him.

Ver. 19. *And Joshua said unto the people,* &c.] To their heads and representatives now assembled together, and who had returned to him the preceding answer: *ye cannot serve the Lord;* which he said not to discourage or deter them from serving the Lord, since it was his principal view, through the whole of this conversation with them, to engage them in it, but to observe to them their own inability and insufficiency of themselves to perform service acceptable to God; and therefore it became them to implore grace and strength from the Lord to assist them in it, and to depend upon that, and not to lean to and trust in their own strength; as also to observe to them, that they could not serve him perfectly without any defect and failure in their service, for there is no man that does good and sins not; and therefore when a man has done all he can, he must not depend upon it for his justification before God; or consider it as his justifying righteousness, which was what that people were always prone to: some supply it, "you cannot serve "the Lord with your images," or along with them, so Vatablus: *for he is an holy God:* perfectly holy, so that the best of men, and the best of their services, are impure and unholy before him, and will not bear to be compared with him, and therefore by no means to be trusted in; and it requires much grace and spiritual strength to perform any service that may be acceptable to him through Christ. In the Hebrew text it is, *for the holy ones are he:* which may serve to illustrate and confirm the doctrine of the trinity of persons in the unity of the divine Essence, or of the three divine holy Persons, holy Father, holy Son, holy Spirit, as the one God, see Isa. vi. 3. *he is a jealous God;* of his honour and glory, and of his worship, in which he will admit of no rival, of no graven images, or any idols to be worshipped with him, or besides him; nor will he suffer the idol of men's righteousness to be set up in the room of, or in opposition to, the righteousness of God, even no services and works of men, be they ever so good, since they cannot be perfect before him: *he will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins;* even the transgressions and sins of such that forsake the worship and service of him, and fall into idolatry, or who seek for justification by their own services, these are both abominable to him; otherwise he is a God pardoning the iniquity, transgression, and sin, of all those who seek unto him and serve him, confess their sins, and renounce their own righteousness; see Exod. xxiii. 21.

Ver. 20. *If you forsake the Lord, and serve strange gods,* &c.] Joshua knew the proneness of this people to idolatry, and therefore expresses his jealousy of them, that they would not be able to continue in the service of God, and would be apt to be carried away after idols; and therefore, to make them the more cautious and watchful, he represents to them the danger they were in, and what would befall them should they forsake the Lord they now promised to serve, and follow after other gods, which their fathers worshipped before they were called out of their estate of Heathenism, or which the Canaanites or Egyptians worshipped, whose examples they were too ready to imitate: *then he will turn and do you hurt;* not that there is properly any change in God, either of his counsel or covenant, or of love and affection to his people, but of his providential dealings, or outward manner of acting towards men; or the sense is, he will again do you hurt, bring evils and calamities upon you again and again, frequently as you revolt from him, such as the sword, pestilence, famine, and captivity, which these people after experienced when they fell into idolatry: *and consume you;* by these his sore judgments: *after that he hath done you good;* by bringing you into such a good land, and bestowing so many good things upon you, natural, civil, and religious; and yet, notwithstanding, being disobedient to him, and especially in the instances mentioned, they are made to expect his resentment, and the effects of it.

Ver. 21. *And the people said unto Joshua, nay,* &c.] We will not serve strange gods: *but we will serve the Lord;* according to his revealed will, and him only.

Ver. 22. *And Joshua said unto the people,* &c.] In reply to their answer and resolution: *ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord God to serve him;* that is, should they, after this choice of him, which they had so publicly declared, desert his service, and go into idolatry, their testimony would rise up against them, and they would be self-condemned: *and they said,* we are *witnesses;* should we ever apostatize from the Lord and his worship, we are content to have this our witness produced against us.

Ver. 23. *Now therefore put away,* said he, &c.] Which last words are rightly supplied, for they are the words of Joshua: *the strange gods which are among you;* not their private notions and secret sentiments that some of them had imbibed in favour of idols, and the worship of them, as Ben Gersom thinks; but, as the Targum expresses it, "the idols of the Gentiles;" either such as they had brought out of Egypt, or had

found among the plunder of the Canaanites, and had secretly retained; or, as others think, their *penates*, or household gods, they had privately kept and worshipped, such as those that were in Jacob's family, which he caused to be delivered to him, and which he hid under an oak in this place where Israel were now assembled, Gen. xxxv. 2, 4. and which Joshua by a prophetic discerning spirit perceived were now among them: *and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel*: to love, fear, and serve him; that is, pray that your hearts may be inclined thereunto, and make use of all means that may tend to direct your hearts to him, and his service; so the Targum, "to the worship of "the Lord God of Israel."

Ver. 24. *And the people said unto Joshua*, &c.] A third time, that as by the mouth of two or three witnesses every thing is confirmed, so by three testimonies of the same persons: *the Lord our God will we serve*: as they had before declared, and to which they add: *and his voice will we obey*: or his word, as the Targum, not only his word of command, but his essential Word, the Son of God.

Ver. 25. *So Joshua made a covenant with the people that day*, &c.] Proposing to them what was most eligible, and their duty to do, and they agreeing to it, this formally constituted a covenant, of which they themselves were both parties and witnesses: *and set them a statute and an ordinance in Shechem*: either made this covenantt to have the nature of a statute and ordinance binding upon them, or repeated and renewed the laws of Moses, both moral and ceremonial, which had been delivered at Mount Sinai, and now, upon this repetition in Shechem, might be called a statute and ordinance there.

Ver. 26. *And Joshua wrote these words*, &c.] Which had passed between him and the people: *in the book of the law of God*: written by Moses, and which he ordered to be put in the side of the ark, and that being now present, the book could be easily taken out, and these words inserted in it, Deut. xxxi. 26. *and took a great stone*; on which also might be inscribed the same words: *and set it up there under an oak, that* was *by the sanctuary of the Lord*: or *in it*[a]; that is, in the field or place where the ark was, which made it sacred, and upon which account the place was called a sanctuary, or an holy place; for there is no need to say that the tabernacle or sanctuary itself was brought hither, only the ark; and much less can it be thought that an oak should be in it; though it was not improbable, that had it been thither brought, it might have been placed under, or by an oak, as we render it; and it is a tradition of the Jews, which both Jarchi and Kimchi make mention of, that this was the same oak under which Jacob hid the strange gods of his family in Shechem, Gen. xxxv. 4. Mr. Mede[b] is of opinion that neither ark nor tabernacle were here, but that by *sanctuary* is meant a *proseucha*, or place for prayer; such an one as in after-times was near Shechem, as Epiphanius[c] relates, built by the Samaritans in imitation of the Jews; but it is a question whether there were any such places so early as the times of Joshua, nor is it clear that such are ever called sanctuaries.

Ver. 27. *And Joshua said unto all the people*, &c.] The chief of them now gathered together, and who represented the whole body: *behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us*: of the covenant now made, and the agreement entered into, as the heap of stones were between Jacob and Laban, Gen. xxxi. 45, 46, 47. *for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us*: this is said by a figure called *prosopopœia*, frequent in Scripture, by which inanimate creatures are represented as hearing, seeing, and speaking, and may signify, that should the Israelites break this covenant, and disobey the commands of the Lord they had promised to keep, they would be as stupid and senseless as this stone, or more so, which would rise in judgment against them. Nachmanides[d], a Jewish commentator, interprets this stone of the Messiah, the same as in Gen. xlix. 24. Psal. cxviii. 22. Zech. iii. 8, 9. *it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God*: for a memorial and testimony to prevent them from going into atheism, a denying of the true God, or into apostacy from him, and into idolatry and false worship. The Targum of which is, "behold, "this stone shall be to us as the two tables of stone of "the covenant, for we made it for a testimony; for "the words which are written upon it are the sum of "all the words of the Lord which he spake unto us, "and it shall be unto you for a memorial, and for a "testimony, lest ye lie before the Lord."

Ver. 28. *So Joshua let the people depart, every man unto his inheritance*.] Dismissed them, and took his final leave and farewell of them, dying soon after; upon which they returned to the possessions and inheritances assigned by lot to the several tribes, of which they were the heads and princes.

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass, after these things*, &c.] Some little time after, very probably the same year: *that Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died*, being *an hundred and ten years old*; he wanted ten years of Moses his predecessor, and just the age of Joseph, from whom he sprung, being of the tribe of Ephraim.

Ver. 30. *And they buried him in the border of his inheritance*, &c.] In a field belonging to his estate; for they buried not in towns and cities in those times. The Greek version adds, "and they put into the tomb, in "which he was buried, the stone knives with which he "circumcised the children of Israel at Gilgal, when he "brought them out of Egypt;" and an Arabic writer[e] affirms the same, but without any foundation: *in Timnath-serah, which is in Mount Ephraim*; which was his city, and where he dwelt; and of which see the note on ch. xix. 50. and his grave was near the city; here, they say[f], his father Nun, and Caleb also, were buried: *on the north side of the hill of Gaash*: of the brooks or valleys of Gaash mention is made in 2 Sam. xxiii. 30. which very probably were at the bottom of this hill.

[a] במקדש in sanctuario, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.
[b] Discourse 18. p. 66.
[c] Contr. Hæres. l. 3. tom. 2. Hæres. 80.
[d] Apud Masium in loc.
[e] Patricides, p. 31. apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 523.
[f] Cippi Heb. p. 32.

Ver. 31. *And the children of Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua*, &c.] Without going into idolatrous practices: *and all the days of the elders that overlived Joshua*; that lived a few years longer than he; some of them that came young out of Egypt, and were now elderly men; and some of them doubtless were of the court of the seventy elders; these could not overlive Joshua a great many years, for, in the times of Cushan-rishathaim, Israel fell into idolatry, Judg. ii. 6, 7, 8. *and which had known all the works of the Lord, that he had done for Israel*; in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, as well as since their coming into the land of Canaan.

Ver. 32. *And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt*, &c.] At the request, and by the order of Joseph, Gen. l. 25. which were punctually observed by the children of Israel under the direction and command of Moses, and therefore is ascribed to him, as here to them, Exod. xiii. 19. *buried they in Shechem*; not in the city, but in a field near it, as the next clause shews. The Jews in their Cippi Hebraici say [g], that Joseph was buried at a village called Belata, a sabbath-day's journey from Shechem; but Jerom says [h] he was buried in Shechem, and his monument was to be seen there in his time. Not that they buried him at the same time Joshua was buried, but very probably as soon as the tribe of Ephraim was in the quiet possession of this place; though the historian inserts the account of it here, taking an occasion for it from the interment of Joshua: *in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for an hundred pieces of silver*: of which purchase see the note on Gen. xxxiii. 19. *and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph*; and particularly of the tribe of Ephraim by lot, agreeably to the gift and disposal of it by Jacob to Joseph, Gen. xlviii. 22. see the note there.

Ver. 33. *And Eleazar the son of Aaron died*, &c.] Very probably in a short time after Joshua; and, according to the Samaritan Chronicle [i], he died as Joshua did, gathered the chief men of the children of Israel a little before his death, and enjoined them strict obedience to the commands of God, and took his leave of them, and then stripped himself of his holy garments, and clothed Phinehas his son with them; what his age was is not said: *and they buried him in a hill* that pertaineth to *Phinehas his son*; or in the hill of Phinehas; which was so called from him, and might have the name given it by his father, who might possess it before him, and what adjoined to it. The Jews in the above treatise say [k], that at Avarta was a school of Phinehas in a temple of the Gentiles; that Eleazar was buried upon the hill, and Joshua below the village among the olives, and on this hill is said [l] to be a school or village of Phinehas: *which was given him in Mount Ephraim*; either to Eleazar, that he might be near to Shiloh, where the tabernacle then was, as the cities given to the priests and Levites were chiefly in those tribes that lay nearest to Jerusalem; though the Jews say, as Jarchi and Kimchi relate, that Phinehas might come into the possession of that place through his wife, or it might fall to him as being a devoted field; but it is most likely it was given to his father by the children of Ephraim, for the reason before observed. The Talmudists say, that Joshua wrote his own book, which is very probable; yet the last five verses must be written by another hand, even as the last eight verses in Deuteronomy were written by him, as they also say; and therefore this is no more an objection to his being the writer of this book, than the addition of eight verses by him to Deuteronomy is to Moses being the writer of that; and the same Talmudists [m] also observe, that ver. 29, 30, 31, 32. *Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died*, &c. were written by Eleazar, and ver. 33. *and Eleazar, the son of Aaron, died*, &c. by Phinehas, which is not improbable.

THE BOOK OF JUDGES.

THE title of this book in the Hebrew copies is Sepher Shophetim, the Book of Judges; but the Syriac and Arabic interpreters call it, "the Book of the "Judges of the Children of Israel;" and the Septuagint only Judges; so called, not because it was written by them, though some think it was compiled out of annals and diaries kept by them; but it seems to be the work of one person only: the true reason of its name is, because it treats of the judges of Israel, gives an account of their lives and actions, and especially such as concerned their office; which office was different from that of kings, and seems only to have been occasional, and chiefly lay in delivering the people out of the hands of their enemies, when oppressed, distressed, or carried captive by them; in protecting them in the enjoyment of their country, rights, and liberties; in leading out

[g] Ut supra.
[h] Quæst. Heb. in Genesim, fol. 73. C.
[i] Apud Hottinger. p. 524.
[k] Cippi Hebraici, ut supra.
[l] See Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. p. 157.
[m] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2. & 15. 1.

their armies against their enemies when needful; and in composing differences, judging law-suits, and administering justice. The government of the nation, during their time, was a theocracy. It is not certain who was the penman of this book; some ascribe it to King Hezekiah, others to Ezra; but the Jewish writers[a] are generally of opinion that it was written by Samuel, which is most likely, who was the last of the judges; and it seems plainly to be written before the times of David, as appears from a speech of Joab, 2 Sam. xi. 21. and from some passages in Psal. lxviii. 8, 9. and xcvii. 5. which seem to refer or allude to Judg. v. 4, 5. and from Jerusalem being called Jebus, which shews it to be inhabited by the Jebusites in the time of the writer of this book, whereas it was taken out of their hands by David; besides, Samuel himself refers to the annals of this book, 1 Sam. xii. 9, 10, 11. and from whose testimonies, as well as from others in the New Testament, there is no doubt to be made of its being genuine and authentic, and written by divine inspiration; as is evident from the use the Apostle Paul, and the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, have made of it, Acts xiii. 20. Heb. xi. 32. it is useful as an history, and without which the history of the people of Israel would not be complete; it containing an account of all their judges, excepting the two last, Eli and Samuel, of whom an account is given in the following books, and of some facts incidental to those times, related in an appendix at the end of it, concerning the idol of Micah, and the war of Benjamin; and furnishes out many useful moral observations concerning God's displeasure at sin in his own people Israel, and his corrections for it; and about his providential care of them in raising up for them deliverers in their time of need, as well as points at various virtues and excellencies in great and good men, worthy of imitation. It contains, according to Piscator, Dr. Lightfoot, and others, an history of 299 years.

CHAP. I.

THE children of Israel, after Joshua's death, inquiring of the Lord which tribes should first go up against the remaining Canaanites, Judah is ordered to go up, who with Simeon did, ver. 1, 2, 3. and had success against the Canaanites under Adoni-bezek, whom they brought to Jerusalem, ver. 4—8. and against the Canaanites in Hebron, Debir, Zephath, Hormah, Gaza, Askelon, and Ekron, ver. 9—20. the Benjamites had not such good success as Judah against the Jebusites in Jerusalem, ver. 21. nor as the house of Joseph had against Beth-el, ver. 22—26. nor could the tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali, drive out the Canaanites from several places which belonged unto them, though many of them became their tributaries, ver. 27—33. and as for the Amorites, they were too powerful for the tribe of Dan, though some of them became tributaries to the house of Joseph, ver. 34, 35, 36.

Ver. 1. *Now after the death of Joshua*, &c.] With the account of which the preceding book is concluded, and therefore this very properly follows after that; though Epiphanius[b] places the book of Job between them: *it came to pass that the children of Israel asked the Lord*: that is, the heads of them who gathered together at Shiloh, where the tabernacle was; and standing before the high-priest, either Eleazar, or rather Phinehas his son, Eleazar being in all probability dead, inquired by Urim and Thummim: *saying, who shall go up for us against the Canaanites first, to fight against them?* for they had no commander-in-chief, Joshua leaving no successor, though the Samaritan Chronicle[c] pretends he did; one Abel, a son of Caleb's brother, of the tribe of Judah, on whom the lot fell, out of 12 of the 9 tribes and a half, to whom Joshua delivered the government of the nation, and crowned him: but this inquiry was not for any man to go before them all as their generalissimo, but to know what tribe should first go up, and they were desirous of having the mind of God in it, when they might expect to succeed; which to do, at their first setting out, would not only be a great encouragement to them to go on, but strike dread and terror into their enemies; and this is to be understood of the Canaanites who remained unsubdued, that dwelt among them, and in cities, which though divided to them by lot, they were not in the possession of; and these being troublesome neighbours to them, and besides the Israelites daily increasing, needed more room and more cities to occupy, and more land to cultivate.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said*, &c.] By an articulate voice, which 'tis probable was the usual way of answering by Urim and Thummim: *Judah shall go up*: not Judah in person, who was long ago dead, but the tribe of Judah; it was the will of the Lord that that tribe should engage first with the Canaanites, being the principal one, and the most numerous, powerful, and valiant, and perhaps had the greatest number of Canaanites among them; and who succeeding, would inspire the other tribes with courage, and fill their enemies with a panic: *behold, I have delivered the land into his hands*: that part of it which belonged to that tribe as yet unsubdued, the conquest of which they are assured of for their encouragement.

Ver. 3. *And Judah said unto Simeon his brother*, &c.] The men of the tribe of Judah said to those of the tribe of Simeon, they being not only brethren by father's and mother's side, which was not the case of all the sons of Jacob, but their possessions and inheritances lay near together; and indeed those of Simeon were within the inheritance of the tribe of Judah, Josh. xix. 1. so that as they lived in great nearness and familiarity with each other, their interests were closely united together: *come up with me into my lot, that we may fight against the Canaanites*; conjunctly: the meaning

[a] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.
[b] De Mensur. & Ponder. c. 12.
[c] Apud Hottinger. Smegma, p. 522.

is, that the tribe of Simeon, as many of their warlike men as could, would come and join their forces with those of the tribe of Judah, in order to reduce such cities, in the lot of that tribe, the Canaanites as yet were in the possession of; *and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot*: the cities being conquered which were in the lot of the tribe of Judah, that tribe proposed to bring their united forces into the lot of the tribe of Simeon, and reduce such cities as were in that lot: *so Simeon went with him*: the tribe of Simeon agreed to the proposal, and went along with the tribe of Judah against their common enemy.

Ver. 4. *And Judah went up*, &c.] Simeon being along with him, from the southern parts of the land, where they dwelt, and went more northward towards Jerusalem, and which therefore is called a going up: *and the Lord delivered the Canaanites and Perizzites into their hands*; into the hands of Judah and Simeon: the Canaanites here is not the common name of the seven nations, but the name of one of those nations, distinguished from the rest, as here from the Perizzites, who otherwise were also Canaanites; and both these, at least many of them, dwelt in those parts, and were subdued by the united forces of Judah and Simeon, whereby the Lord's promise was fulfilled, ver. 2. *and they slew of them in Bezek* 10,000 *men*; that is, in and about Bezek, first and last, in the course of this war, as after related. Jerom says[d] there were two villages of this name in his time near one another, seven miles from Neapolis, as you go to Scythopolis; and our countryman Mr. Sandys[e] says, that when they departed from Beth-lehem, bending their course from the mountains of Judea lying west from it, near to which, on the side of the opposite hill, they passed a little village called Bezek, as he took it, two miles from Beth-sur, see 1 Sam. xi. 8.

Ver. 5. *And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek*, &c.] Who was king of the place, and whose name signifies lord of Bezek; not that they took him there, for he is afterwards said to make his escape from thence, but here he was when they came against that city, and into which they rushed upon him, and fell upon him as follows: *and they fought against him*; entering the city with their forces: *and they slew the Canaanites and the Perizzites* that were in it, or about it, even to the number of 10,000, as before related.

Ver. 6. *But Adoni-bezek fled, and they pursued after him, and caught him*, &c.] It is very probable his view was to get to Jebus or Jerusalem, a strong and fortified city, and he made his way thither as fast as he could, but was pursued and overtaken by some of the forces of Judah and Simeon; and the rather it may seem he took this course, since when he was taken by them, they brought him thither, as follows: *and cut off his thumbs and his great toes*; whereby he was disabled both for fighting and for fleeing. So the Athenians cut off the thumbs of the right hand of the Æginetæ, the inhabitants of the island of Ægina, to disable them from holding a spear, as various writers[f] relate. Whether the Israelites did this, as knowing this king had used others in like manner, and so, according to their law of retaliation, *eye for eye*, &c. required it; or whether, ignorant of it, were so moved and directed by the providence of God to do this, that the same measure might be measured to him which he had measured to others, is not certain; the latter seems most probable, since the Israelites did not usually inflict such sort of punishments; and besides, according to the command of God, they should have put him to death, as they were to do to all Canaanites.

Ver. 7. *And Adoni-bezek said*, &c.] To the men of Judah, after his thumbs and toes were cut off, his conscience accusing him for what he had done to others, and being obliged to acknowledge he was righteously dealt with: 70 *kings, having their thumbs and their great toes cut off*: that is, by him, or by his orders, whom he had conquered and made captives; according to Josephus[g], they were 72; the number may be accounted for by observing, that in those times, as appears by the preceding book, every city had a king over it; and besides, these 70 kings might not be such who had had the government of so many cities, but many of them such who had reigned successively in the same city, and had fallen into the hands of this cruel and tyrannical king, one after another, and their sons also with them might be so called: and these he says *gathered* their meat *under my table*; were glad to eat of the crumbs and scraps which fell from thence, and might in their turns be put there at times for his sport and pleasure, and there be fed with the offal of his meat, as Bajazet the Turk was served by Tamerlane, who put him into an iron cage, and carried him about in it, and used him as his footstool to mount his horse, and at times fed him like a dog with crumbs from his table[h]: *as I have done, so God hath requited me*; whether he had any knowledge of the true God, and of his justice in dealing with him according to his deserts, and had a real sense of his sin, and true repentance for it, is not certain; since the word for God is in the plural number, and sometimes used of Heathen deities, as it may be here by him; however, the righteous judgment of God clearly appears in this instance: *and they brought him to Jerusalem*; to that part of Jerusalem which belonged to the tribe of Judah; see Josh. xv. 8, 63. here they brought him alive, and dying, buried him, as Josephus[i] says; which might be their view in carrying him thither, perceiving he was a dying man; or they had him thither to expose him as a trophy of victory, and as an example of divine justice: *and there he died*: whether through grief and vexation, or of the wounds he had received, or by the immediate hand of God, or by the hands of the Israelites, is not said; neither are improbable.

Ver. 8. *Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and had taken it*, &c.] Which accounted for their carrying Adoni-bezek thither. This they had done in the times of Joshua; for when the king of that place was taken and slain by Joshua, it seems that he

[d] De loc. Heb. fol. 89 H.
[e] Travels, p. 142. Ed. 5th.
[f] Valerius Maximus, l. 9. c. 2. Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 9. Cicero de Officiis, l. 3. c. 11.

[g] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 2.
[h] Such dogs are called τραπεζῆες κύνες, in Homer. Iliad. 23. ver. 173. & Odyss. 17. ver. 227.
[i] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 2.

and Israel went and fought against the city, and took that in which the tribe of Judah had a principal concern; so Kimchi and Ben Gersom interpret it; but Jarchi and Abarbinel are of opinion, that now from Bezek they went up to Jerusalem, and fought against it, and took it; and so others think, because only the children of Judah are mentioned, and not all Israel, who fought together in Joshua's time; nor is there any mention made of its being taken in his time, and yet it seems plain that it was inhabited in part by the children of Judah, Josh. xv. 63. some therefore have thought that it was twice taken; that after Joshua had taken it, he and the children of Israel being employed in making conquests in other parts of the land, the Jebusites repossessed it, from whence they were now again in part driven, not wholly; and Josephus says[k], the lower part was taken, and all the inhabitants killed, but the upper part was hard to be taken, because of the strength of the walls, and the nature of the place: *and smitten it with the edge of the sword;* the *inhabitants of it*, so far as they got possession of it: *and set the city on fire:* some part of it only, for in some part of it dwelt the children of Judah, and in another part the Jebusites.

Ver. 9. *And afterwards the children of Judah,* &c.] After the taking of Bezek, and the king of it, and having him to Jerusalem, where he died: they *went down* from *Jerusalem*: which was on high ground: *to fight against the Canaanites that dwelt in the mountain, and in the south, and in the valley;* into which several parts the lot of the tribe of Judah was divided; in each of which they had cities, and some, as it seems, yet unsubdued, and in the hands of the Canaanites; of these several parts, and the cities in them, see Josh. xv. 21, 33, 48.

Ver. 10. *And Judah went against the Canaanites that dwelt in Hebron,* &c.] Hebron was first taken by Joshua, and the inhabitants of it put to the sword, Josh. x. 36, 37. but whilst Joshua was employed in making other conquests, the Canaanites found ways and means of getting into the possession of it again; wherefore, when a grant of it was made to Caleb, he, with the assistance of the tribe of Judah, of which he was prince, regained it, Josh. xv. 13, 14. wherefore what is recorded here is only a repetition of what was then done; unless it can be thought that this fact was there inserted by anticipation, or that there were two expeditions of the children of Judah against this place: *Hebron,* which *before was Kirjath-arba;* see Josh. xiv. 15. in the first of which Caleb, with the assistance of this tribe, drove out the three giants only, who afterwards got possession again, and in this put them to death, as follows: *and they slew Sheshai, and Ahiman, and Talmai;* see Numb. xiii. 22. Josh. xv. 14. but what follows concerning their going from hence to Debir, and the offer of Caleb to give his daughter in marriage to whomsoever should take it, does not seem so well to agree with times after the death of Joshua; since it is highly probable that Caleb, who was cotemporary with him and Eleazar, was now dead, and at least can't well be thought to have a young daughter at this time undisposed of in marriage; wherefore these facts are only repeated upon observing Judah's having taken Jerusalem, to shew what exploits were performed by men of that tribe; wherefore for what is after said, to the end of the 15th verse, see the notes on Josh. xv. 15—19. where the same things are related in express words as here, containing the request of Caleb's daughter: such an one, as made to Domitian, is related by Martial[l].

Ver. 16. *And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law,* &c.] The posterity of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses; for though Jethro returned to his own country, after he had paid a visit to Moses in the wilderness, yet Hobab his son, at the persuasion of Moses, travelled with him and Israel through the wilderness, and went with them into Canaan, at least some of his descendants, and settled there, some in one part of the land, and some in another, of whom we read in several places of Scripture; they continued to the days of Jeremiah, and then went by the name of Rechabites, so called from Rechab, a descendant of Jethro: *these went up out of the city of palm-trees:* from the city of Jericho, as the Targum, so called from the great number of palm-trees which grew near it, see Deut. xxxiv. 3. This is to be understood not of the city itself, that was utterly destroyed by Joshua, and the rebuilding of it was forbidden under a curse, but the country adjacent, the valley in which it stood, which was set with palm-trees; here was a grove of palm-trees[m], and the garden of balsam, which grew nowhere else, as Strabo[n] says; and who also observes, that here was a royal palace in his time; this belonged to Herod king of Judea in the times of Augustus Cæsar, to whose palm-tree groves there Horace[o] refers. Here the Kenites first settled when they came first over Jordan with Joshua, being a most pleasant and delightful place, and suitable to such persons who dwelt in tents, as they did, and answered to the promise of Moses to Hobab, Numb. x. 29. and here it seems they had remained to this time: and now they left it, and came *with the children of Judah into the wilderness:* which was also a convenient place for the habitation of such persons, who loved a solitary life. Perhaps the Canaanites about Jericho might be troublesome to them, and therefore chose to stay no longer there; or, having a peculiar affection for the tribe of Judah, they chose to be within their lot; and the rather, as they were a warlike and valiant tribe, they might expect the greater safety and protection among them: *which lieth in the south of Arad;* that is, which wilderness of Judah lay there, of which name there was a country or city, see Numb. xxi. 1. and Josh. xii. 14. and here some of them dwelt to the times of Saul, the Amalekites then having got possession of the southern parts, which they infested and were troublesome to, see 1 Sam. xv. 6. and xxx. 1. *and they went and dwelt among the people;* of the tribe of Judah, near some of the cities which were in the wilderness; of which see Josh. xv. 63.

Ver. 17. *And Judah went with Simeon his brother,*

[k] Ut supra.
[l] Est mihi sitque precor, &c. l. 9. ep. 16.
[m] Justin. e Trogo, l. 36. c. 3.
[n] Geograph. l. 16. p. 525.
[o] Præferat Herodis Palmetis Pinguibus——De Arte Poet. ver. 184.

&c.] Having subdued his Canaanites which were in his own lot, according to his promise, he went with his brother Simeon, or the tribe of Simeon, into their lot to reduce those that were in that: *and they slew the Canaanites that inhabited Zepath, and utterly destroyed it*; where and what this city was is not certain; there was a place of this name in upper Galilee, mentioned in Jewish writings[r], which can't be meant here; and we read of the valley of Zephathah, 2 Chron. xiv. 10. which might have its name from hence, and if so it was near Mareshah: *and the name of the city was called Hormah*: from the destruction made of it, and of the country about it; for now what had been vowed by Israel in the wilderness, when near Arad, was fulfilled, Numb. xxi. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 18. *Also Judah took Gaza, with the coast thereof*, &c.] Which by lot fell to that tribe, Josh. xv. 47. but was not till now subdued: *and Askelon with the coast thereof*; which, according to our countryman Sandys[s], was ten miles from Gaza: *and Ekron with the coast thereof*; this also is the lot that fell to Judah, but was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, Josh. xv. 45. and xix. 43. for whom Judah now fought and took it; but in a short time all these places were retaken, and possessed by the Philistines, and were three of their five principalities which they ever after retained, see Judg. iii. 3. 1 Sam. vi. 16.

Ver. 19. *And the Lord was with Judah*, &c.] Encouraging, strengthening, succeeding, and giving the tribe victory over the Canaanites; the Targum is, "the "Word of the Lord was for the help of the house of "Judah:" *and he drove out* the inhabitants *of the mountains*; the mountainous part of Judea, such as was about Jerusalem, and where Hebron stood, and other cities, see Josh. xv. 48, &c. which though fortified both by nature and art, yet God being with them, they were easily subdued: *but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley*; God forsaking them, because they were afraid of them, for a reason after mentioned, or through slothfulness, and being weary of fighting, or because they fell into some sins, which occasioned the divine displeasure; so the Targum, "after they "had sinned, they could not drive out the inhabitants "of the valley:" *because they had chariots of iron*; but this was no reason why they could not drive them out, if God was with them, who could as easily have delivered these into their hands, as the inhabitants of the mountains; but is the reason why they were afraid to fight with them, and to attempt to drive them out, and which they themselves gave why they did not.

Ver. 20. *And they gave Hebron unto Caleb, as Moses said*, &c.] Which was done in the times of Joshua, both by him and all the people, according to the order of Moses. This is to be understood not of the city which was given to the Levites, but of the fields and parts adjacent, Josh. xiv. 13. and xxi. 11, 12. *and he expelled thence the three sons of Anak*: whose names are given ver. 10. this shews that this refers to the same expedition as in Josh. xv. 14. and is expressed in the same manner.

Ver. 21. *And the children of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites that inhabited Jerusalem*, &c.] That is, that part of it which belonged to them, for it lay between Judah and Benjamin; and neither of them separately, nor both conjunctly, could drive out the Jebusites from it, particularly the strong hold on the top of Mount Sion, which they held to the times of David. Abarbinel is of opinion, that Jerusalem in those times was not a city enclosed about, but was a large province, part of which belonged to the tribe of Judah, and another to the tribe of Benjamin, and another was possessed by the Jebusites; and so Jarchi says it was a province, the name of which was Jebusi: *but the Jebusites dwelt with the children of Benjamin unto this day*: when this book was written, which was done by Samuel, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom; and it is certain from hence it must have been written before the reign of David, who dispossessed the Jebusites, 2 Sam. v. 6—9.

Ver. 22. *And the house of Joseph, they also went up against Beth-el*, &c.] Which lay upon the borders of the sons of Joseph, Ephraim and Manasseh, Josh. xvi. 1, 2. and though it seems to have been taken when Ai was, Josh. viii. 17. yet it appears that it was now in the possession of the Canaanites; wherefore the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh being desirous of enlarging their borders after the example of Judah, went against this place in order to take it: *and the Lord was with them*: the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, directing, assisting, and succeeding them in their attempt.

Ver. 23. *And the house of Joseph sent to descry Beth-el*, &c.] To reconnoitre the place, to observe its passes and avenues, which were most accessible, and to examine the walls of it, where they were weakest and least defended: *now the name of the city before was Luz*: which signifies a *nut*; perhaps it was so called from large numbers of nut-trees which grew near it; the Jews suggest as if it was like a nut, no entrance into it but through a cave or some subterraneous passage, see Gen. xxviii. 19.

Ver. 24. *And the spies saw a man come forth out of the city*, &c.] Or *the keepers*[t]; those that were sent to watch, and observe, and get what intelligence they could of the city, and the way into it: *and they said unto him, shew us, we pray thee, the entrance into the city*; not the gate or gates of it, which no doubt were visible enough, but some private way into it; the Jews, as before observed, think the entrance was by the way of a cave, or some hidden passage, of which Jarchi and Kimchi make mention: *and we will shew thee mercy*; give him a reward for it, or spare him and his family when the city came into their hands.

Ver. 25. *And when he shewed them the entrance, into the city*, &c.] Pointing to it with his fingers, as the same writers observe: *they smote the city with the edge of the sword*; they gave notice of what intelligence they had got to the body of the army, who came up, entered the city, took it, and put the inhabitants of it to the sword, as they were ordered to do with all the Canaanites: *but they let go the man and all his family*;

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[r] Juchasin, fol. 6a. 1.
[s] Travels, p. 114. Ed. 5.

[t] השמרים custodes, Pagninus, Montanus; observatores, Vatablus, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

who had returned to it, encouraged by the promise made him, and for the sake of saving of his family; which though not expressed, he might have asked the favour of sparing them, which might be promised, as was in the case of Rahab; provided he would either renounce Heathenism, and embrace the true religion, or depart to another country, the latter of which he chose.

Ver. 26. *And the man went into the land of the Hittites, &c.*] With his family; Kimchi says this was not one of the seven nations of Canaan; and it is very clear from this narrative, that the land this man went to was not in the land of Canaan; though it is certain a people of this name formerly dwelt there, Gen. xiv. 10. and xxiii. 3. and xxvi. 34. and the land of Canaan is called the land of the Hittites, Josh. i. 4. these either might flee to another country upon Joshua's entry into the land of Canaan, or a colony of them from thence might settle elsewhere, to which this man chose to go, who might be originally of them: *and built a city*; his family was numerous, and he a man of wealth, and was allowed to carry all his substance with him: *and called the name of it Luz*; in memory of the place he left, and had long lived in. There is a city called Loussa, among the cities which Josephus says[t] were taken by the Jews from the Arabians; and which is very probably the Lysa of Ptolemy[u], which he places in Arabia Petræa, and might be the same with this Luz; and, if so, this shews the land this man went into was in Edom, which is not unlikely; there is another Luza, which Jerom[w] says fell to the lot of the sons of Joseph, near Sichem, three miles from Neapolis: *which is the name thereof unto this day*; the time of the writing of this book; see the note on ver. 21.

Ver. 27. *Neither did Manasseh, &c.*] One of the sons of Joseph before mentioned; and it respects that half-tribe of Manasseh, which had its portion on this side Jordan in the land of Canaan: these *did not drive out* the inhabitants of *Beth-shean and her towns, nor Taanach and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Dor and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Ibleam and her towns, nor the inhabitants of Megiddo and her towns*; all which were places the half-tribe had assigned them in Issachar and Asher; of which see the note on Josh. xvii. 11. This tribe seems to have been sluggish, and not to have exerted itself at all, or made any attempts to drive out these people: *but the Canaanites would dwell in that land*; not only desired it, but were determined on it, and rather chose to submit to a tribute than be expelled, at least would not depart unless they were forced.

Ver. 28. *And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, &c.*] All the tribes of Israel were become numerous, and able to drive the Canaanites out of the land everywhere, and particularly were able to assist Manasseh in expelling the Canaanites out of the above places, yet they did not; but all they did was, *that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out*: which flowed from covetousness, and a love of ease; they did not care to be at the trouble of expelling them, as they found it turned more to their account and present advantage to make them tributaries; and this was true of the Israelites in general, and of the half-tribe of Manasseh in particular; which, as Abarbinel thinks, is here respected.

Ver. 29. *Neither did Ephraim drive out the Canaanites that dwelt in Gezer, &c.*] Not so much as made them tributaries, but made a covenant with them, it is probable, contrary to the express will of God: *but the Canaanites dwelt in Gezer among them*; the Ephraimites agreeing to it, and here they dwelt to the times of Solomon; see the note on Josh. xvi. 10. where indeed they are said to be under tribute; but that seems to respect some after-time, and not when they were first admitted to dwell among them, since no mention is made of it here.

Ver. 30. *Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol, &c.*] The first of these seems to be the same with Kattah or Kartah, and the latter with Nahalal, both cities given to the Levites, Josh. xix. 15. and xxi. 34, 35. which perhaps was the reason of their sloth in driving them out; though it aggravated their sin not to take care to rid those cities of the Canaanites, which were given to religious persons: *but the Canaanites dwelt among them, and became tributaries*: which is observed so far in their favour, that they exerted themselves to make them tributaries, which was more than was done by some others.

Ver. 31. *Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of Accho, &c.*] The same with Ptolemais, Acts xxi. 7. see the note there; so called from the first Ptolemy king of Egypt, who enlarged it; but it has since recovered its ancient name pretty nearly, and is now called Acca or Acra. "On its north and east sides (Mr. "Maundrell says[x]) it is encompassed with a spacious "and fertile plain; on the west it is washed by the Me-"diterranean sea; and on the south by a large bay, ex-"tending from the city as far as Mount Carmel:" *nor the inhabitants of Zidon*; a well-known city in Phœnicia, belonging to this tribe, see Josh. xix. 21. *nor of Ahlab, nor of Achzib, nor Helbah, nor Aphik, nor of Rehob*; two of these places, Ahlab and Helbah, are not mentioned among the cities of the tribe of Asher, Josh. xviii. unless Helbah is the same with Helkath, ver. 25. of the rest, Achzib, Aphik, and Rehob, see the notes on Josh. xix. 29, 30.

Ver. 32. *But the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, &c.*] They were in a worse condition than those before mentioned; for the Canaanites were possessed of their country, especially of the above cities, and were masters of them; and the Asherites only dwelt among them upon sufferance: *for they did not drive them out*; either they did not attempt it, or they could not do it, and contented themselves with having leave to dwell among them.

Ver. 33. *Neither did Naphtali drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, nor the inhabitants of Beth-anath, &c.*] Of which places see the note on Josh. xix. 38. *but he dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land*; in the same disgraceful manner as Asher did,

[t] Antiqu. l. 14. c. 1. sect. 4.
[u] Geograph. l. 5. c. 17.
[w] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. M.
[x] Journey from Aleppo, p. 54.

owing to cowardice or sloth: *nevertheless, the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, and of Beth-anath, became tributaries unto them:* these two cities did at length exert themselves, and got the mastery over the Canaanites, as to make them pay tribute to them; though they ought to have expelled them, and even destroyed them, according to the command of God, but avarice prevailed over them.

Ver. 34. *And the Amorites forced the children of Dan into the mountain*, &c.] Into the mountainous part of the tribe of Dan; the most noted mountains in it were Seir and Baalah, which lay on the border of Judah, Josh. xv. 10, 11. Joppa in this tribe was built on an high rock, and so Gibbethon, as its name seems to import, perhaps was built on a hill or mountain, as were the cities after mentioned: *for they would not suffer them to come down to the valley;* which lay between Joppa and Cæsarea, the plain of Sharon, in which were Lydda, Jamnia, &c. which belonged to their tribe, and they afterwards enjoyed; see the note on Josh. xix. 48.

Ver. 35. *But the Amorites would dwell in Mount Heres in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim*, &c.] And they would not suffer the Danites to dwell in the valley, a fruitful and delightful part of their country, terrifying them with their iron chariots, which in the vale they could make use of to great advantage; so neither would they let them dwell alone in the mountainous part of their tribe, but would dwell with them, particularly in three places mentioned: where Mount Heres was is not certain; it signifies the *sun;* very probably it had its name from the worship of the sun on it, or from the sun standing still near it; for Aijalon, where that miracle was wrought, is next mentioned. Perhaps it might be near to Timnath-heres, which was in Mount Ephraim, ch. ii. 3. since Ephraim assisted in making these places tributaries; of the two cities, Aijalon and Shaalbim, see Josh. xix. 42. *yet the hand of the house of Joseph prevailed, so that they became tributaries;* or *the hand of it became heavy*[r]; by which it does not clearly appear whether the hand of Joseph was made heavy, and to hang down, by the Amorites; or whether it was heavy upon them, and so prevailed over them, as our version; but the Septuagint puts it out of doubt, reading the words, "and the hand of the "house of Joseph was heavy upon the Amorites;" the Ephraimites being near to the tribe of Dan, and observing how they were pressed by the Amorites, took up arms in their favour, and obliged the Canaanites of the above places to become tributaries to the Danites.

Ver. 36. *And the coast of the Amorites was from the going up to Akrabbim*, &c.] Of which mention is made in Numb. xxxiv. 4. Josh. xv. 3. see the notes there: *from the rock, and upwards;* even from the city Petra in Idumea, and beyond that; and there was a country near Idumea, called Acrabatane, from this mountain Akrabbim, 1 Maccab. v. 3. such was the extent of these people, that their coast reached from the places mentioned to the mountains where the above cities of Dan were; they were the most powerful people among the Canaanites, and lay on both sides of Jordan, and were very troublesome to Israel, yet were at length destroyed, Amos ii. 9.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter gives an account of an angel of the Lord appearing and rebuking the children of Israel for their present misconduct, ver. 1—5. of their good behaviour under Joshua, and the elders that outlived him, ver. 6—10. and of their idolatries they fell into afterwards, which greatly provoked the Lord to anger, ver. 11—15. and of the goodness of God to them nevertheless, in raising up judges to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies, of which there are many instances in the following chapters, ver. 16—18. and yet that how, upon the demise of such persons, they relapsed into idolatry, which caused the anger of God to be hot against them, and to determine not to drive out the Canaanites utterly from them, but to leave them among them to try them, ver. 19—23.

Ver. 1. *And an angel of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bochim*, &c.] The Targum calls him a prophet[s]; and the Jewish commentators in general interpret it of Phinehas[t]; and that a man is meant is given into by others, because he is said to come from a certain place in Canaan, and not from heaven, and spoke in a public congregation, and is not said to disappear; but neither a man nor a created angel is meant, or otherwise he would have spoken in the name of the Lord, and have said, *thus saith the Lord*, and not in his own name; ascribing to himself the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and swearing to them, and making a covenant with them, and threatening what he would do to them because of their sin; wherefore the increated Angel, the Angel of the covenant, is meant, who brought Israel out of Egypt, was with them in the wilderness, and introduced them into the land of Canaan, and appeared to Joshua as the Captain of the Lord's host at or near Gilgal, Josh. v. 13, 14. and because he had not appeared since, therefore he is said to come from thence to a place afterwards called Bochim, from what happened at this time: *and said, I made you to go out of Egypt;* that is, obliged Pharaoh king of Egypt to let them go, by inflicting plagues upon him and his people, which made them urgent upon them to depart: *and I have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers:* into the land of Canaan, now for the most part conquered, and divided among them, and in which they were settled: *and I said, I will never break my covenant with you:* if the covenant between them was broken, it should not begin with him, it would be their own fault; all which is mentioned as so many instances of divine goodness to them, and as so many aggravations of their sins against God.

Ver. 2. *And ye shall make no league with the inha-*

[r] ותכבד יד & aggravata est manus, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.
[s] So Maimonides, Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 15. & par. 2. c. 6.
[t] The Rabbins in Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 42.

bitants of this land, &c.] This the Lord charged them not to do, when he covenanted with them, and assured them of bringing them into the land; and yet they had done it, as some instances in the preceding chapter shew, which were the occasion of the angel's coming to them to rebuke them, see Deut. vii. 2. *you shall throw down their altars*; this they ought to have done as soon as they were come into the land, and possessed of the places where they were erected, to shew their detestation of idolatry, and to prevent the use of them to idolatrous purposes, see Deut. vii. 5. and xii. 3. *but ye have not obeyed my voice*: the command of God, but on the contrary had made leagues and covenants with several inhabitants of the land, allowing them to dwell among them on paying a certain tax or tribute to them; and had suffered their altars to continue, and them to sacrifice upon them to their idols, according to their former customs: *why have ye done this?* transgressed the commandment of God in the instances mentioned. It shewed the wickedness of their hearts, their ingratitude to God, who had done such great things for them, and their proneness to idolatry, and liking of it.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore I also said*, &c.] Supposing, or on condition of their being guilty of the above things, which was foreseen they would: *I will not drive them out from before you*: the seven nations of the Canaanites entirely, and which accounts for the various instances related in the preceding chapter; where it is observed, that they could not, or did not, drive the old inhabitants out of such and such places, because they sinned against the Lord, and he forsook them, and would not assist them in their enterprises, or left them to their sloth and indolence: *but they shall be as thorns in your sides*: very troublesome and afflicting, see Numb. xxxiii. 55. or for straits, as the Septuagint, or be such as would bring them into tribulation, and distress them, as the Targum; so they often did: *and their gods shall be a snare unto you*: which they suffered to continue, and did not destroy them, as they ought to have done; they would be, as they proved, insnaring to them, and whereby they were drawn to forsake the worship of the true God, and bow down to them, as we read in some following verses.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass, when the angel of the Lord spake these words unto all the children of Israel*, &c.] This being either one of the three solemn feasts, when all the males appeared at the tabernacle of the Lord; or else here was now a solemn convention of all the tribes to inquire of the Lord the reason why they were not able to drive out the Canaanites in some places, and why they prevailed over them in many: *that the people lift up their voice, and wept*; being affected with what the angel said, and convicted in their consciences of their sins, and so fearing the bad consequences thereof, they wept because of the sins they had been guilty of, and because of the evils that were like to befall them on account of them.

Ver. 5. *And they called the name of that place Bochim*, &c.] Which signifies *weepers*, from the general lamentation of the people, which before had another name; very probably it was Shiloh itself, since all Israel was gathered together, the tabernacle being now at Shiloh, and also because sacrifices were offered up, as follows: *and they sacrificed there unto the Lord*: to atone for the sins they had committed; and if they did this in the faith of the great sacrifice of the Messiah, they did well; however, so far there was an acknowledgment of their guilt, and a compliance with the appointments of God directed to in such cases.

Ver. 6. *And when Joshua had let the people go*, &c.] This is not to be connected with what goes before, as if that was done in Joshua's life-time; for during that, as is after testified, the people of Israel served the Lord; whereas the angel, in the speech to them before related, charges them with disobeying the voice of the Lord, making leagues with the inhabitants of the land, and not demolishing their altars, all which was after the death of Joshua; but this refers to a meeting of them with him before his death, and his dismission of them, which was either when he had divided the land by lot unto them, or when he had given them his last charge before his death, see Josh. xxiv. 28. and this, and what follows, are repeated and introduced here, to connect the history of Israel, and to shew them how they fell into idolatry, and so under the divine displeasure, which brought them into distress, from which they were delivered at various times by judges of his own raising up, which is the subject-matter of this book: *the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land*; as it was divided to the several tribes and their families: which seems to confirm the first sense given, that this refers to the dismission of the people upon the division of the land among them.

Ver. 7. *And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord that he did for Israel*.] In Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, at the river Jordan, and in the land of Canaan; see the note on Josh. xxiv. 31. The Jews[a] say, the elders died on the 5th of Shebet, which answers to part of January and part of February, on which account a fast was kept on that day.

Ver. 8. *And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, died*, &c.] See the note on Josh. xxiv. 29.

Ver. 9. *And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres*, &c.] In Josh. xxiv. 30. it is called Timnath-serah, the letters of *serah* being here inverted, make *heres*, which sometimes is used for the sun, Job ix. 7. and therefore some observe, that the whole name signifies the figure of the sun, which the Jews say was put on his monument, in commemoration of the miracle of the sun standing still at his request, and had this inscription on it, "this is he that caused "the sun to stand still;" but this is not very probable, since it might have had a tendency to idolatry, the sun being what was the first object of idolatrous worship among the Heathens, and had the greatest shew of reason for it: *in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash*; see the note on Josh. xxiv. 30.

Ver. 10. *And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers*, &c.] Were dead and buried, that is, the greatest part of those that were cotem-

[a] Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.

poraries with the elders that outlived Joshua; for they might not be all dead, at least not all that came out of Egypt, and still less all that came into the land of Canaan; for, according to the computation of Ben Gersom, the time of Joshua and the elders were but 27 years; and there were no more than 67 years from their coming out of Egypt to this time; and no doubt there were men living of 80 years of age and more, but these might be but few: *and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord:* so as to love, fear, serve, and worship him; did not own him to be the one only living and true God, otherwise they must know him notionally, being educated in the true religion: *nor yet the works which he had done for Israel;* some of them, as before observed, might have seen the works and wonders of the Lord for Israel, at their first coming out of Egypt; though not being wise, as the above writer observes, it had no effect upon them, to keep them from doing evil in the sight of God; and they all of them had been informed of them, and many had seen, and must have had personal knowledge of what was done for them at their coming into the land of Canaan; but not a practical knowledge, or such as had any influence upon them, to preserve them from idolatry.

Ver. 11. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] Openly and publicly, boldly and impudently, in the very face of God, and amidst all the good things they received from him, which were aggravating circumstances of their sins; what the evil was they did is next observed: *and served Baalim;* the idol Baal, as the Arabic version, of which there were many, and therefore a plural word is used; to which the apostle refers 1 Cor. viii. 5. for the word signifies *lords*, and there were Baal-peor, Baal-zebub, Baal-berith, *&c.* and who seem to have their name from Bal, Bel, or Belus, a king of Babylon after Nimrod, and who was the first monarch that was deified, the Jupiter of the Heathens. Theophilus of Antioch [p] says, that, according to the history of Thallus, Belus the king of the Assyrians, whom they worshipped, was older than the Trojan war 322 years; and that some call Cronus or Saturn Bel and Bal; by the Assyrians called Bel, and in the Punic or Phœnician language Bal [q].

Ver. 12. *And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers,* &c.] The covenant-God of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and of their more immediate ancestors; his worship they forsook, neglected his tabernacle, and the service of it: *which brought them out of the land of Egypt;* out of wretched misery and bondage there, with an high hand, and outstretched arm; and led them through the wilderness, and provided for them there, and brought them into the land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey; but all these mercies were forgotten by them: *and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them;* the gods of the Canaanites and Phœnicians, of the Egyptians, and of the Moabites, Ammonites, and Edomites, that were round about them, on the borders of them; instead of one God they worshipped many, even all in or about the land of Canaan; so much given were they to idolatry: *and bowed themselves unto them;* giving them all religious worship and honour they were capable of: *and provoked the Lord to anger;* nothing is more provoking to him than idolatry; he being a jealous God, and will not bear any rival in worship, nor his glory to be given to another, to a strange god.

Ver. 13. *And they forsook the Lord,* &c.] The worship of the Lord, as the Targum; this is repeated to observe the heinous sin they were guilty of, and how displeasing it was to God: *and served Baal and Ashtaroth;* two images, as the Arabic version adds; Baal, from whence Baalim, may signify the he-deities of the Gentiles, as Jupiter, Hercules, *&c.* and Ashtaroth their she-deities, as Juno, Venus, Diana, *&c.* the word is plural, and used for flocks of sheep, so called because they make the owners of them rich; and Kimchi and Ben Melech say these were images in the form of female sheep. Perhaps, as Baal may signify the sun, so Ashtaroth the moon, and the stars like flocks of sheep about her. Ashtaroth was the goddess of the Zidonians, 1 Kings xi. 5, 33. the same with Astarte, the wife of Cronus or Ham, said to be the Phœnician or Syrian Venus. So Lucian says [r] there was a temple in Phœnicia, belonging to the Sidonians, which they say is the temple of Astarte; and, says he, I think that Astarte is the moon; and Astarte is both by the Phœnicians [s] and Grecians [t] said to be Venus, and was worshipped by the Syrians also, as Minutius Felix [u] and Tertullian [w] affirm; the same with Eostre, or Æstar, the Saxon goddess; hence to this day we call the passover Easter [x], being in Eoster-month; and with Andraste, a goddess of the ancient Britains [y]. There were 4 of them, and therefore the Septuagint here uses the plural number Astartes; so called either from Asher, being reckoned *blessed* ones, or from Asheroth, the groves they were worshipped in; or from עש, *Ash*, and תור, *Tor*, the constellation Taurus or the bull; so Astarte by Sanchoniatho is said to put upon her head the head of a bull, as the token of her sovereignty; see the note on Gen. xiv. 5.

Ver. 14. *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,* &c.] For the idolatries they were guilty of; it burned within him, it broke forth, and was poured out like fire on them, and consumed them; see Nahum i. 6. *and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them;* that rifled their houses, and plundered them of their goods and substance: *and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about;* that is, delivered them into their hands, who carried them captive, where they were as men sold for slaves; see Psal. xliv. 12. and this was in just retaliation, that as they had sold themselves to work wickedness, the Lord sold them into the hands of their enemies for their wickedness; and, as they had followed the gods of the people round about them, so he delivered them up

[p] Ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 138, 139. Vid. Lactant. de fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 23.
[q] Servius in Virgil. Æneid. 1. prope finem.
[r] De Dea Syria.
[s] Sanchoniatho apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 1. p. 38.
[t] Suidas in voce Αςαρτη.
[u] In Octavio, p. 6.
[w] Apolog. c. 24.
[x] Vid. Owen. Theologoumen, l. 3. c. 4. p. 192.
[y] Ib. c. 11. p. 244.

into the hands of their enemies round about them, as the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Midianites, Philistines, and Ammonites: *so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies*: but turned their backs on them, and fled whenever engaged in war with them.

Ver. 15. *Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil*, &c.] They prospered not in any business they undertook, or put their hands unto; or in any expedition they went upon, or when they went out to war, as Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Abarbinel explain the phrase: the battle went against them, because God was against them; his hand was against them, and there was no resisting and turning that back; and this sense seems to agree with what goes before and follows after; though in some Jewish writings [a] it is explained of those that went out of the land to escape the calamities of it, and particularly of Elimelech and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, Ruth i. 1, 2. *as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them*: having ratified and confirmed his threatening with an oath, that if they served other gods, he would surely bring upon them all the curses of the law; see Deut. xxix. 12—20. *and they were greatly distressed*: by the Canaanites they suffered to dwell among them, who were pricks in their eyes, and thorns in their sides, as had been threatened them; and by the nations round about them, who came in upon them, and plundered them, and carried them captive.

Ver. 16. *Nevertheless, the Lord raised up judges*, &c.] Who are particularly mentioned by name, and their exploits recorded, in some following chapters, and from whom the book in general has its name: these were men that God raised up in an extraordinary manner, and spirited and qualified for the work he had to do by them; which was to deliver the people of Israel out of the hands of their oppressors, and restore them to their privileges and liberties, and protect them in them, and administer justice to them; which was a wonderful instance of the goodness of God to them, notwithstanding their many provoking sins and transgressions: *which delivered them out of the hands of those that spoiled them*; who took away their goods and cattle from them, and carried their persons captive: these were the instruments of recovering both again, just as Abraham brought again Lot and all his goods.

Ver. 17. *And yet they would not hearken unto their judges*, &c.] Afterwards, or not always; but when they admonished them of their sins, and advised them to walk in the good ways of God, and serve him only; they turned a deaf ear to them, and went on in their own ways, which is a sad aggravation of their iniquities: *but they went a-whoring after their gods*; committing spiritual adultery, for such idolatry is, and is often so represented in Scripture; for by it they broke the covenant God made with them, which had the nature of a matrimonial contract, and in which God was an husband to them; and therefore serving other gods was rejecting him as such, and committing whoredom with others; than which nothing was more provoking to God, jealous of his honour and glory: *they turned quickly out of the way which their fathers walked in*; as soon as ever Joshua and the elders were dead, they departed from the God of their fathers, and the way in which they worshipped him; and so likewise quickly after they had been delivered by the judges, or however as soon as they were dead: *obeying the commandments of the Lord*; serving him at his tabernacle, according to the laws, commands, and ordinances he gave to Moses, which is to be understood of their fathers: but *they did not so*; did not walk in the same way, nor serve the Lord, and obey his commands, as their fathers did; but all the reverse.

Ver. 18. *And when the Lord raised them up judges, then the Lord was with the judge*, &c.] Every one of them that he raised up; as he stirred up their spirits for such service, to judge his people, and qualified them for it, he assisted and strengthened them, and abode by them, and succeeded them in whatsoever they engaged for the welfare of the people; the Targum is, "the Word of the Lord was for the help of "the judge:" *and delivered them out of the hands of their enemies all the days of the judge*; so long as a judge lived, or continued to be their judge, they were protected by him, and preserved from falling into the hands of their enemies: *for it repented the Lord because of their groanings, by reason of them that oppressed them and vexed them*; the Lord being merciful had compassion upon them, when they groaned under their oppressions, and cried unto him, then he received their prayer, as the Targum, and sent them a deliverer; and so did what men do when they repent of a thing, change their conduct; thus the Lord changed the outward dispensation of his providence towards them, according to his unchangeable will; for otherwise repentance, properly speaking, does not belong unto God: the Targum is, "he turned from the word he "spake;" the threatening he had denounced.

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass, when the judge was dead*, &c.] Any one of them, the first and so all succeeding ones: that *they returned*; to their evil ways and idolatrous practices, from which they reformed, and for which they shewed outward repentance during the life of the judge; but he dying, they returned again to them: *and corrupted themselves more than their fathers*; in Egypt and in the wilderness; or rather than their fathers that lived in the generation after the death of Joshua; and so in every generation that lived before a judge was raised up to deliver them out of the evils brought upon them; the children of those in every age successively grew worse than their fathers: *in following other gods to serve them, and to bow down unto them*; not content with the idols their fathers served, they sought after and found out others, and were more constant and frequent in their worship and service of them, and increased their sacrifices and acts of devotion to them: *they ceased not from their own doings*; or, *did not let them fall* [b]; but retained them, and continued in the practice of them, being what they were naturally inclined unto and delighted in: *nor from their stubborn way*; which they were bent upon, and deter-

[a] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 24.

[b] לא הפילו non cadere faciebant, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.

mined to continue in: or *their hard way*[c]; which their hard hearts had chosen, and they obstinately persisted in, being obdurate and stiff-necked; and which, in the issue, they would find hard, troublesome, and distressing to them, though at present soft and agreeable, and in which they went on smoothly; but in time would find it rough and rugged, offensive, stumbling, and ruinous; or it may signify a hard-beaten path, a broad road which multitudes trod in, as is the way of sin.

Ver. 20. *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel*, &c.] As at first, so whenever they fell into idolatry; see ver. 14. *and he said, because this people have transgressed my covenant which I commanded their fathers;* made at Sinai, in which they were enjoined to have no other gods before him: *and have not hearkened to my voice;* in his commands, and particularly what related to his worship and against idolatry.

Ver. 21. *I also henceforth will not drive out any from before them*, &c.] At least not as yet, not very soon nor hastily, as in ver. 23. *of the nations which Joshua left when he died;* that is, unsubdued; which was owing either to the infirmities of old age coming upon him, which made him incapable of engaging further in war with the Canaanites; or to the sloth and indolence of the people, being weary of war, and not caring to prosecute it; or to want of men to cultivate any more land, and people other cities, than what they were possessed of; and chiefly this was owing to the providence of God, who had an end to answer hereby, as follows.

Ver. 22. *That through them I may prove Israel*, &c.] Afflict them by them, and so prove or try them, their faith and patience, which are tried by afflictions; and such were the Canaanites to them, as afflictions and temptations are to the spiritual Israel of God; or rather, whether they would keep in the ways of God, or walk in those the Canaanites did, as follows: *whether they will keep the way of the Lord, as their fathers did keep it, or not;* whether they would worship the true God their fathers did, or the gods of the Canaanites; not that the Lord was ignorant of what they would do, and so made the experiment; but that the sincerity and faithfulness, or insincerity and unfaithfulness of their hearts, might appear to themselves and others.

Ver. 23. *Therefore the Lord left these nations, without driving them out hastily*, &c.] Left them unsubdued, or suffered them to continue among the Israelites, and did not drive them out as he could have done; which was permitted, either that it might be seen and known whether Israel would give into the idolatry of these nations or not, ver. 22. of which there could have been no trial, if they and their idols had been utterly destroyed; or because the children of Israel had transgressed the covenant of the Lord, therefore he would drive no more of them out, but leave them to afflict and distress them, and thereby prove and try them, ver. 20, 21. both senses may very well stand, but the former seems rather to agree with what follows: *neither delivered he them into the hand of Joshua;* having an end to be answered by them, before suggested, namely, to prove and try Israel; and, for a like reason, the in-dwelling sin and corruptions of God's people are suffered to remain in them, for the trial of their graces, and that the power of God in the support and deliverance of them might appear the more manifest.

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter gives an account of the nations left in Canaan to prove Israel, and who became a snare unto them, ver. 1—7. and of the servitude of Israel under the king of Mesopotamia for their sins, from which they were delivered by Othniel, ver. 8—11. and of their subjection to the Moabites, from which they were freed by Ehud, who privately assassinated the king of Moab, and then made his escape, ver. 12—30. and of the destruction of a large number of Philistines by Shamgar, with an ox-goad, ver. 31.

Ver. 1. *Now these are the nations which the Lord left to prove Israel by them*, &c.] Which are after mentioned, ver. 3, 5. even *as many of* Israel *as had not known all the wars of Canaan;* those that Joshua, and the people of Israel under him, had with the Canaanites, when they first entered the land and subdued it; being then not born, or so young as not to have knowledge of them, at least not able to bear arms at that time.

Ver. 2. *Only that the generations of the children of Israel might know and teach them war*, &c.] That is, the following nations were left in the land, that the young generations of Israel might by their wars and conflicts with them learn the art of war, and be inured to martial discipline; which, if none had been left to engage with, they had been ignorant of; besides, their fathers in Joshua's time, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe, had no need to learn the art of war, for God fought for them; they did not get possession of the land by their own arm, and by their sword, but by the power of God in a miraculous way; but now this was not to be expected, and the Canaanites were left among them to expel, that they might be trained up in the knowledge of warlike affairs, and so be also capable of teaching their children the military art; which they should make use of in obeying the command of God, by driving out the remains of the Canaanites, and not give themselves up to sloth and indolence; though some think that the meaning is, that God left these nations among them, that they might know what war was, and the sad effects of it; and the difference of fighting with their enemies alone, as other men, and the Lord fighting along with them, and for them, as he did for their fathers: *at least such as before knew nothing thereof;* being either unborn, or at an age incapable of bearing arms, or learning the art of war.

Ver. 3. Namely, *five lords of the Philistines*, &c.] The places they were lords of were Gaza, Ashdod,

[c] מדרכם הקשה de via sua dura, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius.

Ashkelon, Gath, and Ekron; see Josh. xiii. 3. three of these, Gaza, Ashkelon, and Ekron, had been taken from them by Judah, since the death of Joshua, ch. i. 18. but they soon recovered them again, perhaps by the help of the other two. The Philistines were a people originally of Egypt, but came from thence and settled in these parts, and were here as early as in the times of Abraham, and were very troublesome neighbours to the Israelites in after-times; see Gen. x. 14. and xxi. 33. *and all the Canaanites;* these were a particular tribe or nation in the land so called, which inhabited by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan, Numb. xiii. 29. otherwise this is the general name for the seven nations: *and the Sidonians;* the inhabitants of the famous city of Sidon, which had its name from the first-born of Canaan, Gen. x. 15. *and the Hivites that dwelt in Mount Lebanon;* on the north of the land of Canaan: *from Mount Baal-hermon;* the eastern part of Lebanon, the same with Baal-gad, where Baal was worshipped: *unto the entering in of Hamath;* the boundary of the northern part of the land, which entrance led into the valley between Libanus and Antilibanus; see Numb. xxxiv. 8. Josh. xi. 3. and xiii. 5.

Ver. 4. *And they were to prove Israel by them,* &c.] They were left in the land, as to inure them to war, and try their courage, so to prove their faithfulness to God: *to know whether they would hearken to the commandments of the Lord, which he commanded their fathers by the hand of Moses;* even all the commandments of the Lord delivered to them by Moses, moral, civil, and ceremonial, and particularly those that concerned the destruction of the Canaanites, their altars, and their idols, Deut. vii. 1, 5.

Ver. 5. *And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites,* &c.] As if they had been only sojourners with them, and not conquerors of them; and dwelt by sufferance, and not as proprietors and owners; such were their sloth and indolence, and such the advantage the inhabitants of the land got over them through it, and through their compliances with them; and this was the case not only of one sort of them, the Canaanites, but of the rest: *the Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites;* who all had cities in the several parts of the land, with whom the children of Israel were mixed, and with whom they were permitted to dwell.

Ver. 6. *And they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons,* &c.] The Israelites intermarried with the inhabitants of the land, contrary to the express command of God, Deut. vii. 3. whereby they confounded their families, debased their blood, and were insnared into idolatry, as follows: perhaps to these unlawful marriages, in their first settlement in the land of Canaan, reference is had in Ezek. xvi. 3. *thy father was an Amorite and thy mother an Hittite:* an Amorite marrying a daughter of Israel, and an Israelitish man an Hittite woman: *and served their gods;* this was the natural consequence of their intermarriages, which the Lord foresaw, and therefore cautioned them against them, Exod. xxxiv. 15, 16. Deut. vii. 3, 4.

Ver. 7. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] Both by marrying with Heathens, and worshipping their gods: *and forgot the Lord their God;* as if they had never heard of him, or known him, their Maker and Preserver, who had done so many great and good things for them: *and served Baalim, and the groves;* of Baalim, see ch. ii. 11. the *groves* mean either idols worshipped in groves, as Jupiter was worshipped in a grove of oaks, hence the oak of Dodona; and Apollo in a grove of laurels in Daphne: there were usually groves where idol-temples were built; and so in Phœnicia, or Canaan, Dido the Sidonian queen built a temple for Juno in the midst of the city, where was a grove of an agreeable shade[d]: so Barthius[e] observes, that most of the ancient gods of the Heathens used to be worshipped in groves. And groves and trees themselves were worshipped; so Tacitus says[f] of the Germans, that they consecrated groves and forests, and called them by the names of gods. Groves are here put in the room of Ashtaroth, ch. ii. 13. perhaps the goddesses of that name were worshipped in groves; and if Diana is meant by Astarte, Servius[g] says that every oak is sacred to Jupiter and every grove to Diana; and Ovid[h] speaks of a temple of Diana in a grove. But as they are joined with Baalim, the original of which were deified kings and heroes, the groves may be such as were consecrated to them; for, as the same writer observes[i], the souls of heroes were supposed to have their abode in groves; see the notes on Exod. xxxiv. 13. and Deut. vii. 5. It was in this time of defection that the idolatry of Micah, and of the Danites, and the war of Benjamin about the Levite's concubine, happened, though related at the end of the book; so Josephus[k] places the account here.

Ver. 8. *Therefore the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,* &c.] Because of their idolatry; see ch. ii. 14, 20. *and he sold them into the hand of Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia;* or Aram-naharaim; that is, Syria, between the two rivers, which were Tigris and Euphrates; hence the Greek name of this place is as here called Mesopotamia. Josephus[l] calls him king of Assyria, and gives him the name of Chusarthus; and indeed Cushan-rishathaim seems to be his whole name, though the Targum makes Rishathaim to be an epithet, and calls him Cushan, the wicked king of Syria; the word is of the dual number, and signifies two wickednesses; which, according to the mystical exposition of the Jews[m], refers to two wicked things Syria did to Israel, one by Balaam the Syrian, and the other by this Cushan. Mr. Bedford[n] thinks it may be rendered, "Cushan, king of the two wicked "kingdoms;" the Assyrian monarchy being at this time like two kingdoms, Babylon being the metropolis of the one, and Nineveh of the other; but it is a

[d] Lucus in urbe fuit media, &c. Virgil. Æneid. l. 1.
[e] Animadv. ad Claudian. de rapto Proserp. l. 1. v. 202.
[f] De mor. German. c. 9. Vid. Plin. l. 12. 1.
[g] In Virgil. Georgic. l. 3. col. 193.
[h] Est nemus & piceis, &c. Ep. 12. v. 67. Vid. Metamorph. l. 11. Fab. 9. v. 360.

[i] In Virgil. Æneid. l. 1. col. 481. & in l. 8. col. 721.
[k] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. & 3.
[l] Ibid. l. 5. c. 3. sect. 2.
[m] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 105. 1.
[n] Scripture Chronology, p. 307.

question whether the monarchy was as yet in being. Hillerus[o] makes Cushan to be an Arab Scenite, from Hab. iii. 7. and Rishathaim to denote disquietudes; and it represents him as a man very turbulent, never quiet and easy, and so it seems he was; for not content with his kingdom on the other side Euphrates, he passed over that, and came into Canaan, to subject that to him, and add it to his dominions. Kimchi says that Rishathaim may be the name of a place, and some conjecture it to be the same with the Rhisina of Ptolemy[p]; but it seems rather a part of this king's name, who came and fought against Israel, and the Lord delivered them into his hands: *and the children of Israel served Cushan-rishathaim eight years*; became tributaries to him during that space of time, but when that began is not easy to say. Bishop Usher[q] places it in A. M. 2591, and before Christ 1413.

Ver. 9. *And when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord*, &c.] Towards the close of the eight-years' bondage, as it may be supposed, groaning under the oppressive taxes laid upon them, and the bondage they were brought into: *and the Lord raised up a deliverer to the children of Israel*; he heard their cry, and sent them a saviour, whose spirit he stirred up, and whom he qualified for this service: *who delivered them*: out of the hands of the king of Mesopotamia, and freed them from his oppressions: *even Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother*: the same that took Debir, and married Achsah, the daughter of Caleb, ch. i. 12, 13. who now very probably was a man in years.

Ver. 10. *And the spirit of the Lord came upon him*, &c.] Moved him to engage in this work of delivering Israel, inspired him with courage, and filled him with every needful gift, qualifying him for it; the Targum interprets it the spirit of prophecy; it seems rather to be the spirit of counsel and courage, of strength and fortitude of body and mind: *and he judged Israel*; took upon him the office of a judge over them, and executed it; very probably the first work he set about was to reprove them for their sins, and convince them of them, and reform them from their idolatry, and restore among them the pure worship of God; and this he did first before he took up arms for them: *and he went out to war*; raised an army, and went out at the head of them, to fight with their oppressor: *and the Lord delivered Cushan-rishathaim into his hand*; gave him the victory over him and his army, so that he fell into his hands, became his captive, and perhaps was slain by him.

Ver. 11. *And the land had rest forty years*, &c.] As it should seem from the time of this deliverance; though, according to Ben Gersom and Abarbinel, the eight-years' servitude are to be included in them; and Bishop Usher[r] reckons these forty years from the rest first settled in the land by Joshua; but the former sense seems best: *and Othniel the son of Kenaz died*; not at the end of the forty years; it is not likely he should live so long, but when he died is not certain; Eusebius[s] says he judged Israel fifty years.

Ver. 12. *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord*, &c.] Fell into idolatry again, which was a great evil in the sight of God, and what they were prone to fall into: *and the Lord strengthened Eglon the king of Moab against Israel*; put it into his heart to invade them, and encouraged him to it, and gave him success; what kings reigned over Moab between Balak and this king we know not: it is a commonly received notion of the Jews, that Ruth was the daughter of Eglon; see Ruth i. 4. and it was about this time that Elimelech with his two sons went into Moab, and when many of those things recorded in the book of Ruth were transacted: *because they had done evil in the sight of the Lord*; which had greatly provoked him to anger, and was the cause of stirring up the king of Moab against them.

Ver. 13. *And he gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek*, &c.] Either the Lord gathered them to Eglon, inclined them to enter into a confederacy with him, to assist in the war against Israel; or the king of Moab got them to join with him in it, they being his neighbours, and enemies to Israel, and especially Amalek: *and went and smote Israel*; first the two tribes and a half, which lay on that side Jordan Moab did, whom it is reasonable to suppose he would attack first; and having defeated them, he came over Jordan: *and possessed the city of the palm-trees*; Jericho, as the Targum, which was set with palm-trees; see Deut. xxxiv. 3. Judg. i. 16. not the city itself, for that was destroyed by Joshua, and not rebuilt until the time of Ahab; but the country about it, or, as Abarbinel thinks, a city that was near it; here Josephus says[t] he had his royal palace; it is probable he built a fort or garrison here, to secure the fords of Jordan, and his own retreat; as well as to keep up a communication with his own people, and prevent the tribes of the other side giving any assistance to their brethren, if able and disposed to do it.

Ver. 14. *So the children of Israel served Eglon king of Moab* 18 *years*.] Ten years longer than they served the king of Mesopotamia, as a severer correction of them for their relapse into idolatry.

Ver. 15. *But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord*, &c.] After being long oppressed, and groaning under their burdens, and brought to a sense of their sins, and humiliation for them, they asked forgiveness of God, and deliverance from their bondage; for it is very probable they were until towards the close of those years stupid and hardened, and did not consider what was the reason of their being thus dealt with: *the Lord raised them up a deliverer*; another saviour, one that he made use of as an instrument of their deliverance: *Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed*; who is described by his parentage, a son of Gera, but who his father was is not koown; by his tribe a Benjamite, in which Jericho was, Eglon possessed, and so might be more oppressed than any other part; and therefore the Lord stirred up one of that tribe to be the deliverer; and by his being a left-handed man, as several of that tribe were, ch. xx. 16. though a Benjamite signifies a son of the right hand;

[o] Onomastic. p. 154, 155.
[p] Geograph. l. 5. c. 18.
[q] Annal. Vet. Test. p. 42.
[r] Annal. Vet. Test. p. 42.
[s] Evangel. Præpar. l. 10. c. 14. p. 502.
[t] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 1.

and he perhaps was one of those left-handed Benjamites that fled to the rock Rimmon, as Dr. Lightfoot[u] conjectures, ch. xx. 47. for that affair, though there related, was before this: the Septuagint calls him an *ambidexter*, one that could use both hands equally alike; but the Hebrew phrase signifies one that is *shut up* in *his right hand*[w]; who has not the true use of it, cannot exercise it as his other hand, being weak and impotent, or contracted through disuse, or some disease; or, as Josephus[x] expresses it, who could use his left hand best, and who also calls him a young man of a courageous mind, and strong of body, and says he dwelt at Jericho, and was very familiar with Eglon, and who by his gifts and presents had endeared himself to all about the king: *and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab;* either their yearly tribute, or rather a gift unto him, to soften him, and reconcile him to them, and make their bondage easier; or to give him access to him with more confidence and safety, though it does not seem that they knew any thing of Ehud's design.

Ver. 16. *But Ehud made him a dagger, which had two edges, of a cubit length,* &c.] A little sword, as Josephus calls it[y], with two edges, that it might cut both ways, and do the execution he designed by it, and was about half a yard long; which he could the more easily conceal, and use for his purpose: *and he did gird it under his raiment;* that it might not be seen, and give occasion of suspicion; this was a military garment, the *sagum*, as the Vulgate Latin version, which was coarse, and made of wool, and reached to the ankle, and was buttoned upon the shoulder, and put over the coat[z]; the Septuagint makes use of a word Suidas[a] interprets a coat of mail: *upon his right thigh;* whereas a sword is more commonly girt upon the left; though some observe, from various writers, that the eastern people used to gird their swords on their right thigh; or this was done that it might be the less discernible and suspected, and chiefly as being most convenient for him, a left-handed man, to draw it out upon occasion.

Ver. 17. *And he brought a present unto Eglon king of Moab,* &c.] Accompanied by two servants, as Josephus says[b], and who doubtless bore the presents; for that there were such with him that did is clear from the following verse; nor can it be thought that so great a personage as a judge in Israel should go alone and carry a present in his own hands; though it is possible, when come to the king of Moab, he might take it from his servants, and deliver it to him with his own hands: *and Eglon was a very fat man:* and so the less active, and unable to decline and avoid the stroke, he might see, when about to be given him.

Ver. 18. *And when he had made an end to offer the present,* &c.] Had delivered the several things contained in it, and very probably made a speech to the king in the name of the people of Israel from whom he brought it: *he sent away the people that bare the present:* not the servants of Eglon that introduced him, as if they assisted in bringing in the present to the king; for over them he could not have so much power as to dismiss them at pleasure; but the children of Israel that came along with him, and carried the present for him: these he dismissed, not in the presence of the king of Moab, but after he had taken his leave of him, and when he had gone on some way in his return home; and this he did for the greater secrecy of his design, and that he might when he had finished it the more easily escape alone, and be without any concern for or care of the safety of others.

Ver. 19. *But he himself turned again from the quarries that were by Gilgal,* &c.] For so far he accompanied the men that came with him. These quarries were places where they dug stones and hewed them, according to the Targum, and most Jewish writers; but some render the word *engravings*, and understand them of inscriptions engraved on pillars here, which remained from the times of Seth the son of Adam; of which see more on ver. 26. but according to the Vulgate Latin, and other versions, graven images or idols are meant, which the king of Moab set up here in contempt of the Israelites, it being a place where the ark remained some time, and circumcision had been performed; or in order to draw them into idolatry, those idols perhaps being made of the twelve stones they had set up there; or rather in honour of his gods, to invoke their assistance when he first entered into the land, or by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the subduing of it: and this 'tis thought by some stirred up the spirit of Ehud, and caused him to turn back, resolving to avenge this profaneness: *and said;* when he came to the palace of the king of Moab, and into his presence: *I have a secret errand unto thee, O king;* which he had forgot when with him before, as he might pretend; or something new had occurred unto him to acquaint him of, and which required privacy: *who said, keep silence;* that is, the king of Moab said so either to Ehud, to be silent until he had sent out his servants that were about him, that they might not hear the secret; or to a person or persons that were speaking to him, whom he bid to desist and depart, it being his pleasure to hear Ehud before them; so Ben Gersom; but the former sense rather seems best: *and all that stood by him went out from him:* his servants, his courtiers that were waiting upon him, or such as were admitted into his presence, to have audience of him, and deliver their messages, or make their petitions to him.

Ver. 20. *And Ehud came unto him,* &c.] Somewhat nearer him than he was before; it seems probable that Eglon retired from the presence-chamber, where he received company, into his summer-parlour; which was smaller and more private, and in which he had used to be alone, as follows, and whither Ehud went in unto him, as he directed him: *and he was sitting in a summer-parlour, which he had for himself alone;* into which he was wont to go and sit alone, for the sake of coolness and refreshment in the hot season of

[u] Works, vol. 1. p. 46.
[w] אטר יד ימינו obturatum manu dextera sua, Montanus; habens manum dexterum obturatum, Munsterus; erat clausa manu dextera, Tigurine version; clausum manu dextera, Drusius; perclusum, Junius & Tremellius; præclusum, Piscator.
[x] Ut supra, sect. 2.
[y] Ibid.
[z] Vid. Valtrinum de re militar. Roman. l. 3. c. 13.
[a] In voce Μηλωτης.
[b] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.

the year, which it seems it now was; a room this was, in which, as Kimchi and others observe, were many windows to let in air to cool and refresh; or it was in such a part of the palace that was cool, and sheltered from the heat of the sun; see Amos. iii. 15. *and Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee*: which was to kill him; and undoubtedly he was sent of God on this errand to him: whether it be rendered a *word* or *thing* from God, as it signifies both, it was true, and no lie; for it was the Lord that spoke to him by an impulse on his spirit, and the thing was from the Lord he was to do, for nothing less could have justified him in such an action; and therefore this instance can be no warrant for the assassination of princes; as Ehud did not this of himself, but of the Lord, so neither did he do it as a private man, but as a judge of Israel. Josephus [c] says, he told him that he had a dream at the order of God to declare unto him; but for this there is no warrant; however it seems pretty plain that his view in making mention of the name of God, and of Elohim, a name given to false gods as well as the true, rather than Jehovah, was to strike his mind with awe and reverence, and cause him to rise from his seat, that he might the better thrust him with his dagger; and it had the desired effect: *and he arose out of his seat*: in reverence of God, from whom he expected to receive a message; this he did, though in his mind a blind ignorant idolater; in his body fat, corpulent, and unwieldy; and in his office a king, and a proud and tyrannical man. The above writer says, that, for joy at the dream he was to hear, he rose from his throne.

Ver. 21. *And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh*, &c.] Being, as before observed, a left-handed man; and this he could the better do, without being taken notice of by the king, who, if he saw him move his left hand, would have no suspicion of his going to draw a dagger with it, and which also was hid under his raiment, ver. 16. *and thrust it into his belly*: Josephus [d] says into his heart; it is certain the wound was mortal, and must have been in a part on which life depended.

Ver. 22. *And the haft went in after the blade*, &c.] The handle of the dagger, as well as the blade; so strong and violent was the thrust, he determining to do his business effectually; *and the fat closed upon the blade*: being an excessive fat man, the wound made by the dagger closed up at once upon it, through the fat: *so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly*: being not able to take hold of the haft or handle, that having slipped in through the fat after the blade, so that he was obliged to leave it in him: *and the dirt came out*; the margin of our Bibles is, *it came out at the fundament*; that is, the dagger did, the thrust being so strong and vehement; but that is not so likely, the dagger being so short, and Eglon a very fat man. The Targum is, "his food went out:" which was in his bowels; but as the wound was closed up through fat, and the dagger stuck fast in it, it could not come out that way: rather therefore this is to be understood of his excrements, and of their coming out at the usual place, it being common for persons that die a violent death, and indeed others, to purge upon it; some, as Kimchi observes, interpret it of the place where the guards were, the guard-room, through which Ehud went out, but that is expressed in another word in the following verse; the Syriac and Arabic versions read, *he went out in haste*, that is, Ehud.

Ver. 23. *Then Ehud went forth through the porch*, &c.] Which the Targum interprets by *exedra*, a place, as Kimchi, where there were many seats, either for the people to sit in whilst waiting to have admittance into the presence of the king, or where the guards sat, and may be called the guard-room; through this Ehud passed with all serenity and composure of mind imaginable, without the least shew of distress and uneasiness in his countenance, being fully satisfied that what he had done was right, and according to the will of God: *and shut the doors of the parlour upon him, and locked them*; joined the doors of the parlour, as the Targum, the two folds of the door, shut them close together upon Eglon within the parlour, and bolted them within, or drew the bolt on the inside, which he was able to do with a key for that purpose; of which see more on ver. 25. and which it is probable he took away along with him; this must be understood as done before he went through the porch, and therefore should be rendered, *when* or *after he had shut the doors*, &c. [e]; wherefore in the Vulgate Latin version this clause is put first.

Ver. 24. *When he was gone out, his servants came*, &c.] When Ehud was gone through the porch, and out of the palace, the servants of Eglon, who had been put out, came to the parlour-door to reassume their former place, and finish their business with the king, or in order to wait upon him as usual: *and when they saw that behold the doors of the parlour were locked*; which they supposed were done by the king himself within-side, having no suspicion of Ehud: *they said, surely*, or *perhaps*, as Noldius [f] renders it, *he covereth his feet in his summer-chamber*; that is, was easing nature; and as the eastern people wore long and loose garments, when they sat down on such an occasion, their feet were covered with them; or they purposely gathered them about their feet to cover them, and so this became a modest expression for this work of nature, see 1 Sam. xxiv. 3. though some think that in that place, and also in this, is meant lying down to sleep; and that Eglon's servants supposed that he had laid himself down on his couch in his summer-chamber to take sleep, when it was usual to cover the feet with long garments, to hide those parts of nature which otherwise might be exposed; and it must be owned that this seems more agreeable to a summer-parlour than the former, and better accounts for the servants waiting so long as they did; and Josephus [g] is express for it, that his servants thought he had fallen asleep. Indeed, the Jews in after-times used the phrase in the first sense [h], which seems to be taken from hence.

Ver. 25. *And they tarried until they were ashamed*,

[c] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 4. sect. 2.
[d] Ibid.
[e] ויסגר quum occlusisset, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[f] Ebr. Concord. part. p. 47. No. 237.
[g] Ut supra.
[h] Misn. Yoma, c. 3. sect. 2.

&c.] And knew not what to think of it, or what methods to take to be satisfied of the truth of the matter, and what should be the meaning of the doors being kept locked so long: *and, behold, he opened not the doors of the parlour*; this was what surprised them, and threw them into this confusion of mind, that they knew not what course to take for fear of incurring the king's displeasure, and yet wondered the doors were not opened for so long a time: *therefore they took a key and opened them*; this is the first time we read of a key, which only signifies something to open with; and the keys of the ancients were different from those of ours; they were somewhat like a crooked sickle[i], which they put in through a hole in the door, and with it could draw on or draw back a bolt, and so could lock or unlock within-side, see Cant. v. 4, 5. and at this day the keys in the eastern countries are unlike ours. Chardin[k] says, that a lock among the eastern people is like a little harrow, which enters half way into a wooden staple, and the key is a wooden handle with points at the end of it, which are pushed into the staple, and so raise this little harrow: *and, behold, their lord was fallen dead on the earth*: lay prostrate on the floor of the parlour, dead.

Ver. 26. *And Ehud escaped while they tarried*, &c.] While the servants of the king of Moab tarried waiting for the opening of the doors of the parlour, this gave him time enough to make his escape, so as to be out of the reach of pursuers; or else the sense is, that even when they had opened the doors, and found the king dead, whilst they were in confusion at it, not knowing what to ascribe it to, the dagger being enclosed in the wound, and perhaps but little blood, if any, issued out, being closed up with fat, and so had no suspicion of his being killed by Ehud; but rather supposing it to be an accidental fall from his seat, and might call in the physicians to examine him, and use their skill, if there were any hopes of recovery; all which prolonged time, and facilitated the escape of Ehud: *and passed beyond the quarries, and escaped to Seirath*: he got beyond the quarries, which were by Gilgal, which shews that it could not be at Jericho where the king of Moab was, as Josephus thinks, but either in his own country beyond Jordan, though no mention is made of Ehud's crossing Jordan, or however some place nearer the fords of Jordan; since Gilgal, from whence he returned, and whither he came again after he had killed the king of Moab, lay on that side of Jericho which was towards Jordan; and this Seirath he escaped to was in or near the mountain of Ephraim, as appears from the next verse, but of it we have no account elsewhere; but it is thought by some learned men[l] to be the place where Seth's pillars stood, and they to be the engravings here spoken of, which we translate *quarries*: the words of Josephus[m] are, that the posterity of Seth, who very much studied astronomy, having heard that Adam foretold the destruction of the universe, at one time by fire, and at another by water, erected two pillars, one of stone, and the other of brick, on which they inscribed their inventions (in astronomy), that they might be preserved, and which remain to this day in the land of Siriad; but this account of Josephus seems to be taken from a fabulous relation of Manetho, the Egyptian, and is abundantly confuted by Dr. Stillingfleet[n]. Jarchi interprets this of Seirath, a thick wood or forest, the trees of which grew as thick as the hair on a man's head, and so a proper place to escape to, and hide in: it may be it was the woody part of the mount Ephraim, see Josh. xvii. 18.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass, when he was come*, &c.] That is, to Seirath, in the tribe of Ephraim: *that he blew a trumpet in the mountain of Ephraim*: which being an high mountain, the sound of the trumpet was heard afar off; and if Ehud's design was known to the Israelites, what he intended to do, this might be the token agreed on, should he succeed, to call them together, see Jer. xxxi. 6. *and the children of Israel went down with him from the mount, and he before them*: being there assembled together, and which might be the place before appointed for their rendezvous, and where and when he took the command of them, and went before them as their general.

Ver. 28. *And he said unto them, follow after me*, &c.] This he said to encourage them, putting himself at the head of them, shewing himself ready to expose his own life, if there was any danger: *for the Lord hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into your hands*; which he concluded from the success he had had in cutting off the king of Moab, which had thrown the Moabites into great confusion and distress, and from an impulse on his mind from the Lord, assuring him of this deliverance: *and they went down after him*: from the mountain of Ephraim: *and took the fords of Jordan towards Moab*, where the river was fordable, and there was a passage into the country of Moab, which lay on the other side Jordan; this they did to prevent the Moabites, which were in the land of Israel, going into their own land upon this alarm, and those in the land of Moab from going over to help them: *and suffered not a man to pass over*; neither out of Israel into Moab, nor out of Moab into Israel.

Ver. 29. *And they slew of Moab at that time about* 10,000 *men*, &c.] Who had been sent into the land of Israel to keep it in subjection, or had settled themselves there for their better convenience, profit, and pleasure; it is very probable there were some of both sorts: *all lusty, and all men of valour*: the word for *lusty* signifies *fat*, living in ease for a long time, and in a plentiful country, were grown fat; and, according to Ben Gersom, it signifies rich men, such as had acquired wealth by living in the land of Canaan; or who came over Jordan thither, and settled about Jericho, because of the delightfulness of the place, and others were stout and valiant soldiers, whom the king of Moab had placed there to keep the land in subjection he had subdued, and to subdue what remained of it; but they were all destroyed: *and there escaped not a man*; for there being no other way of getting into the land of Moab but at the fords of Jordan, they fell into the

[i] κληῗδ' εὐκαμπέα, Homer. Odyss. 21. ver. 6. & Eustathius in ib.
[k] Apud Calmet's Dictionary, on the word *Key*.
[l] Marsham. Chronicon, p. 39. Vossius de 70 Interpret. p. 271.
[m] Antiqu. l. 1. c. 2. sect. 3.
[n] Origines Sacræ, l. 1. c. 2.

hands of the Israelites possessed of them, as they made up unto them.

Ver. 30. *So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel,* &c.] Or the Moabites were broken, as the Targum, that is, their forces in the land of Israel; for the land of Moab itself was not subdued and brought into subjection to the Israelites; but they were so weakened by this stroke upon them, that they could not detain the Israelites under their power any longer: *and the land had rest* 80 *years;* which, according to Ben Gersom, are to be reckoned from the beginning of their servitude, and that the rest properly was but 62 years, and so both rest and servitude were 80 years, as R. Isaiah; and, according to Abarbinel, the rest was from the death of Othniel; and our Bishop Usher [o] reckons this 80th year from the former rest restored to it by Othniel; but others [p] are of opinion that there were several judges at a time in several parts of the land, and that the land was at rest in one part when there was war in another; and so that at this time it was only the eastern part of the land that had rest, while the western parts were distressed by the Philistines, and the northern parts by Jabin king of Canaan, as in the following verse, and ch. iv. 1.

Ver. 31. *And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath,* &c.] That is, after the death of Ehud, when the people of Israel were in distress again from another quarter, this man was raised up of God to be a judge and deliverer of them; but who he was, and who his father, and of what tribe, we nowhere else read: *which slew of the Philistines* 600 *men:* who invaded the land, and came in an hostile manner into it; or rather, as it seems from ch. v. 6, they entered as a banditti of thieves and robbers, who posted themselves in the highways, and robbed travellers as they passed, so that they were obliged to leave off travelling, or go through bye-paths, and not in the public road; and this man, who seems to have been called from the plough to be a judge of Israel, as some among the Romans were called from thence to be dictators and deliverers of them from the Gauls: *with an ox-goad:* which he had used to push on his oxen with at ploughing, cleared the country of them, and with no other weapon than this slew 600 of them, either at certain times, or in a body together; which is no ways incredible, being strengthened and succeeded by the Lord, any more than Samson's slaying 1,000 men with the jaw-bone of an ass. So Lycurgus is said to put to flight the forces of Bacchus with an ox-goad [q], which is said to be done near Carmel, a mountain in Judea, which makes it probable that this is hammered out of the sacred history; or that Shamgar and Lycurgus are the same, as Bochart conjectures [r]. The ox-goad, as now used in those parts, is an instrument fit to do great execution with it, as Mr. Maundrell [s], who saw many of them, describes it; on measuring them, he found them to be eight feet long, at the bigger end six inches in circumference, at the lesser end was a sharp prickle for driving the oxen, and at the other end a small spade, or paddle of iron, for cleansing the plough from the clay: *and he also delivered Israel;* from those robbers and plunderers, and prevented their doing any further mischief in the land, and subjecting it to their power, and so may very properly be reckoned among the judges of Israel; but how long he judged is not said; perhaps his time is to be reckoned into the eighty years of rest before mentioned; or, as Abarbinel thinks, into the forty years of Deborah, the next judge; and who also observes, that their Rabbins say, Shamgar judged but one year.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter shews how that Israel sinning was delivered into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, by whom they were oppressed twenty years, ver. 1, 2, 3. and that Deborah and Barak consulted together about their deliverance, ver. 4—9. and that Barak, encouraged by Deborah, gathered some forces and fought Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, whom he met, and obtained a victory over, ver. 10—15. who fleeing on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber, was received into it, and slain by her while asleep in it, ver. 16—22. which issued in a complete deliverance of the children of Israel, ver. 23, 24.

Ver. 1. *And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] Which was the fruit and effect of the long rest and peace they enjoyed; and which is often the case of a people favoured with peace, plenty, and prosperity, who are apt to abuse their mercies, and forget God, the author and giver of them; and the principal evil, though not expressed, was idolatry, worshipping Baalim, the gods of the nations about them; though it is highly probable they were guilty of other sins, which they indulged in the times of their peace and prosperity: *when Ehud was dead:* Shamgar is not mentioned, because his time of judging Israel was short, and the people were not reformed in his time, but fell into sin as soon as Ehud was dead, and continued. Some choose to render the words, *for Ehud was dead* [t], who had been the instrument of reforming them, and of preserving them from idolatry, but he being dead, they fell into it again; and the particle *vau* is often to be taken in this sense, of which Noldius [u] gives many instances.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord sold them,* &c.] Delivered them into a state of bondage and slavery, where they were like men sold for slaves, see ch. iii. 8. *into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, that reigned in Hazor;* there was a city of this name, and a king of it of the same name, as here, in the times of Joshua, which city was

[o] Annal. Vet. Test. p. 42.
[p] Marsham Canon. Chron. p. 306, 307. Patrick in loc. Vid. Lampe Eccl. Hist. l. 1. c. 5. p. 21, 22.
[q] Βουπλῆγι, Homer. Iliad. 6. ver. 135.
[r] Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 39. col. 385. & Canaan. l. 1. c. 18. col. 446.
[s] Journey to Aleppo, &c. p. 110, 111.
[t] ואהוד enim, vel quia Ehud, Bonfrerius; so Patrick.
[u] Concord. Ebr. part. p. 285, 295.

taken and burnt by him, and its king slain, Josh. xi. 1, 10, 11. and either the country about it is here meant, as Jericho in the preceding chapter is put for the country adjacent to it; or this city had been rebuilt, over which reigned one of the posterity of the ancient kings of it, and of the same name; or Jabin was a name common to the kings of Canaan, as Pharaoh to the Egyptian kings; and by Canaan is meant, not the land of Canaan in general, but a particular part of it inhabited by that, or some of that nation or tribe, which was peculiarly so called: *the captain of whose host was Sisera;* Jabin maintained a standing army to keep the people of Israel in subjection, the general of which was Sisera, of whom many things are after said: *which dwelt in Harosheth of the Gentiles;* not Jabin, as many understand it, for he had his royal seat and residence in Hazor; but Sisera his general, and where the army under his command was. This place had its name either because it was built by some of divers nations, or inhabited by workmen of different countries; or rather it was a wood originally, as the name signifies, to which many of the seven nations of the Canaanites fled from before Joshua, and hid and sheltered themselves, and in process of time built strong towers and fortresses in it, and became numerous and powerful; and so the Targum paraphrases the words, "and he "dwelt in the strength of the towers of the people;" and in other times, as Strabo relates [w], the northern parts of the land of Canaan, as those were where Hazor and Harosheth were, were inhabited by a mixed people, Egyptians, Arabians, and Phœnicians; such were they, he says, that held Galilee, Jericho, Philadelphia, and Samaria.

Ver. 3. *And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, &c.*] Because of their hard bondage, and begged deliverance from it, being brought to a sense of their sins, and humbled for them: *for he had 900 chariots of iron;* the same with the ἅρματα τὰ δρεπανηφόρα, chariots which carried scythes at the side of them, fastened to the orbs of the wheels [x], and were on both sides; and in some stood out ten cubits [y], which running furiously among the infantry, cut them to pieces in a terrible manner; of which Cyrus had in his army at first but 100, afterwards increased to 300 [z]; and yet here a petty prince of Canaan had 900 of them; and which Josephus [a] has increased, beyond all belief, to the number of 3,000; which struck great terror into the Israelites, and who therefore durst not attempt to shake off his yoke, but cried to the Lord for help: *20 years he mightily oppressed the children of Israel;* as they increased their sins, and repeated their revolts, the Lord increased their oppressions, and continued them the longer; the first was only eight years, the next 18, and this 20, and which was a very heavy one; the other being foreign princes that oppressed them, but this a Canaanitish king, an implacable enemy, and who doubtless used them the more severely for what they had done to his ancestors, killed his father or grandfather, burnt the city of Hazor, and destroyed the inhabitants of it in Joshua's time; and the servitude was the harder, and the more intolerable to the Israelites, that they were under a people whose land had been given them to possess, and whom they had expelled, and now were become subject to them.

Ver. 4. *And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, &c.*] Deborah was a name common to women with the eastern people, see Gen. xxxv. 8. as Melissa, which is of the same signification with the Greeks, and both signify a *bee;* and to which Deborah answered in her industry, sagacity, and sweetness of temper to her friends, and sharpness to her enemies: she was a *prophetess,* and foretold things to come, as the drawing of Sisera and his army to a certain place named by her, the victory that should be gained over him, and the delivery of him into the hands of a woman. Who Lapidoth was, or what is meant by the name, is not certain; most take it to be the name of her husband, which seems best, but who he was is not known; the Jews will have him to be the same with Barak, there being, as they think, some agreement in the names, Barak signifying lightning, and Lapidoth lamps; but the whole context shews the contrary, that he was not her husband. Some render the words, *a woman of Lapidoth,* taking it for the name of her native place or habitation; but where there was a place of this name no account can be given: some say she was so called from her employment before she was a prophetess and judge, making wicks for the lamps in the sanctuary, as Jarchi relates; and others take it to be expressive of her excellencies and virtues, which shone in her as lamps; the first sense is best: *she judged Israel at that time;* toward the close of the twenty-years' oppression under Jabin, being raised up of God as other judges were, and eminently endowed with gifts and grace; she endeavoured to convince the people of their sins, exhorted them to repentance, and was a means of reforming them, and administering justice and judgment in all cases brought before her; and which Jabin might admit of, connive at, or take no notice of, she being a woman, of whose growing power and interest he had no jealousy.

Ver. 5. *And she dwelt under the palm-tree of Deborah, &c.*] Her dwelling-house was under a palm-tree, or rather she sat under one, in the open air, when the people came to her with their cases, and it was called from hence after her name; though some, as Abarbinel observes, think it was so called, because Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, was buried here, and which was near Beth-el, one of the places next mentioned, see Gen. xxxv. 8. *between Ramah and Beth-el in Mount Ephraim;* which places were in the tribe of Benjamin in the borders of Ephraim, see Josh. xvi. 2. and xviii. 22, 25. The Jews conclude, from the situation of her, that she was a very opulent woman; the Targum is, "she was "dwelling in a city in Ataroth, Deborah was supported "of her own; she had palm-trees in Jericho, orchards "in Ramah, olives producing oil in the valley, a place "of watering in Beth-el, and white dust in the king's "mountain:" *and the children of Israel came up to her;* from all parts of the land to the mount of Ephraim;

[w] Geograph. l. 16. p. 523.
[x] Vid. Suidam in voce Δρεπανηφόρα.
[y] Curtius, l. 4. c. 9, 12, 15. Liv. Hist. l. 37. c. 41.
[z] Xenophon. Cyropædia, l. 6. c. 13.
[a] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.

for judgment: to have her advice and counsel in matters of difficulty, and to have causes between contending parties heard and decided by her, so that she might be truly reckoned among the judges.

Ver. 6. *And she sent and called Barak the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh-naphtali*, &c.] So called to distinguish it from other places of the same name, this being in the tribe of Naphtali, and a city of refuge, Josh. xx. 7. of which tribe and place Barak was, but who he and his father Abinoam were we have no other account; it seems clear from hence that he was not the husband of Deborah, as the Jews say, or they would have lived together; though, according to Ben Gersom, she lived separate from him, because of the spirit of prophecy that was upon her; however, in this mission and message to Barak she acted not as a private person, but as a judge in Israel, and as having and exercising public power and authority: *and said unto him*; when come to her upon her summons: *hath not the Lord God of Israel commanded*; can any doubt be made of it? can Barak in the least question it, as if she should say? the interrogation carries in it a strong affirmation, that the Lord had commanded, and that he had commanded by her mouth: saying, *go and draw toward Mount Tabor*; a mountain on the border of Zebulun, and between the tribes of Issachar and Naphtali, and so lay very convenient for the inhabitants of these tribes to meet here; of which see the note on Josh. xix. 22. here Barak is directed to steer his course, and betake himself, and draw others with him by persuasive motives and arguments, urging the command of God by Deborah the prophetess, and the assurance given from the Lord by her of victory over their enemies, and deliverance from them; for otherwise the children of Israel were in great fear of Jabin, because of his large army, and iron chariots: *and take with thee* 10,000 *men of the children of Naphtali, and of the children of Zebulun?* which were near at hand, and were the tribes which perhaps were most oppressed, and therefore more easily to be persuaded to engage in this expedition; and the number of them is fixed, as being sufficient for this service, and whose hearts the Lord would engage in it, so that Barak would have little to do but to move it to them, and enforce it with proper arguments; and as they would willingly offer themselves, as it appears afterwards they did, he was at once to take them with him to Mount Tabor, on the top of which was a plain of 26 furlongs, as Josephus [b] says, surrounded by a wall; though modern travellers make it much less, on which, however, he might draw up his army of 10,000 men, and muster and exercise them.

Ver. 7. *And I will draw unto thee*, &c.] Which are the words of the Lord by Deborah, as are the preceding, signifying, that by the secret and powerful influence of his providence he would so order things, and the circumstances of them; and so powerfully operate on the mind and heart of the Canaanitish general as to engage him to come *to the river Kishon, Sisera the captain of Jabin's army, with his chariots, and his multitude*; called the ancient river, the river Kishon, ch. v. 21. According to Mr. Maundrell [c], the fountain of it was near the valley, at the bottom of Mount Tabor, where Barak was to have his army in readiness to attack Sisera; and which river, according to the same traveller [d], cuts his way down the middle of the plain of Edraelon, and then continuing his course close by the side of Mount Carmel, falls into the sea at a place called Caypha; with which agrees the account of Mr. Sandys [e], who says it flows from the mountains of Tabor and Hermon, and, gliding by the north skirts of Carmel, dischargeth itself into the sea. This river is supposed to be the Chorseus of Ptolemy [f]: hither the Lord in his providence would incline the mind of Sisera to come with his large army and chariots, and give Barak an opportunity to fall upon him: *and I will deliver him into thine hand*; not his person only, but his numerous hosts, and his 900 chariots.

Ver. 8. *And Barak said unto her*, &c.] To Deborah, after she had delivered the words of the Lord unto him: *if thou wilt go with me, then I will go*; which shewed faith in the word of the Lord, for which he is commended, and a readiness to do the will of God, and courage to engage in such a work with a powerful adversary, and is therefore reckoned among the heroes for faith, Heb. xi. 32. *but if thou wilt not go with me, then I will not go*; which though it might discover some weakness in him, yet shewed the high opinion he had of Deborah as a judge of Israel, and prophetess of the Lord; being desirous that he might have her with him to pray to God for him, to give him advice and counsel on any emergency, she being as the oracle of God; and whereby he testified his regard to the Lord, and to his presence, which he concluded he should have, the prophetess being with him; and more especially his reason for insisting on her going with him might be to prevail upon the inhabitants of Naphtali and Zebulun to go with him, who he might fear would not believe him, or pay any regard to his words, and be in dread of engaging with the enemy, unless she was present; which he supposed would satisfy them as to the mind of God in it, and animate them, and give them heart and spirit.

Ver. 9. *And she said, I will surely go with thee*, &c.] She made no hesitation about it, but agreed at once to go with him for his encouragement; perceiving some degree of weakness in him, and yet an hearty and sincere inclination to engage in the work proposed, and that this might be no hinderance, she readily assents to it: adding, *notwithstanding the journey thou takest*; the way or course he steered, the methods he took in insisting on it that she should go with him: *shall not be for thine honour*; as a general of an army, who is commonly solicitous to have the whole glory of an action: *for the Lord shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman*; meaning either herself, for she being judge of Israel, and going along with him, would have the glory of the victory ascribed to her, as usually is to the principal person in the army; and so it would be said in future time, that the Lord delivered Sisera and his army, not into the hand of Barak, but into the hand of Deborah, whereby he would not have all the honour which otherwise he would have, if she went not with

[b] De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 1. sect. 8.
[c] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 115.
[d] Ib. p. 57.
[e] Travels, l. 3. p. 158. Ed. 5.
[f] Geograph. l. 5. c. 15.

him; or else Jael, Heber's wife, is meant, into whose hands Sisera did fall, and by whom he was slain; but this seems to have no connexion with Deborah's going or not going with him, it did not depend upon that one way or another; unless it can be thought that thus it was ordered in Providence as a rebuke of his diffidence and weakness, that because he would not go without a woman, Sisera should fall not into his hands, but into the hands of a woman; and if so, this is a clear instance of Deborah's having a spirit of prophecy, and of a prediction of a future contingent event: *and Deborah arose, and went with Barak to Kedesh*; that is, they went together from the palm-tree between Ramah and Beth-el in Mount Ephraim, to Kedesh in Mount Naphtali, in order to raise the 10,000 men that were to fight with Sisera.

Ver. 10. *And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh*, &c.] This he did either by the sound of a trumpet, as Ehud did, or by sending messengers to them to collect 10,000 men from among them, which they accordingly did, and came to him in Kedesh: *and he went up with* 10,000 *men at his feet*; they following him up to Mount Tabor cheerfully and readily, being all footmen; for the Israelites had no cavalry, and yet got the victory over Sisera's army, which, according to Josephus[g], had 10,000 horse in it: *and Deborah went up with him*; and his 10,000 footmen, to the top of Mount Tabor, to encourage him and them with her presence, and give her best advice when to descend and engage the enemy.

Ver. 11. *Now Heber the Kenite*, &c.] A descendant of Kain, a principal man among the Midianites; the Targum calls him the Salmaan: which was *of the children of Hobab the father-in-law of Moses*: who came along with the children of Israel through the wilderness into the land of Canaan, and first settled about Jericho, and then removed into the wilderness of Judah, ch. i. 16. *had severed himself from the Kenites*: which dwelt in the said wilderness; to whom he belonged when this separation was made, and on what account is not certain. Abarbinel thinks that it was done now, and with a design to help Israel, that hearing Barak was gone up to Mount Tabor, and seeing Sisera prepared to fight with him, he made as if he was disgusted with his own people, and separated from them, that Jabin, with whom he was at peace, might the more confide in him; when it was out of love to Israel, and with a view to assist them, as occasion should offer, that he removed; but this is not very likely, as these Kenites were a people that kept themselves from meddling with military affairs as much as possible: *and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh*; for these people dwelt in tents as the Midianites did, from whence they sprung, and as the Scenite Arabs; and yet near to cities, as here, and in places fit for the pasturage of their cattle, in which they were chiefly employed, and here pitched upon a plain, where were fields and meadows: the Targum calls it a plain of pools, where were pools of water for the watering of their flocks; or rather it might be rendered the oak or grove of oaks of Zaanaim, the same with Alonzaanannim in Josh. xix. 33. see the note there. This place lay between Harosheth of the Gentiles, from whence Sisera came, and Mount Tabor, where Barak was. This little piece of history is inserted here, partly to account for it that there should be any Kenites here, when we are told before they settled in the wilderness of Judah, and partly on account of the following narrative of Sisera being slain by this man's wife.

Ver. 12. *And they shewed Sisera*, &c.] Either some of the Canaanites that dwelt near Tabor, or some spies that Sisera had out; though some think the Kenites told him, who were at peace with Jabin, ver. 17. yet whether out of good will or ill will cannot be said; however, so it was ordered by the providence of God, that by some means or another Sisera should be informed *that Barak the son of Abinoam was gone up to Mount Tabor*; and no doubt at the same time he was told the number of men that went with him; from whence he might well conclude, that such a warlike man, with such a force collected together, and having posted himself in an high and strong mountain, must have some design to cause a revolt of Israel from Jabin his prince.

Ver. 13. *And Sisera gathered together all his chariots*, &c.] Or *therefore* he gathered them together, which might lie some in one place, and some in another, for the better quartering of the men that belonged to them: even 900 *chariots of iron*; and which, as before observed, are magnified by Josephus, and made to be 3,000: *and all the people that were with him*; his soldiers, Jabin's army, of which he was captain, and are called a multitude, ver. 7. and which, the above writer says[h], consisted of 300,000 foot, and 10,000 horse, besides the iron chariots: these he collected together, and brought with him, *from Harosheth of the Gentiles*; the place where he resided with his army, ver. 2. *unto the river of Kishon*; which was near Mount Tabor, the rendezvous of Barak and his men, see ver. 6, 7.

Ver. 14. *And Deborah said unto Barak, up*, &c.] Not go up higher, for they were upon the top of a mountain; but rise, bestir thyself, prepare for battle, put the army in rank and file, and march and meet the enemy without delay: *for this is the day in which the Lord hath delivered Sisera into thine hand*: by a spirit of prophecy she knew this was the precise day, the exact time in which it was the will of God this deliverance should be wrought; and she speaks of it as if it was past, because of the certainty of it, and the full assurance she had of it, and Barak might have; nor is what she says any contradiction to what she had said before, that Sisera should be sold or delivered into the hands of a woman, ver. 9. for both were true, Sisera first fell into the hands of Jael, a woman, and then into the hands of Barak, and into the hands of both on the same day: *is not the Lord gone out before thee?* it was manifest he was, at least to Deborah, who was fully assured of it, and therefore it became Barak and his men, and great encouragement they had, to follow, since, as the Lord went before them as their Generalissimo, they might be sure of victory: perhaps there might be some visible appearance, some shining lustre and splendour of the Shechinah, or divine Majesty; the

[g] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 1.

[h] Ut supra.

Targum is, "is not the angel of the Lord gone out "before thee, to prosper thee?" *so Barak went down from Mount Tabor, and 10,000 men after him*: no mention is made of Deborah's coming down with them, perhaps she stayed on the mountain till the battle was over; nor might Barak be urgent upon her now to go with him, being confident of success, and having all the ends answered by her presence he could wish for.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord discomfited Sisera and all his chariots, and all his host*, &c.] Frighted them, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, or disturbed them with a noise and tumult, as the word signifies; with a noise in the heavens, which were in their ears, as Abarbinel observes, like the noise of a large army, as was the case of the Syrians, 2 Kings vii. 6. and they saw, he says, horses and chariots of fire, and the like, which terrified them; and all this he supposes was done before Barak descended from the mountain, so that he had nothing to do when he came but to pursue and kill, whereby it plainly appeared it was the Lord's doing. Josephus[i] says there was a great tempest of rain and hail, and the wind blew the rain in their faces, which so blinded their eyes, that their slings and arrows were of no use to them; and they that bore armour were so benumbed, that they could not hold their swords. Something of this kind is intimated by Deborah in her song, ch. v. 20. and this was accompanied or followed by a slaughter *with the edge of the sword before Barak*; the fright and dread they were put into was increased by the appearance of Barak, who fell upon them in their confusion, and cut them to pieces: *so that Sisera lighted down off his chariot, and fled away on his feet*; being very probably swift of foot; and besides thought it safest to quit his chariot, which in the confusion was in danger of being run against by others; as also he might judge he should not be so easily discerned who he was when on foot, as a common soldier, as in his splendid chariot; and this he might do in his fright, not considering his horses were swifter than he: thus Homer represents a Trojan warrior leaping out of his chariot to escape Diomedes, and another as doing the same to get clear of Achilles[k].

Ver. 16. *But Barak pursued after the chariot, and after the host, unto Harosheth of the Gentiles*, &c.] The place from whence they came, and to which they endeavoured to escape: but he followed them so close all that way, and made such havoc of them, that *all the host of Sisera fell upon the edge of the sword, and there was not a man left*; no, not one, excepting Sisera, as in the next verse; or *even to one*[l], as in the original text; not one escaped to Hazor to acquaint Jabin of the loss of his army. Philo Byblius says, that 997 thousand of Sisera's army were slain.

Ver. 17. *Howbeit, Sisera fled away on his feet*, &c.] Got off, and made his escape *to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite*; before spoken of, ver. 11. and he made to that, because he might think himself safer in a tent than in a town; and especially in the tent of a woman, where he might imagine no search would be made; for women of note, in those times, had separate tents, see Gen. xxiv. 67. and the rather he made his escape hither for a reason that follows: *for there was peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite*; which Jabin might the more readily come into, because these were not Israelites, nor did they make any claim to the country, and lived only in tents, and attended their flocks, and were a quiet people, and not at all disposed to war; and it might be so ordered by the providence of God, as a rebuke to the Israelites for their sins, when those who were only proselytes kept close to the worship of God, and so enjoyed liberty, peace, and prosperity.

Ver. 18. *And Jael went out to meet Sisera*, &c.] Seeing him coming, and knowing him full well, she stepped forward towards him, to invite him into her tent: some think she was looking out, that if she saw any Israelite in distress to take him in; and very probably had been some time at her tent-door, to inquire how the battle went, and which, no doubt, living so near Kedesh, she knew was expected: *and said unto him, turn in, my lord*; that is, into her tent: and she addresses him with the title of *lord*, for the sake of honour, having been general of a large army; and not because her husband was a servant, and in subjection to him, as Abarbinel suggests: *turn in to me, fear not*; she repeats the invitation, to shew she was hearty and sincere, and that he had nothing to fear from her, nor any in her house; and it may be at first she had no thought of doing what she afterwards did to him, it being put into her heart after this: *and when he had turned in unto her in the tent*; and laid himself down upon the ground, being weary: *she covered him with a mantle*; either to hide him, should any search be made for him, or it may be to keep him from catching cold, being in a sweat through his flight, and being also perhaps inclined to sleep through weariness. The word for a mantle, according to Kimchi, signifies such a garment which has locks of wool on both sides of it, a sort of rug, and so very fit to cover with, and keep warm. So David de Pomis[m] describes it, as having locks and threads hanging down here and there.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto her, give me, I pray thee, a little water to drink, for I am thirsty*, &c.] Which might be occasioned by the heat of the battle, and by the heat of the day, and by heat in running; he asks for a little water, that being very desirable by persons athirst. Some think he did not ask for wine, because he knew the Kenites did not drink any, and so of course kept none in their tents; but though this was the custom of the Rechabites, who were the same with the Kenites, Jer. xxxv. 8. yet it is very probable this custom had not yet obtained among them, since it was enjoined by Jonadab their father, who lived in the times of Jehu, 2 Kings x. 15. *and she opened a bottle of milk, and gave him to drink*; which she did either out of courtesy, being a better liquor, or with design to throw him into a sleep, which milk inclines to, making heavy, as all the Jewish commentators observe; though Josephus[n] has no authority to say, as he does,

[i] Ut supra, sect. 4.
[k] Vid. Iliad. λ. & 20.
[l] עד אחד usque ad unum, Montanus.

[m] Tzemach David, fol. 216. 3.
[n] Ut supra.

that the milk she gave him was bad and corrupt: *and covered him*; again, after he had taken a draught of milk, which it seems she poured into a dish with the cream on it, see ch. v. 25.

Ver. 20. *And he said unto her, stand in the door of the tent*, &c.] This he said, not in an imperious way, as some think, but by entreaty: *and it shall be, when any man shall come and inquire of thee*; seeing her at the door, and where he desired she would stand to prevent their coming into the tent: *and say, is there any man here?* any besides what belongs to the family? or any of Sisera's army? *that thou shalt say, no*: there is no man; but to this she made no answer that is recorded.

Ver. 21. *Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a nail of the tent*, &c.] When she perceived he was fast asleep, and it being now put into her heart to kill him, having an impulse upon her spirit, which she was persuaded, by the effect it had upon her, that it was of God; not filling her with malice and revenge, but a concern for the glory of God, the interest of religion, and the good of Israel, she took this method to effect the death of this enemy of God, and his people; having no arms in the house, for the Kenites used none, she took up an iron pin, with which her tent was fastened to the ground: *and took a hammer in her hand*; which perhaps she knew full well how to handle, being used to drive the pins of the tents into the ground with it: *and went softly unto him*; lest she should awake him: *and smote the nail into his temples*; as he lay on one side, these being the tenderest part of the head, from whence they have their name in the Hebrew language, and into which therefore a nail, or iron pin, might be more easily driven: *and fastened it into the ground*; she smote the nail with such force and violence, that she drove it through both his temples into the ground on which he lay; and then, as it seems from ch. v. 26. cut off his head, to make sure work of it: *for he was fast asleep and weary*: and so heard not when she came to him: *so he died*; not in the field of battle, but in a tent; not by the sword, but by a nail; not by the hand of a man, but of a woman, as Deborah foretold, ver. 9.

Ver. 22. *And, behold, as Barak pursued Sisera*, &c.] Knowing the way he took, at least as he supposed: *Jael came out to meet him*; as she did Sisera, but with greater pleasure: *and said unto him, come, and I will shew thee the man whom thou seekest*; for she full well knew whom he was in pursuit of: *and when he came into her* tent; at her invitation: *behold, Sisera lay dead, and the nail* was *in his temples*; which she did not attempt to draw out, but left it there, that it might be seen in what way she had dispatched him.

Ver. 23. *So God subdued on that day Jabin king of Canaan before the children of Israel.*] Freed Israel from subjection to him, and delivered him into the hands of the Israelites; for Josephus * says, that as Barak went towards Hazor, he met Jabin, and slew him; who perhaps having heard of the defeat of his army under Sisera, came forth with another against Israel, which being overcome by them, he was slain, and the city utterly destroyed, as the same writer says; but by what follows it seems rather that the total conquest of him was afterwards and gradually accomplished.

Ver. 24. *And the hand of the children of Israel prospered and prevailed against Jabin, the king of Canaan*, &c.] They continued their wars with him, in which they were successful: *until they had destroyed Jabin, king of Canaan*; took him, and put him to death, and took his cities, and destroyed the inhabitants of them, and so acted more agreeably to the declared will of God, that they should not spare the Canaanites, but destroy them.

CHAP. V.

THIS chapter contains a song of praise on account of the victories obtained over Jabin, and his kingdom; after an exhortation to praise is given, and kings excited to attend to it, the majestic appearance of God at Seir, on Sinai, is observed, to raise in the mind a divine veneration of him, ver. 1—5. then the miserable state and condition Israel was in before these victories, and therefore had the more reason to be thankful, ver. 6, 7, 8. the governors, and judges, and the people that were delivered, together with Deborah and Barak, are stirred up to rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord, and bless his name, ver. 9—13. and those who willingly engaged in the war are praised, and such who were negligent reproved, and some even cursed, ver. 14—23. but Jael, Heber's wife, is particularly commended for her exploit in slaying Sisera, ver. 24—27. and the mother of Sisera, and her ladies, are represented as wondering at his long delay, and as assured of his having got the victory, ver. 28, 29, 30. and the song is concluded with a prayer for the destruction of the enemies of the Lord, and for the happiness and glory of them that love him, ver. 31.

Ver. 1. *Then sang Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam*, &c.] Deborah is first mentioned, because she was, as Kimchi says, the root or foundation of the work, the chief person in it, both in the direction of the war, and in the composition of this song; and indeed, as Ben Gersom observes, she alone composed it, see ver. 7. and the verb is singular: *then sang Deborah*; and after her, and in her words, sung also Barak; he joined with her, not in making the song, but in singing it; and so likewise the people of Israel joined with her in singing it, as they did with Moses at the Red sea; and this song was sung *on that day*; not on the precise day on which the victory was obtained over Sisera and his army, but on occasion of that memorable day, and what followed upon it: *saying*; the following divine hymn or song, penned by

* Antiqu. l. 5. c. 5. sect. 4.

Deborah, under divine inspiration, as the sublimity of the style, the fine and noble thoughts and sentiments that are in it, the beautiful and elegant phrases in which they are expressed, abundantly shew; no Sappho, or any Grecian poetess, nor indeed any poet whatever, uninspired, being equal to the writer of this poem.

Ver. 2. *Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel*, &c.] The injuries done to Israel by any of their enemies, and particularly what wrongs had been done them by Jabin, king of Canaan, for 20 years past; though some understand it of the vengeance God took on Israel for their sins; and though praise is not given directly for that, yet inasmuch as, when that was the case, there were some whose spirits were stirred up to engage voluntarily in the deliverance of them from the oppression of their enemies, it was matter of praise: *when the people willingly offered themselves*; to go and fight for Israel against their enemies, particularly those of the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, ver. 18. though not excluding others that joined, who could not have been forced to it, had they not freely offered themselves; and which was owing to the secret influence of divine Providence on their hearts, moving and drawing them to this service; and therefore praise was due to the Lord on this account, who works in the hearts of men both to will and to do, as in things spiritual and religious, so in things natural and civil.

Ver. 3. *Hear, O ye kings; give ear, O ye princes*, &c.] Not only the neighbouring ones, but all the kings and princes of the earth, far and near, then and in succeeding ages; Deborah desires and wishes that all potentates might hear of the wonderful works of God done for his people, that they might learn to know there is one that is higher than they, to whom all the amazing things done in the world are to be ascribed; and be cautious how they oppressed the people of God, since sooner or later he would avenge them on them. The Targum restrains this to the kings that came with Sisera and the governors with Jabin; but if there were any such, as it is not improbable there were, see ver. 19. yet it is most likely that they were slain with them: there are some, as Kimchi observes, who think this respects the people of Israel, who were all the sons of kings; but the first sense is best: *I, even I, will sing unto the Lord, I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel*; which are the words of Deborah particularly, and the repetitions serve to express how cordial, earnest, and vehement she was in her praise and thankfulness to God; thereby setting an example to others, encouraging them to the same practice, and directing persons of every rank and quality to give praise only to Jehovah, the self-existing, everlasting, and unchangeable Being; to him who is the Lord and God of Israel in a peculiar manner, and not to any of the gods of the Gentiles.

Ver. 4. *Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the fields of Edom*, &c.] Here properly begins the song, what goes before being but a preface to it; and it begins with an apostrophe to the Lord, taking notice of some ancient appearances of God for his people, which were always matter of praise and thankfulness; and the rather are they taken notice of here, because of some likeness between them and what God had now wrought; and this passage refers either to the giving of the law on Sinai, as the Targum and Jarchi; see Deut. xxxiii. 2. or rather, as Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and others, to the Lord's going before Israel, after they had encompassed the land of Edom, and marched from thence towards the land of Canaan; when they fought with Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites, and conquered them; which struck terror into all the nations round about them, and the prophecies of Moses in his song began to be fulfilled, Exod. xv. 14, 15. and which dread and terror are expressed in the following figurative phrases: *the earth trembled*; and the like figure Homer [a] uses at the approach of Neptune, whom he calls the shaker of the earth, perhaps borrowed from hence: it may design the inhabitants of it, the Amorites, Moabites, Edomites, Philistines, Canaanites, and others: *and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water*; which, as it may literally refer to the storm and tempest of rain that might be then as now, see ch. iv. 15, so may figuratively express the panic great personages, comparable to the heavens and the clouds in them, were thrown into, when their hearts melted like water, or were like clouds dissolved into it.

Ver. 5. *The mountains melted from before the Lord*, &c.] The inhabitants of them, through fear, the Lord going before Israel in a pillar of cloud and fire, and delivering mighty kings and their kingdoms into their hand: even *that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel*: or, *as that Sinai*, the note of similitude being wanting; and the sense is, the mountains melted, just as the famous mountain Sinai in a literal sense did, when it trembled and quaked at the presence of God on it; the tokens of it, the fire and smoke, thunders, lightnings, and tempests there seen and heard; and which being observed, would call to mind the benefit Israel then received, which required praise and thankfulness, as well as would serve to express the awe and reverence of God due unto him.

Ver. 6. *In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath*, &c.] Of whom see ch. iv. 31. who succeeded Ehud as a judge, but lived not long, and did not much; at least wrought not a perfect deliverance of the children of Israel; but during his time till now, quite through the twenty years of Jabin's oppression, things were as they are after described: *in the days of Jael*; the wife of Heber the Kenite, spoken of in the preceding chapter, who appears to be a woman of masculine spirit, and endeavoured to do what good she could to Israel, though not a judge among them, as Jarchi suggests; and who before this affair of Sisera had signalized herself by some deeds of her's in favour of Israel, and against their enemies; yet far from putting a stop to the outrages committed; for in the times of both these persons, *the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways*; the public roads were so infested with thieves and robbers, who stopped all they met with, and robbed them of what they had, that travellers and merchants with their carriages were obliged either to quit their employments, and not

[a] τρέμε δ' οὔρεα μακρὰ καὶ ὕλη, Iliad. 13. v. 18, 34, 44.

travel at all; or, if they did, were obliged to go in private roads, and round-about ways, to keep clear of those rapparees the highways and public roads abounded with.

Ver. 7. The inhabitants *of the villages ceased*, &c.] Not only did those Canaanitish robbers go upon the highway, and robbed all they met with, which made travelling difficult and dangerous: but entered into the villages and unwalled towns, and broke into houses and plundered them; so that the inhabitants of them were obliged to quit their dwellings, and go into the fortified cities for security; by which means the villages were left empty, and in time fell to ruin, and ceased: *they ceased in Israel*: for they were the villages which belonged to the Israelites that were plundered, and not those that belonged to any of the Canaanites; and these were the unhappy circumstances Israel were under *until that I Deborah arose, that I arose a mother in Israel*: until it pleased God to raise her up, and endow her in a very wonderful and extraordinary manner with gifts qualifying her to be a nursing mother to Israel, to teach and instruct them in the mind and will of God, to administer judgment and justice to them, to protect and defend them, and in all which she discovered a maternal affection for them; and as a good judge and ruler of a people may be called the father of them, so she, being a woman, is with propriety called a mother in Israel, having an affectionate concern for them as her children: now, till she arose, there was no perfect salvation and deliverance wrought for them, since the death of Ehud, even throughout the days of Shamgar and Jael; which is observed to excite praise and thankfulness on the present occasion, which hereby became the more illustrious.

Ver. 8. *They chose new gods*, &c.] That is, Israel, as most of the Jewish commentators interpret it; for the verb is singular, and Israel agrees well with it: this they did after the death of Joshua; it refers to their first idolatry, begun by Micah, ch. xvii. they chose other gods than the true God; Baalim and Ashtaroth they are said to serve, ch. ii. 11, 13. and iii. 7. and besides the gods of the Canaanites and Phœnicians, they sought after and introduced new ones from other places, or the same may be meant; since all besides the true God, the eternal Jehovah, the Ancient of days, and everlasting King, are new gods that lately sprung up: the Arabic and Syriac versions are, "God chose "a new king;" so Ben Gersom; to perfect this wonder: for not only Sisera and his army were drawn to the gates of Israel to a proper place to fall in, but the victory was not obtained by Israel by their own force and strength; for they had no weapons of war, not a shield nor a spear, but for a very few men, but it was the Lord that fought for them in a new way; the former sense seems best, and agrees with what follows: *then was war in the gates*: when they fell into idolatry, then God suffered the judgment of war to come upon them, even into the gates of their fortified cities, which were the security of them, and where were their courts of judicature, but by war disturbed and made to cease: *was there a shield or spear seen among* 40,000 *in Israel?* though the number of the Israelites were several hundred thousands, yet there were not to be seen among them shields and spears sufficient for 40,000; or not one among 40,000 was armed; which was owing either to their negligence and sloth in not providing themselves with arms, or not taking care of them in a time of peace; so that when war came into their gates, they had nothing to defend themselves with, or annoy their enemies; or to their cowardice, not daring to take up a shield or spear in their own defence; or to the enemy, Jabin king of Canaan, having disarmed them, that they might not be able to make a revolt from him, and recover their liberties. Ben Gersom refers it to the times of Joshua, when there was no need of a shield and spear among the 40,000 of the children of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, that came over Jordan with them, since God fought for them; and the Targum seems to understand it of Sisera's army, that came against Israel with shields, spears, and swords; and makes the number of them to be in all 300,000, which is just the number of foot-soldiers Josephus makes his army to consist of; and yet, though so numerous and so well armed, could not stand before Barak with 10,000 men only; see the note on ch. iv. 13. the words rather refer to the intestine war of the Benjamites with the Israelites, when 40,000 of the latter were killed, which was before the times of Deborah, ch. xx. 21, 25.

Ver. 9. *My heart is towards the governors of Israel*, &c.] Most of the Jewish commentators interpret this of their wise men and Scribes, who were willing to teach the people the law and the commandments, even in times of trouble, and did not cease from doing it on that account, and therefore Deborah praises them for it; so the Targum; but Kimchi and Ben Melech understand by them the great men of the nation, their nobles and rulers, who enacted good laws and statutes; or at least took care to see that the good laws they had were put in execution; and these had a share in the affections and good wishes of Deborah, and that chiefly for the following reason: *that offered themselves willingly among the people*: to go along with them, and march at the head of them, to fight Sisera and his army; thereby setting a good example, and animating the people to battle, and inspiring them with courage and intrepidity; when they saw their chiefs and the heads of them exposing their lives with them in defence of their country, and the rights of it: *bless ye the Lord*: for giving them such spirits, to engage so willingly in this service, and for giving them success in it.

Ver. 10. *Speak, ye that ride on white asses*, &c.] Though in some countries, as in ours, it is reckoned disgraceful to ride on asses; so Leo Africanus[b] makes mention of a preacher in Africa, who was called the ass-rider, because he was continually sitting on an ass; yet in Judea, where there were no horses, or very few, it was accounted honourable; so it was in the time of our Lord; for his riding on an ass to Jerusalem was not mean and disgraceful, but honourable and glorious: and so it certainly was in those early times of the judges; for we read of the sons of two of them, which were very numerous, that rode on asses' colts, ch. x.

[b] Descriptio Africæ, l. 5. p. 274.

4; and xii. 14. and it seems that white asses were the most valuable, and chiefly used by great personages. The ass in the Hebrew language has its name from redness, that being the usual colour of them in those parts; and hence they were hateful to the Egyptians, because that their Typhon was of that colour[c]; but there were some that were white, as there are wild ones now of that colour. A traveller[d] in those parts in the beginning of the last century tells us, that on the banks of the Euphrates they beheld every day great droves of wild beasts, as wild asses *all white*, &c. The word we translate *white* is *zechorot*, and perhaps may describe the same animal the Ethiopians call *zecora*, and some *zebra*; said to excel in beauty all four-footed creatures in the whole world. It is an animal of the bigness of a mule, found in the woods beyond Abyssinia, is easily tamed, and is the frequent and chief present of the kings of that country; about its loins is a circle of a black colour, in the form of a girdle, which is followed with more on each side, according to the part of the body, some broader, others narrower, both black and white, or of an ash colour, so neat that they seem to exceed the art of the most eminent painter; its only deformity are its ears, which are long; hence it is called by the Portuguese the wild ass, though wrongly; of what value and esteem it was appears from the large price it has been sold for: one, that was the gift of a king to a Turkish governor, was sold to an Indian for 2,000 pieces of Venetian money, to make a present of to the great Mogor, king of the Indians[e], which was the value of 900 pounds. Those that rode on these creatures were the princes and nobles of Israel; though they are generally interpreted by the Jewish commentators of merchants that rode from place to place about business; and these are called upon to speak of the wonderful things God had done for Israel, in freeing them from the bondage of the Canaanites, so that these nobles or merchants might ride about the country without any fear; and to discourse of them to others, and in their meditations give praise to God on account of them: *ye that sit in judgment*; which seems to describe judges upon the bench, sitting to hear and try causes, and pass righteous judgment; these are also exhorted to give thanks to the Lord, that they were now restored to their seats of judgment, from which they were driven; or where they could not peaceably exercise their office, which they now might and did: Cocceius renders the word *on measures*, as if these were persons that presided over measures, and took care that they were just and right. Though Kimchi and Ben Melech say, that Middin, which we render *in judgment*, is either the name of a city in the book of Joshua, ch. xv. 61. see the note there; or the name of a way[f] well known, in which they were afraid to go because of the enemy, but now went in it with safety, and therefore had reason to speak well of God, and praise his name; but this is rather intended in the next clause: *and walk by the way*: the common people that travelled from place to place on business, who before were obliged to leave the public roads, and go in by-ways, ver. 6. but now could travel in the common road without fear, and therefore ought to be thankful.

Ver. 11. They that are delivered *from the noise of archers in the place of drawing water*, &c.] Meaning either the army of the Israelites, delivered from the archers of Sisera's host at the river Kishon; or such persons, as maidens and others, that went out of the cities to fountains and wells of water, to fetch water from thence for their necessities, but were frightened by the noise of archers that shot at them; or shepherds who led their flocks to water them there, but were repulsed or slain by archers that lay in wait in woods or lurking-places thereabout; but now the country being cleared of them, they could without fear have recourse to these places of drawing water for their flocks or other uses, which laid them under obligation to do as directed in the next clause. The words are by some rendered, "because of the voice of "those that number (sheep and other cattle) at the "places of drawing water[g]:" which now they could do, being a time of peace; and for which the persons before described ought to be thankful: *there shall they rehearse the righteous acts of the Lord*; coming to those places again, it would put them in mind to what hazards and dangers they had been exposed formerly by the enemy, but now were freed from; and this would lead them to discourse of and repeat the righteous dealings of God in taking vengeance on their enemies and delivering them from them: *even the righteous acts* towards the inhabitants *of his villages in Israel*; they being now in no danger of having their houses broke open, and their substance plundered as before, ver. 7. *then shall the people of the Lord go down to the gates*; either of their enemies, pursuing them unto them, as they did, ch. iv. 16. or rather to the gates of their own cities, where they had now free egress and regress; and those that were in the fortified cities, who had fled thither from the villages because of the rapine of the enemy, now would go down to the gates, and pass through them, and return to their villages again; or else the meaning is, that the people would now frequent as formerly the courts of judicature held in the gates of their cities, to have justice done them, and be in no fear of being disturbed by the enemy, as before.

Ver. 12. *Awake, awake, Deborah, awake, awake, utter a song*, &c.] Either perceiving some languor and remissness in her spirits, whilst she was delivering this song, and therefore arouses herself to attend to this service with more ardour and zeal; or rather finding herself more impressed with a sense of the great and good things the Lord had done for Israel, calls upon her soul to exert all its powers in celebrating the praises of the Lord, and therefore repeats the word *awake* so often as she does: *arise, Barak, and lead thy captivity captive, thou son of Abinoam*: for though the whole army of Sisera was destroyed, that not a man was left, ch. iv. 16. yet as Barak pursued to Harosheth of the Gentiles, many there and in other places which

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[c] Plutarch. de Iside.
[d] Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 106.
[e] Ludolph. Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. c. 10. Vid. Philostorg. Eccles. Hist. l. 3. c. 11.
[f] Vid. David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 19. 2.
[g] So Cocceius, Noldius, p. 561. No. 1992.

fell into his hands, that belonged to Jabin, might be taken captive by him; and though the Canaanites were to be slain, yet they might first be led captive in triumph; and besides, there might be some of other nations that were taken by him in this war; see Psal. lxviii. 18.

Ver. 13. *Then he made him that remaineth,* &c.] The people of Israel that remained, who had been under the yoke of Jabin king of Canaan, under which many of the Israelites very probably died; but now the few mean and miserable that remained were raised to an high estate, and made to *have dominion over the nobles among the people;* that is, over the Canaanitish nobility, that were among the people under Jabin; but he being conquered by the Israelites, his people and even his nobles became subject to them: and this was the Lord's doing, as the following words shew: *the Lord made me have dominion over the mighty;* that is, Deborah, to whom God gave dominion either over the mighty ones of Israel, being raised up to be their judge; or over the mighty Canaanites, she having a concern in the conquest of them and triumph over them, through her direction, advice, command, and presence, though a woman.

Ver. 14. *Out of Ephraim was there a root of them against Amalek,* &c.] In this and some following verses, Deborah makes mention of the tribes that were aiding and assisting in this war, and of those that were not; and begins with Ephraim, where she herself dwelt, ver. 4, 5. who was the root, foundation, and source of this expedition, that under a divine influence directed, animated, and encouraged to it; and by whom, and from whence, a detachment was sent against the Amalekites, who upon all occasions were ready to assist the Canaanites, and now were about to do it; and to prevent their junction, a party was sent from Ephraim, and by the Ehpraimites; though the Targum, and the Jewish commentators in general, refer this to a past action, which Deborah here commemorates and celebrates; and understand by *root,* Joshua, who was of that tribe, and who discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword, Exod. xvii. 13. *after thee, Benjamin, among thy people;* which the same Targum and the same writers interpret of a future fact, and as spoken of by way of prophecy; and suppose that Saul of the tribe of Benjamin is meant, and the people of Benjamin, the two hundred thousand footmen he took with him, and fought against Amalek, and destroyed them, 1 Sam. xv. but it is rather to be understood of the tribe of Benjamin in general, which at this time went out against Amalek, to prevent their giving any assistance to Jabin king of Canaan, and who were followed in it by a party of the Ephraimites; so that Benjamin has the greatest honour given it, partly as it was first in this affair, and partly as it was general, the whole tribe engaged, whereas only a few in Ephraim, and those stimulated by the example of Benjamin: *out of Machir came down governors;* Machir was the only son of Manasseh, and therefore this must respect that tribe, half of which was settled on the other side Jordan, and to which Jarchi and other Jewish writers ascribe this, and suppose it refers to the princes and great men of it, who subdued the Amorites, and took the 60 cities of Argob in the time of Moses; though Kimchi and Ben Gersom understand it of some of them that came from thence to assist in this war; but it is clearly suggested in ver. 17 that they abode beyond Jordan, and gave no assistance at all; it therefore must be understood of the half-tribe of Manasseh, within Jordan, from whence came great personages, with a number of men no doubt along with them, to lend an helping hand against the Canaanites, or to be employed as assistants under Barak in this expedition: *and out of Zebulun they that handle the pen of the writer;* which being a maritime tribe, and employed in trade and navigation, had many clerks famous for their readiness in handling the pen; but these through a zeal for the common cause dropped their pens, and took to the sword, in vindication of the rights and liberties of themselves and their brethren; for which they are justly commended.

Ver. 15. *And the princes of Issachar were with Deborah,* &c.] On Mount Tabor, whither they came to offer themselves to join in the war against Jabin; or to assist with their counsels, the men of this tribe being understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, 1 Chron. xii. 32. *even Issachar;* not the princes only, but the whole tribe also; so the Targum paraphrases it, "the rest of the tribe of Issachar:" *and also Barak, he was sent on foot into the valley;* which was at the bottom of Mount Tabor, from whence he was sent down by Deborah, when Sisera's army was come thither; and where he went cheerfully on foot at the head of his 10,000 men, to engage Sisera with his horse and chariots; and which latter were capable of doing great execution in the valley, by running among the foot, and cutting them in pieces with the scythes at the side of them; but Barak, fearless of danger, readily obeyed the command of the judge and prophetess, believing it was of God: or the words may be rendered, as by Noldius[h], *as Issachar, so Barak; he was sent,* &c. the one as the other, with equal readiness and cheerfulness, courage and intrepidity, descended the mountain, at the order of Deborah, and took the field in the open plain, to engage with Sisera and his numerous host: *for the division of Reuben there were great thoughts of heart;* either for their divisions among themselves in their own councils, some being for going over Jordan to assist their brethren the Israelites against Jabin, and free them from his yoke, pitying their distressed state and condition; and others were for keeping at home, and taking care of their flocks, and not intermeddle in the quarrel; judging it to be most for their worldly peace and profit to observe a neutrality: by reason of which divisions no assistance was given. Or for their divisions and separations from their brethren the Israelites, from whom they were not only separated by the river Jordan, but in their affections to them, and regards for them; keeping at a distance from them, when their help was required: and this conduct of theirs caused many thoughts of heart in Deborah and Barak, in the princes and people of Israel, who could not well understand the reason of it; and which caused much grief and

[h] וישׂשכר כן ברק sicut Issachar sic Barach, Concord. Ebr. part. p. 305. No. 1214. So Belg.

uneasiness of mind, that so powerful a tribe, and who had been assisting to them in the conquest of the land, and lay convenient to help them, yet should be so very indifferent to them.

Ver. 16. *Why abodest thou among the sheepfolds, to hear the bleatings of the flocks?* &c.] This tribe abounded with flocks and herds, and therefore chose the country on the other side Jordan, as suitable for them; and now, at this critical juncture, they judged it wisest, and their best policy, to abide by them, and the care of them; lest by intermeddling, should Jabin prevail, he might be provoked to fall upon them, and take them from them; wherefore the bleatings of their flocks, and the whistlings of the shepherds that kept them, sounded louder in their ears, and more engrossed their attention, than the groans and cries of Israel under oppression; or than the soundings of the trumpet, the alarm of war, or the loud calls of Deborah and Barak; being under the influence of a carnal worldly spirit, and wanting affection and sympathy towards their brethren, about which Deborah here expostulates with them: *for the divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart;* this is repeated to shew how much the prophetess, the general of the army, the princes and people, were affected with this conduct of the tribe of Reuben; it gave them much pain and uneasiness, occasioned many inquiries, caused much discourse and conversation, and put them upon thinking, and greatly exercised their minds, what should be the meaning of their behaving after this manner. Cocceius takes these words to be spoken ironically, and renders them, "at the rivers of Reuben "were great men in searchings of heart;" there were wisdom, prudence, counsel, searching, and discerning of spirits, preferring their flocks to the people of God.

Ver. 17. *Gilead abode beyond Jordan,* &c.] A country which lay on the other side Jordan, and was given by Moses, half of it to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other half to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Deut. iii. 12, 13. and being here distinguished from Reuben, it seems that not only that tribe, but also the tribe of Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, on that side Jordan, came not to the help of Israel; but abode where they were, attending their flocks and herds, and preferring their own private profit to the public good; yet as Gilead was given to Machir, Deut. iii. 15. and some are said to come out from thence to serve in this expedition, ver. 14. some read the words, as Kimchi observes, with an interrogation, *did Gilead abide beyond Jordan?* no, he did not; though his situation was beyond it, as well as Reuben's, yet he did not continue there, but came over to help his brethren; and so this is introduced to upbraid Reuben, and leave him without excuse, since he could as well have left his flocks as Gilead did, and come over to the help of his brethren as well as he: *and why did Dan remain in ships?* the Danites inhabiting Joppa, and other places bordering on the Mediterranean sea, attended their navigation and merchandise; and which they chose rather to do, than to appear in the field of battle in the behalf of their brethren; judging this to be a sufficient excuse, though the question put implies the contrary; according to the Targum, they were meditating a flight, and put their goods into ships to flee with them, should Sisera get the day: *Asher continued on the sea-shore;* on the shore of the Mediterranean sea, attending traffic and business, and did not concern themselves at all in this war: *and abode in his trenches;* in his towns and cities, the walls of which had been broken down by the Canaanites, and remained unrepaired, nor were they suffered to repair them; and therefore excused themselves on this account from engaging in the war, being obliged to stay at home to keep and defend their cities; which were in such a ruinous and weak condition, that the enemy might enter at any time: some render it, *in their creeks*[l]; bays and havens where they had much shipping, and which required their attendance.

Ver. 18. *Zebulun and Naphtali were a people,* &c.] These two tribes were chiefly concerned in this war; out of them were the 10,000 men that followed Barak, who willingly offered themselves, and were the most active and vigorous: that *jeoparded themselves unto the death;* exposed them to the utmost danger, fearless of death itself: or *reproached*[k] their lives; were careless of them, valued them not; they were not dear to them, but were ready to part with them freely, in the cause of liberty in which they were engaged: *in the high places of the field;* on the top of Mount Tabor, where they were mustered, and from whence they beheld the vast host of Sisera surrounding them; and yet, with an undaunted bravery and courage, descended the hill to fight with them. The Vulgate Latin version reads, *in the country of Merome;* in the plains and fields of it, near which were the waters of Merom, where Joshua fought Jabin, a former king of Canaan, and supposed by some to be the same with Kishon here, Josh. xi. 5. see Psal. lxxxiii. 9.

Ver. 19. *The kings came,* &c.] Who were with Sisera, as the Targum adds; unless Deborah can be thought to refer to the battle, supposed to be fought about the same place, between Joshua and the kings in confederacy with Jabin, Josh. x. 1, 7. *then fought the kings of Canaan in Taanach by the waters of Megiddo;* the other kings of Canaan, which came into the assistance of Jabin, either in the times of Joshua; or rather which now joined Sisera's army, in those places, which both belonged to Manasseh, but were in the tribe of Issachar, of which see the note on Josh. xvii. 11. and were at some distance from each other, as appears by the villages and country around, and belonging to each; and such was the largeness of Sisera's army, reinforced by those kings, that according to the Targum it reached from Taanach to Megiddo; the same is observed by the Jewish commentators; the waters of Megiddo are the same with the river Kishon, which ran near the city: *they took no gain of money;* that is, either of Jabin king of Canaan, whom they came to serve; but freely engaged with him, and maintained their own troops, which they brought into the field, and had raised at their own expense; but according to Kimchi the sense is, they took no money of the Israelites that fell into their hands, but slew them, would not save their lives,

[l] על מפרציו in portubus, V. L. ad sinus suos, some in Vatablus.

[k] חרף probris affecit Pagninus; so the Targum.

though they offered them money, being like the merciless Medes, Isa. xiii. 17, 18. but rather the meaning is, that whereas they came big with expectation of a large booty among the Israelites, they were disappointed, and obliged to flee without any.

Ver. 20. *They fought from heaven*, &c.] Either the angels of heaven, afterwards called stars; or the heavens, the elements, fought for Israel, and against Sisera; a violent storm of rain and hail falling at this time, which discomfited Sisera's army; see the note on ch. iv. 15. or this victory was obtained in such a manner as plainly shewed it was not of man, but of God from heaven; so the Targum, "from heaven war was made "with them;" with the kings before mentioned; God fought against them, and no wonder they were conquered: *the stars in their courses fought against Sisera*; it seems as if it was in the night that this battle was fought, at least that the pursuit lasted till night, when the stars by their brightness and clear shining favoured the Israelites, and were greatly to the disadvantage of the Canaanites; unless it can be thought, as is by some, that the stars had an influence to cause a tempest of rain, hail, thunder, and lightnings, by which the army of Sisera was discomfited in the day-time, as before observed.

Ver. 21. *The river of Kishon swept them away*, &c.] To which Sisera's army was drawn, and where it was discomfited; and very probably many of them, in their confusion, endeavoured to make their escape by fording or swimming over the river, by which they were swept away and drowned, the waters of it at this time swelling in a miraculous manner, as Ben Gersom thinks; or were increased by the large showers of rain that fell, as some note from Josephus, though I find it not in him; however it is not improbable it might be the case; for our countryman Mr. Maundrell[l] thus observed when he was at it; "in the condition we saw "it, its waters were low and inconsiderable; but passing "along the side of the plain, we discovered the track "of many lesser torrents falling down into it from "the mountains, which must needs make it swell ex- "ceedingly upon sudden rains, as doubtless it ac- "tually did at the destruction of Sisera's host, Judg. "v. 21." *that ancient river, the river Kishon*; called ancient, either because it was from the beginning of the creation, and not cut by the art of men, as some rivers are; or because it was spoken of by poets and historians in ancient times; or because of famous exploits done here of old; so the Targum, "the river where "signs and mighty works were done for Israel of old." Some take the word Kedumim to be another name of the river, so called from its windings and turnings, and, as it were, meeting itself. So some travellers tell us[m], the river Kedumim, the same with Kishon, is so called, because it meets itself, being by its meanders formed like a sling or noose, as Kishon signifies; it rises at Mount Tabor, and discharges itself into the Mediterranean sea, at the foot of Mount Carmel; so Hillerus[n] says, Kishon signifies bending in manner of a snare, or net, or meander, and takes it to be the same with the Pagida of Pliny[o], which in the Greek tongue signifies the same: *O my soul, thou hast trodden down strength*; a strong and mighty army, through her prayers and supplication, advice and direction; or thou hast trodden with strength, that is, the river Kishon, as some Jewish interpreters understand it, who suppose that another miracle was wrought; that as the waters of the river swelled when the Canaanites attempted to escape over it, so it sunk and became fordable for Deborah and the Israelites; a miracle, as they suppose, somewhat similar to that at the Red sea.

Ver. 22. *Then were the horse-hoofs broken by means of the prancings*, &c.] Either through the force of the waters of the river, where they pranced and plunged, and could have no standing; or through the swift haste they made to run away, striking the earth so quick, and with such force and vehemence, that their hoofs were broken thereby, especially on stony ground, and so their speed retarded: *the prancings of the mighty ones*: either their riders, princes, and great personages, who made them prance, leap, and run with great speed and force; or horses strong and mighty, being such as were selected for this purpose, and trained to war.

Ver. 23. *Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord*, &c.] Not Barak, as the Targum and Jarchi, but Deborah herself said this under a spirit of prophecy, not from her own spirit in a revengeful way, but from the spirit of God; or this was suggested to her by an angel, not a created, but the increated one, the Angel of the covenant, by whom she was inspired, and an impulse made by him on her to denounce a curse on Meroz; which some say was a star, Sisera's star; others the name of a mighty man[p], so Jarchi; but rather it is some name of a city or place near where the battle was fought, so Kimchi, Ben Gersom, and Ben Melech: some take Meroz to be the same with Merom, at the waters of which Joshua fought with Jabin, Josh. xi. 5. and supposed to be the same with the waters of Megiddo, and the river Kishon, where this battle was fought; and Jerom[q], under the word Merom, observes, that there was in his time a village called Merrus, 12 miles from the city Sebaste near Dothaim, and that Meroz here is the name of a place is clear from what follows: *curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof*: or *curse cursing*[r]; repeat it, give them curse upon curse, curse them most vehemently: the reason of which follows: *because they came not to the help of the Lord*; that is, of the people of the Lord, whose cause was the Lord's; for though he stood in no need of their help, yet their negligence and neutrality were highly resented by him, and therefore repeated: *to the help of the Lord against the mighty*; the mighty Canaanites, and their mighty kings, and mighty hosts; or *with the mighty*[s], Barak and his 10,000: now though others, who did not come into their assistance, are only discommended; being at a distance, yet those are cursed, being very near, and saw the peril their brethren were in, and yet would not lend an helping hand.

Ver. 24. *Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of*

[l] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 57.
[m] Egmont and Heyman's Travels, par. 2. p. 2.
[n] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 180, 405, 395.
[o] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.

[p] T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 16. 1.
[q] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. D.
[r] ארו ארור maledicite maledicendo, Pagninus, Montanus.
[s] בגבורים cum fortibus, Pagninus, Tigurine version; so Patrick.

Heber the Kenite be, &c.] Under the same influence that Meroz was cursed, Jael is blessed, the one for not helping Israel in a public way, the other for doing it in a private manner; this blessing is pronounced, either in a way of prayer that it might be, or in a way of prophecy that it should be, and indeed in both: *blessed shall she be above the women in the tent;* above all women that dwell in tents: this being a proper description of a woman, whose character it is to abide in her tent, dwell at home, and mind the business of her family; and may have respect to the manly action she performed in her tent, equal, if not superior, to what was done in the field.

Ver. 25. *He asked water, and she gave him milk,* &c.] That is, Sisera asked it of her, as the Targum expresses it, when he turned into her tent: *she brought him fresh butter in a lordly dish;* which signifies either the same, the milk with cream on it, for that is meant by butter; or having first taken off the cream, she gave him milk to drink, and then brought the cream in a dish for him to eat, and thereby the more incline him to sleep; and this she brought in a dish fit for any lord or nobleman to eat out of; in such a polite and courteous manner did she use him, so that he could have no suspicion of her having any ill design against him. R. Jonah, as Kimchi notes, interprets this of a dish of the mighty or lordly ones, of the shepherds, the principal of the flock, as they are called in Jer. xxv. 34, 35. out of which they had used to drink their milk, or eat their cream, and such an one was likely enough to be Jael's tent; from this Hebrew word *sepel,* here used, seems to come the Latin word *simpucium* or *simpulum,* used in things sacred, and which, according to Pliny[t], was an earthen vessel; and so some of the Rabbins, as Kimchi observes, say, this was a new earthen vial; it is very probable it was a broad platter or dish fit for such an use.

Ver. 26. *She put her hand to the nail,* &c.] Her left hand, as the Septuagint, Arabic, and Vulgate Latin versions express it, and as appears by what follows; she having taken up a pin from her tent, with which it was fastened to the ground, she clapped it to the temples of Sisera: *and her right hand to the workman's hammer;* in her right hand she took a hammer, such as carpenters, and such-like workmen, make use of, and workman-like went about her business she had devised, and was determined upon, being under a divine impulse, and so had no fear or dread upon her: *and with the hammer she smote Sisera;* not that with the hammer she struck him on the head, and stunned him, but smote the nail she had put to his temples and drove it into them: *she smote off his head;* after she had driven the nail through his temples, she took his sword perhaps and cut off his head, as David cut off Goliah's, after he had slung a stone into his forehead; though as this seems needless, nor is there any hint of it in the history of this affair, the meaning may only be, that she struck the nail through his head, as the Septuagint, or broke his head, as the Targum: *when she had pierced and stricken through his temples;* that being the softest and tenderest part of the head, she drove the nail quite through them to the ground, ch. iv. 21.

Ver. 27. *At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down,* &c.] Perhaps at her first approach to him, and attempt to drive the nail, or at the blow she gave, he rose up, but she had done his business so effectually at the first stroke, that he dropped at once, and laid down his head again: *at her feet he bowed, he fell;* when she redoubled her blow: *where he bowed, there he fell down dead;* and struggled and stirred no more; thus ingloriously did this general of a vast army die. This action is no otherwise to be justified, but by its being done through an impulse of the spirit of God upon her, to take away the life of an implacable enemy of God's people; otherwise it might seem to be a breach of hospitality towards her guest she had invited in, and of the peace which subsisted between this general's prince and her husband; and therefore is not to be drawn into an example where there is no appearance of a divine warrant.

Ver. 28. *The mother of Sisera looked out at a window,* &c.] Which perhaps looked towards the high road, in which she expected Sisera to return in his chariot with his victorious army; and she was looking out for him, not through fear of any ill that had befallen him, or suspicion of bad success, but through impatience to see him in triumph return, wreathed with laurels: *and cried through the lattice;* which is but another word for a window, which was not of glass, that being of a later invention, but made in lattice-form, in a sort of network, full of little holes to let in air and light, and look out at; here she stood and cried with a very loud uneasy tone; the word signifies a sort of a groaning howling noise, discovering impatience and uneasiness; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it, *she howled;* saying in a whining way, *why is his chariot so long in coming?* she did not doubt at all of victory, and concluded it would soon be obtained, and there would be very little trouble and difficulty in getting it, and therefore wondered his chariot was not in sight: *why tarry the wheels of his chariots?* the 900 he took with him, of the return of which she made no doubt, only was uneasy until they appeared, that she might be delighted with the glory of the triumph; the Targum is, "why are the runners hindered, who should "bring me a letter of the victories?"

Ver. 29. *Her wise ladies answered her,* &c.] Every one in their turn endeavouring to comfort her and make her easy. The Vulgate Latin version is, "one "that was wiser than the rest of his wives;" but they seem rather to be her maids of honour, or ladies of her acquaintance, who were come to pay her a visit, and share in the pleasing sight they expected to have of Sisera: *yea, she returned answer to herself;* before they could well give theirs, she soon recollected herself what might be, and must be, the occasion of this delay; and this, according to the Targum, she made in her wisdom, what her great wisdom quickly suggested to her was certainly the case, and with which she comforted and quieted herself.

Ver. 30. *Have they not sped?* &c.] Or *found*[a] the enemy, Barak and his army, or the spoil of them? no

[t] Nat. Hist. l. 35. c. 12.

[a] הלא ימצאו nonne invenient, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Vatablus.

doubt they have: *have they not divided the prey?* doubtless they have, which being large, and the captives many, has taken up much of their time to look over, and make an equal and proper division of, and that most certainly is the cause of the delay: *to every man a damsel or two?* or *a womb or two*[w], using both unchaste and contemptuous language[x], and pleasing themselves with the virgins of Israel being abused by the common soldiers, which was too frequently the case with the Heathens at gaining a victory: *to Sisera a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work, of divers colours of needle-work on both sides;* suits of clothes of different colours, such as were the works of the women of Sidon[y], and those curiously interwoven or wrought with a needle, and that on both sides of the silk or stuff of which they were made; and so such as were of great worth and esteem, and such it was expected, and with confidence and assurance of it, Sisera would bring with him, and make presents of to his mother and her ladies, or which he would have for his own wear and use, or both: *meet for the necks* of them *that take the spoil?* the general of the army, and the chief men to whom the spoil was brought, and then divided suitably to the rank and quality of every soldier. Pliny[z] says, the Phrygians first invented the art of needle-work; hence the garments wrought, and those that made them, were called after their name; but it is certain it was known by the ancient Hebrews and Canaanites, see Exod. xxvi. 36.

Ver. 31. *So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord!* &c.] As Sisera and his army did, and be disappointed as his mother and her ladies were; which is not only a wish or prayer that it might be, but a prophecy that so it would be: *but let them that love him:* that love the Lord superlatively and sincerely, with all their heart and soul, and from love serve and fear him: be *as the sun when he goeth forth in his might;* in the middle of the day, when its heat and light are the greatest, and in the summer solstice, in the month of June, when the sun is in Cancer, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel observe, and it is hottest: the sense is, let the true friends of God be as bright and as glorious, and increase in light, lustre, and splendour, as that glorious luminary in midday, and be no more liable to be resisted and stopped by their enemies, and as much out of the reach of them as that is: *and the land had rest 40 years;* these are not the words of Deborah, whose song ends with the last clause, but of the writer of this book; which years, according to most, are to be reckoned from the death of Ehud, including the 20-years' bondage under Jabin, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel; so that strictly speaking the rest was but 20 years; one would think they should be reckoned from the victory obtained over Jabin king of Canaan.

CHAP. VI.

IN this chapter we have an account of the distressed condition Israel was in through the Midianites, ver. 1—6. of a prophet being sent unto them to reprove them for their sins, ver. 7—10. of an angel appearing to Gideon, with an order to him to go and save Israel out of the hands of the Midianites, ver. 11—16. and of a sign given him by the angel, whereby he knew this order was of God, ver. 17—24. and of the reformation from idolatry in his father's family he made upon this, throwing down the altar of Baal, and building one for the Lord, ver. 25—32. and of the preparation he made to fight the Midianites and others, ver. 33, 34, 35. but first desired a sign of the Lord, that Israel would be saved by his hand, which was granted and repeated, ver. 36—40.

Ver. 1. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] After the death of Deborah and Barak, during whose life they kept to the pure worship of God, and who, perhaps, lived pretty near the close of the 40-years' rest, or of the 20 years from their victory over Jabin; but they dying, the children of Israel fell into idolatry, for that that was the evil they did appears from ver. 10. even worshipping the gods of the Amorites: *and the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian seven years:* this was not the Midian where Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, lived, which lay more southward, but that which joined to Moab, and was more eastward. This people had been destroyed by the Israelites in the times of Moses, in their way to the land of Canaan, Numb. xxxi. wherefore they might bear them a grudge, and now took the opportunity to revenge themselves on them, God permitting them so to do for their sins; and though the destruction of this people by Israel was very general, yet as some of them might make their escape, and afterwards return to their own land, and this being about 200 years ago, might, with others joining them, re-people their country by this time, and become strong and powerful.

Ver. 2. *And the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel,* &c.] They were too strong for them, and overcame them, and brought them into subjection to them, and no wonder, when the Lord delivered them into their hand: *and because of the Midianites;* because of their usage of them, their manner of coming upon them yearly, and pillaging and plundering their substance, as after related: *the children of Israel made them dens which are in the mountains;* the word for *dens* has the signification of light in it, and are so called either by an antiphrasis, because they were dark, or, as Kimchi thinks, because they had a window at the top of them, which let in the light[a]; but Ben Gersom conjectures they were torches, which gave a great light, and when they that held them saw from the mountains the Midianites, by these torches they made a signal to the Israelites to take care and hide themselves and their sub-

[w] רחם רחמתים vulvam vulvas duas, Piscator.
[x] Vid. R. Sol. Urbin. Ohel Moed, fol. 59. 1.
[y] Julian. Opera, par. 1. orat. 2. p. 94. Vid. Homer. Iliad. 6. ver. 289, 290.
[z] Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 48.
[a] So David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 90. 3. or because men flowed and flocked to them for safety; so Buxtorf.

stance: *and caves, and strong holds*: the caves were for the poorer sort, and the strong holds for the richer to retire to with their goods; though, according to Jarchi, the latter were no other than fences they made in woods, by cutting down trees, and setting them round about them, perhaps much the same as the thickets, 1 Sam. xiii. 6.

Ver. 3. *And so it was, when Israel had sown*, &c.] Their land, and it was grown up, and near being ripe, or quite: for the Midianites gave them no disturbance in the winter, and during seed-time, when they came out of their lurking-holes, and manured their land, and sowed it: *that the Midianites came up*: into the land of Canaan, from the other side Jordan, where their country lay, and which it seems lay lower than the land of Israel: *and the Amalekites, and the children of the east*: the former were implacable enemies of Israel, and on every occasion would join other nations in oppressing them; and the children of the east were Arabians, as Josephus [b] expressly affirms: *even they came up against them*; all these three sorts of people in a confederacy.

Ver. 4. *And they encamped against them*, &c.] Formed a camp, from whence they sent out parties to plunder the people; or "they were fixing their tents among "them," as the Vulgate Latin version; and so the Targum, "they dwelt by them," or fixed their habitations by them; for they seem not to have come as a regular army, but as a sort of banditti to pillage, and plunder, and destroy the fruits of the earth; and the Midianites and Arabians dwelt in tents chiefly: *and destroyed the increase of the earth*: the corn and grass before they were well ripe, and fit to cut down; this they did, and gave it to their cattle, and the rest they carried off: *till thou come unto Gaza*: a principality of the Philistines, which lay in the western part of Canaan, on the shore of the Mediterranean sea; so that as these people came out of the east, and entered the eastern part, they went through the whole land from east to west, cutting down all the fruits of the earth for forage for their cattle: *and left no sustenance for Israel*; nothing to support life with, cutting down their corn and their grass, their vines and olives, so that they had nothing to live upon: *neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass*: not any thing for those creatures to live upon, nor did not leave any of them, but carried them all away.

Ver. 5. *For they came up with their cattle, and their tents*, &c.] Brought their flocks and their herds with them, to eat up the increase of the earth, and their tents, which they pitched and removed from place to place, for the conveniency of feeding their cattle, and whilst they cut down the fruit of the earth everywhere, which serves to confirm the sense of the Targum and Vulgate Latin version of ver. 4. *and they came as grashoppers for multitude*: or *as locusts* [c], they were like them for their number, and for devouring all they came to: *and their camels were without number*: which they brought with them, to load and carry off their plunder they could not eat. Midian was a place famous for camels and dromedaries, Isa. lx. 6. and so Arabia, the people of which joined the Midianites in this expedition; of whom Leo Africanus says [d], that they reckon of their riches and possessions by their camels; wherefore if any one speaks of the riches of such a prince or nobleman, he says that he is possessed of so many camels, and not of so many thousands of pieces of gold, see Job i. 3. *and they entered into the city to destroy it*: this was their sole view. In such-like manner as this did Alyattes king of the Lydians make war with the Milesians, as Herodotus [e] relates; which passage Grotius has quoted at large.

Ver. 6. *And Israel was greatly impoverished, because of the Midianites*, &c.] Were reduced very low, brought into famishing circumstances through the Midianites thus destroying the fruits of the earth year after year: *and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord*; which they should have done at first, instead of going into dens and caves; however, better late than not at all; they cried, not to the idols they had served, being sensible they could not help them, though so foolish as to worship them; but to Jehovah the God of the whole earth, and who was in a special sense their God, though they had forsaken him.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass, when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, because of the Midianites*.] Because of their oppressions and ill usage of them, and not because of their sins, which had brought those evils on them, of which, at present, they seemed not to be sensible; and yet such was the goodness and compassion of God to them, that having a mind to deliver them, he immediately, on their crying to him, sends them a messenger to bring them to a sense of their sins, and prepare them for the deliverance he designed to work for them, as follows.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord sent a prophet unto the children of Israel*, &c.] A *man, a prophet* [f], as in the Hebrew text, not an angel, but a man; and this not Phinehas, as say some Jewish writers [g]; for it is not probable he should live so long as more than 200 years; and had he been living, it is very much he should not have been heard of in the times of the preceding judges, and that he was not made use of before now to reprove the people for their sins; but who the prophet was we have no account now nor hereafter, here or elsewhere. Abarbinel supposes he was raised up for a short time: *which said unto them, thus saith the Lord God of Israel*; he came in the name of the Lord, and using the form and manner of speech the prophets of Israel did, putting them in mind of the true God they had forgot, and who yet was their Lord and God: *I brought you up from Egypt, and brought you forth out of the house of bondage*; reminding them of the benefits they received from God, and the obligations they lay under to serve him, who, when they were bond-slaves in Egypt, he appeared for them, and brought them out of their miserable condition.

Ver. 9. *And I delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians*, &c.] Even after they were brought out of Egypt, when the Egyptians pursued after them, and

[b] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 1.
[c] כדי ארבה tanquam locustæ, Pagninus, V. L. Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[d] Descriptio Africæ, l. 9. p. 745.
[e] Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 17.
[f] איש נביא virum prophetam, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[g] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 53.

overtook them at the Red sea; where they were in the utmost distress, and the Lord wrought salvation for them, gave them a passage through it, and destroyed the Egyptians in it: *and out of the hand of all that oppressed you*: the Amalekites who made war with them at Rephidim, Sihon, and Og, kings of the Amorites, who came out to fight with them, and oppose their passage through their land into Canaan, and the kings of the Canaanites also, who combined against them: *and drave them out from before you, and gave you their land*: not only the land of Sihon and Og, but the whole land of Canaan, out of which more properly the inhabitants of it may be said to be driven.

Ver. 10. *And I said unto you, I am the Lord your God, &c.*] The covenant-God of them and their fathers, and they ought not to have owned and acknowledged any other besides him: *fear not the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell*: meaning not a fear of being hurt by them, but such a fear and reverence of them as to worship them, which was only to be given to the Lord. The Amorites are here put for all the Canaanites, they being a principal people among them: *but ye have not obeyed my voice*: to cleave to him, fear and worship him; they had been guilty of idolatry, and this is the sin the prophet was sent to reprove them for, and bring them to a sense of.

Ver. 11. *And there came an angel of the Lord, &c.*] This was not the prophet before mentioned, as Ben Gersom thinks, but an angel of God, as expressed, and not a created one, but the Angel of Jehovah's presence, the Word and Son of God, and who is expressly called Jehovah himself, ver. 14, 23, 24. *and sat under an oak*: or stayed there a while, as Kimchi interprets it, seeing, according to his observation, angels are not said to sit, but stand: *which was in Ophrah, that pertaineth to Joash the Abiezrite*; which shews that this Ophrah is different from a city of this name in the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 23. for the oak that was in it, under which the angel sat, belonged to Joash an Abiezrite, a descendant of Abiezer, son of the sister of Gilead, who was the son of Machir the son of Manasseh, Josh. xvii. 2. 1 Chron. vii. 17, 18, 14. it is called by Josephus [h] Ephra, and by Jerom [i] Ephrata: *and his son Gideon threshed wheat by the wine-press, to hide it from the Midianites*; lest they should take it away, and bereave his father's family of their sustenance, as they were wont to do, wherever they could find it; and all circumstances attending this affair were on this account: he threshed it himself, this he chose to do, and not trust his servants, lest it should be discovered; and he beat the wheat out with a staff, that it might be more silently done, and not with oxen, which was the usual way of treading out corn, who, bellowing [k], would discover it: and this was done not on a threshing-floor, but where a wine-press stood, where there could be no suspicion of such work being doing.

Ver. 12. *And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him, &c.*] He stayed some time under the oak, and Gideon being busy in threshing, took no notice of him, wherefore he came and stood before him, in his sight: *and said unto him, the Lord is with thee*; the gracious presence of God was with Gideon while he was threshing, who very probably was sending up ejaculations to heaven, on account of the distressed case of Israel, and was deep in meditation about the affairs of the people of God, and contriving how to deliver them; or the angel might mean himself, who was no other than Jehovah, the eternal Word of God, who was present with him, and spake unto him; and so the Targum, "my Word is thy help:" *thou mighty man of valour*; who very probably was a stout man in body, and of a courageous mind naturally, and might at this instant have an increase both of bodily strength and greatness of soul; or, however, this was said to animate and encourage him to do what he was about to be sent to do.

Ver. 13. *And Gideon said to him, oh my Lord, &c.*] Taking him not to be an angel, but some illustrious and eminent person: *if the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us?* all these troubles and calamities through the oppression of the Midianites; for he understood what was said to him in the salutation, respecting not himself personally and privately, but the people of Israel; and he could not tell how to reconcile the Lord's being with them, and yet suffering such sad things to befall them they groaned under: *where be all his miracles which our fathers told us of, saying, did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?* when God was with his people, and brought them out of Egypt, he wrought miracles for them, whereby they were delivered out of their bondage; of this their fathers had assured them, but nothing of this kind was wrought for them now, and therefore there was no appearance of the Lord being with them, but all the contrary, as follows: *but now the Lord has forsaken us, and delivered us into the hand of the Midianites*: and there was good reason for it, because they had forsaken the Lord, and worshipped the gods of the Amorites.

Ver. 14. *And the Lord looked upon him, &c.*] The same before called the angel of the Lord, and who was no other than Jehovah himself; who looked upon him with great earnestness, and with great delight and pleasure smiled upon him, and thereby shewing he had a kindness for him, and meant well to him: *and said unto him, go in this thy might*: both of body and mind, which had been before given unto him, and was now increased, and which no doubt Gideon was sensible of: *and thou shalt save Israel from the hand of the Midianites?* as he did, and therefore justly reckoned among the saviours and judges of Israel: *have not I sent thee?* to do this great work, save the people of Israel, from whence Gideon might perceive who it was that talked with him, and having a command and commission from God, had authority enough to go about this service.

Ver. 15. *And he said unto him, oh my Lord, &c.*] Whether he had yet suspected who he was, or took him still for some eminent person, is not certain; it is very probable he began to think he was some extraor-

[h] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 6, 7.
[i] De loc. Heb. fol. 90. K.
[k] Vid. Homer. Iliad. 20. ver. 495, 496, 497.

dinary person sent of God, and speaking in his name, and therefore expostulates with him about the work he put him upon: *wherewith shall I save Israel?* in what way is it possible for me to do it, who had neither men nor money sufficient for such an undertaking? *behold, my family is poor in Manasseh;* of which tribe he was, and the *thousand* in it, as the word [l] here used signifies, was the meanest of all the thousands in that tribe; some render it, *my father* [m]: *and I am the least in my father's house;* perhaps the youngest son; though some take him, and others his father, to be the Chiliarch, or head of the thousand; but by these words of his it does not seem as if either was true; not but that he was of some wealth and substance, power and authority, by having such a number of servants as to take *ten* of them with him, ver. 27. however, this he says in great humility and modesty, having no high thoughts of himself and family, nor any dependence on his own strength, and on an arm of flesh.

Ver. 16. *And the Lord said unto him, surely I will be with thee,* &c.] The Targum is, "my Word shall "be thy help," which was sufficient to answer all objections taken from his meanness, unworthiness, and weakness: *and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man;* all together, and as easily as if thou hadst but one man to deal with, and the destruction be so entire and general that none shall be left.

Ver. 17. *And he said unto him, if now I have found grace in thy sight,* &c. Or seeing he had, as appeared by his salutation of him as a man of might, by the work he gave him a commission to do, and by the promise of assistance and success: *then shew me a sign that thou talkest with me;* in the name of God, as a messenger sent by him, whether an angel or a man; for who he was as yet Gideon was not clear in it, and that what he had said was truth, and would be certainly fulfilled; and which Gideon might desire, not so much, or at least not only for his own sake, and the confirmation of his faith, for which he is renowned, as that he might be able to satisfy others that he had a commission from God, by a messenger of his, to attempt the deliverance of Israel.

Ver. 18. *Depart not hence, I pray thee, until I come unto thee,* &c.] Intending to go to his own, or his father's house, to fetch some food to entertain him with, and therefore entreats he would not quit the place where he was until he returned: *and bring forth my present, and set it before thee;* to treat him with, as a stranger and a messenger of God; and perhaps he thought, by this means, the better to discover who he was, whether an angel or a man: the word for the present is *minchah,* often used for a meat-offering, therefore some have thought of a sacrifice; but it appears by what follows that it was not of the nature of a sacrifice; and, besides, Gideon was no priest, nor was this a place for sacrifice, nor was there here any altar; and, besides, as Gideon did not yet know that it was the Lord himself, he could never think of offering a sacrifice to him: *and he said, I will tarry until thou come again;* which was a wonderful instance of divine condescension, it being some time he waited ere Gideon could prepare what he brought, as follows.

Ver. 19. *And Gideon went in,* &c.] Into his own house, or his father's: *and made ready a kid;* boiled it, as appears by the broth he brought, at least part of it was so dressed; and perhaps it was only some part of one that he brought, since a whole one was too much to be set before one person, and if even he himself intended to eat with him: *and unleavened cakes of an ephah of flour;* that is, probably those were made out of an ephah of flour; not that the whole ephah was made into cakes; since an omer, the tenth part of an ephah, was sufficient for one man a whole day; and, according to the computation of Waserus [n], an ephah was enough for 45 men for a whole day; unless it can be thought that this was done to shew his great hospitality to a stranger, and the great respect he had for him as a messenger of God: the rather unleavened cakes were brought, because of dispatch, being soon made. Jarchi says, from hence it may be learned that it was now the time of the passover, and the day of waving the sheaf; but this is no sufficient proof of it; besides, if this was new wheat Gideon had been threshing, it shews it to be about the wheat-harvest, which was not till Pentecost; it was the barley-harvest that began at the passover: *the flesh he put in a basket;* the flesh of the kid which was boiled, or if any part of it was dressed another way, it was put by itself in a basket for more easy and commodious carriage: *and he put the broth in a pot;* a brazen pot, as Kimchi interprets it, in which the kid was boiled; and this, as he says, was the water it was boiled in: *and brought it out unto him under the oak;* where he first appeared, and was now waiting the return of Gideon there: *and presented it;* set it before him, perhaps upon a table, which might be brought by his servants, or on a seat, which was placed under the oak to sit upon under its shade for pleasure.

Ver. 20. *And the angel of God said unto him,* &c.] Instead of sitting down and partaking of the entertainment made for him, he bid him do as follows: *take the flesh, and the unleavened cakes, and lay them upon this rock;* not as a table to eat it from, but as an altar to offer it upon; and which rock and altar might be typical of Christ, who sanctifies every gift, present, and offering of his people: this rock was undoubtedly in sight, and very probably the oak, under which they were, grew upon it, or at the bottom of it, where it was no unusual thing for oaks to grow, Gen. xxxv. 8. but it was upon the top of the rock that these were to be laid, where afterwards an altar was built, ver. 26. *and pour out the broth;* upon the flesh and cakes, and upon the rock also, which by bringing from his house must have been cool, and it became cooler by being poured out, and cooler still by being poured upon a cold rock: *and he did so;* he readily obeyed his orders; though he had reason to wonder he should have so ordered the food he brought for his entertainment to be thus made use of; perhaps he might expect that he intended to give him a sign, as he de-

[l] אלפי chilias mea, Montanus, Drusius; mea millenaria, Tigurine version; mille meum, Piscator.

[m] Pater meus, Pagninus; so some in Drusius.

[n] De Antiqu. mensuris Heb. l. 2. c. 5. sect. 9.

sired, and therefore the more readily, without any objection, complied with his order.

Ver. 21. *Then the angel of the Lord put forth the end of the staff that* was *in his hand*, &c.] With which he walked, appearing as a traveller, and which was one reason of Gideon's providing for his refreshment, before he proceeded on in his journey: *and touched the flesh and the unleavened cakes;* did not strike the rock with it, as Moses did with his rod, to fetch out water for the Israelites, but touched the provisions brought him; not using it instead of a knife to separate any part of them, but for the working of a miracle, as follows: *and there rose up fire out of the rock;* had he struck the rock with his staff, the miracle would not have appeared so great, because it might be thought there was an iron ferrule at the end of it, which striking on a flinty rock might cause fire; but it was the flesh and cakes only that were touched, and these also as having broth poured on them, and the rock likewise: *and consumed the flesh, and the unleavened cakes;* though they had the broth poured on them, and were sodden with it; so that the miracle was similar to that wrought by Elijah on Mount Carmel, 1 Kings xviii. 33—38. and those who think that this angel was the man, the prophet before mentioned, and he Phinehas, and Phinehas Elijah, are confirmed in their opinion by this likeness; though there is no sufficient ground for it: *then the angel of the Lord departed out of his sight;* not went on his journey, as he might seem, but vanished immediately; which circumstance plainly shewed, and fully convinced Gideon, that he was not a man, but an angelic spirit, as well as the miracle wrought proved him to be more than a man; and so Gideon had what he desired, a sign that he might know who talked with him, and that what he talked of would certainly come to pass.

Ver. 22. *And when Gideon perceived he was an angel of the Lord*, &c.] By the miracle wrought, and the manner of his departure: *Gideon said, alas! O Lord God:* woe to me, what will become of me, or befall me, I shall surely die: *for because I have seen an angel of the Lord face to face;* and whom he had reason to believe was the Lord himself, a divine Person, by the miracle wrought; and it was a commonly received notion even among good men, in those times, that the Lord was not to be seen by them and live, as appears from Jacob, Manoah, and others; at least the appearance of a divine Person, and even of any messenger from heaven, was startling, surprising, and frightful to them; which arose from a sense they had of the divine Being, and of their own sinfulness and frailty.

Ver. 23. *And the Lord said unto him*, &c.] Either by a secret impulse upon his spirit, or by a voice from heaven; and even, as Kimchi observes, the angel, after He ascended, might cause this voice to be heard, seeing him in great fear, because he knew he was an angel; and which is another proof of this angel being Jehovah himself, the eternal Word: *peace be unto thee, fear not, thou shalt not die:* let not thy mind be ruffled and disturbed, but serene and calm; fear not that any evil shall befall thee, and particularly death; thou shalt be safe from any danger whatever, and especially from death, which he expected in his fright would immediately follow.

Ver. 24. *Then Gideon built an altar there unto the Lord*, &c.] On the top of the rock where he had laid his provisions, and which had been consumed by fire issuing out of it, as a token of divine acceptance, and as an assurance of his destroying the Midianites as easily and quickly as the fire had consumed them, and therefore had great encouragement to erect an altar here for God: *and called it Jehovah-shalom;* the Lord is peace, the author and giver of peace, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; so Jarchi, "the Lord is our peace," a fit name for the angel that appeared to him, who was no other than the man the peace; who is our peace, the author of peace between God and man. This name he gave the altar, with respect to the words of comfort said to him in his fright, *peace be to thee;* and by way of prophecy, that peace would be wrought for Israel by the Lord, and prosperity given them; or by way of prayer, the Lord grant or send peace: *unto this day it is yet in Ophrah of the Abiezrites;* that is, the altar Gideon built remained to the times of Samuel, the writer of this book, and was then to be seen in the city of Ophrah, which belonged to the family of the Abiezrites, who were of the tribe of Manasseh.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass the same night*, &c.] The night which followed the day in which the angel appeared to Gideon as he was threshing: *that the Lord said unto him;* perhaps in a dream, since it was in the night: *take thy father's young bullock;* or *the bullock, the ox* [r]; a bullock which was a large grown ox, and was not only his father's property, but what his father designed and set apart for the service of Baal; and though it was his father's, yet having a divine warrant for it, it was sufficient for him to take it without his leave, and especially as it was designed for such an ill use: *even the second bullock of seven years old;* which, according to Hesiod [s], is in its prime and full strength at nine years old, and lives much longer. In Homer [t], one of five years old is said to be sacrificed: this further describes what he was to take, the second that stood in the stall of the bullocks, or that drew in the second row at plough, or the second in age and value, or the second that was set apart for the service of Baal; though the words may be rendered, *and the second bullock* [u]; besides that of his father's, he was to take another, which perhaps belonged to the people, and was the second in birth or age with respect to the former, being seven years old; or, as the Targum is, that had been fatted seven years, and had been so long preparing for the sacrifice of Baal; which was as long as the tyranny of the Midianites over them, and was occasioned by the idolatry of the people of Israel; and such a bullock was ordered to be taken with respect to that, and to shew that it would end with the sacrifice of this creature: *and throw down the altar of Baal that thy father hath;* upon his ground, in some part of his possessions, and per-

[r] השור פר juvencum bovem, Drusius; juvencum adultiorem, Junius & Tremellius.
[s] Opera & dies, l. 2. ver. 54. 55.

[t] Iliad. 2. ver. 403. & Iliad. 7. ver. 35.
[u] ופר & juvencum alium, Tigurine version; & alterum taurum, V. L. & juvencum secundum, Pagninus, Montanus.

haps built at his own expense, though for public use: *and cut down the grove that is by it*; or *about* it, as the Vulgate Latin version; it being usual with the Heathens to plant groves near or around their altars and temples where religious worship was performed; partly to make them more pleasant and venerable, and partly for the commission of deeds which would not bear the light; or *over it*, for they were commonly tall trees which grew over the altar they erected. Some render it, *upon it*[t], and understand by it an idol placed on it: so the Arabic version is, "cut down the female "idol Asira (perhaps the same with Astarte), which is "upon the same altar;" and so the Syriac version to the same purpose, which calls it the idol Estere, set upon the altar.

Ver. 26. *And build an altar to the Lord thy God upon the top of this rock*, &c.] Where the provisions were laid, and out of which came forth fire that consumed them; and where the altar, called by the name of Jehovah-shalom, had been built by him, near it very probably; and there might be room enough for both upon the top of the rock; for this seems to be a distinct altar from that that was erected as a monumental altar, in memory of the miracle there wrought, and in gratitude by Gideon for the preservation of his life, and the peace and prosperity there and then promised, and which altar was to continue, and did; but this was for sacrifice, and only for the present time; for the proper place for sacrifice was the tabernacle: and this was to be built *in the ordered place*; either in the place where Gideon was ordered to put the flesh and the unleavened cakes; or in an orderly way and manner, according as was commanded in the law, as that it should be of earth and unhewn stones, and so framed as that it might be fit to have the wood and sacrifice laid in order on it; or in a plain place, as Kimchi, upon the top of the rock, where he might lay in order the stones of the altar: and *take the second bullock, and offer a burnt-sacrifice with the wood of the grove which thou shalt cut down*: mention being made only of one bullock that was to be offered, has made some think that only one was ordered to be taken, namely, this second, which agrees with our version of ver. 25. for if two were taken, what became of the first, since only the second was ordered to be sacrificed? to which Kimchi makes answer, that he was ordered to take it away, that his father might not offer it to an idol, as he intended, and therefore this was done to prevent idolatry; and as this second bullock was to be a burnt-sacrifice, and to be burned with the wood of the grove just cut down, it seems to confirm the sense of such versions and interpreters who understand it of an idol on the altar of Baal; since wood just cut down would not be fit to burn, whereas an idol of wood, that had been of some standing, would be very proper: every thing ordered and done were different from the laws and usages directed to by Moses, and practised by the Jews. Gideon was no priest, and yet bid to offer sacrifice, and that on an altar of his own erecting, and not the altar of God; and upon the top of a rock, and not at the tabernacle; and the wood of a grove or idol was to be made use of, which in other cases was not allowed; and all this done in the night, which was not the time of sacrificing; but the divine warrant was sufficient for Gideon. The Jews say[u], there were eight things that were made free or allowed now, which were not at another time: and it was necessary, before Gideon acted the part of a deliverer, that he should become a reformer, and it was proper to begin at his own family.

Ver. 27. *Then Gideon took ten men of his servants*, &c.] Not only whom he could command, but could confide in, and whom he knew would cheerfully engage in this work, being like himself, who had not bowed the knee to Baal; and as there was much work to do, and it required dispatch, such a number was necessary; since he had not only the altar of Baal to throw down, and his grove or idol to cut down, but an altar to build, and a sacrifice to be taken and offered: *and did as the Lord had said unto him*: all the above things, he set about them at once, and dispatched them all in one night; so ready and cheerful was he in obedience to the divine command: *and so it was, because he feared his father's household, and the men of the city, that he could not do it by day, that he did it by night*; for both his father's family, and the inhabitants of the city of Ophrah, were all idolaters, worshippers of Baal; and this fear of them was not a fear of being reproached or punished for what he did, or of any harm coming to him for the fact, which as he might expect would be known, so the risk was the same, be it done when it would; but it was a fear of being restrained and hindered from doing it, and therefore in point of prudence, and consulting the honour of God and religion, and not his own safety, he took the time of the night to do it in.

Ver. 28. *And when the men of the city arose early in the morning*, &c.] And came to the place where the altar of Baal, his grove and image, were, to pay their morning devotions to him: *behold, the altar of Baal was cast down, and the grove was cut down that was by it, and the second bullock was offered upon the altar that was built*; upon the new altar that Gideon built, and which very probably was burning when they came: and it is very likely that the place, where the altar of Baal had stood, was not far from the rock where this new altar was erected.

Ver. 29. *And they said one to another, who hath done this thing?* &c.] They were struck with amazement, and could not devise who could be so daring and wicked as to do such an action: *and when they inquired and asked*; one and another, every one present, or they could think of as proper to inquire of; they were very diligent and industrious to find it out; and perhaps they inquired of the family and servants of Joash and Gideon, in whose ground the altar stood: *they said, Gideon the son of Joash hath done this thing*; when they had inquired of every body they could, and thought of one person and another, there was none appeared to them more likely to have done it than Gideon; partly because they knew he was no friend of Baal, and partly because he was a man of spirit and courage, and they concluded none but such an one would have ventured to have done it; and besides,

[t] אשר עליו, Sept. super illud, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.

[u] T. Bab. Temurah, fol. 28. 2. & 29. 1.

they considered he was the son of Joash, who perhaps was their chief magistrate, and that he might presume on his father's protection, as they might suppose; and being near the premises, he was the most likely person they could think of; and it is not improbable, that upon inquiry they got it out of the servants concerned, or that had knowledge of it from them, or from some that saw him that morning at the sacrifice, or returning from it, and therefore peremptorily assert he was the man that did it.

Ver. 30. *Then the men of the city said unto Joash, &c.*] The principal inhabitants of the place met together, and in a body went to Joash their chief magistrate, to have justice done in this case: *bring out thy son, that he may die*: they don't ask to have the cause tried by him, to hear what proof they had of the fact, or what Gideon had to say in his own defence; nor do they wait for the sentence of Joash, but determine it themselves, and require the delinquent to be given up to them, that they might put him to death; a strange request of Israelites, whose law judged no man before it heard him; and besides, according to that, the worshippers of Baal, and not the destroyers of him, and his altars, were to be put to death, which shews how strangely mad and infatuated these people were: *because he hath cut down the altar of Baal, and because he hath cut down the grove that was by it*; they take no notice of the bullock which he had taken and offered, it being his father's property; and which seems to confirm the sense of our version, that there was but one, ver. 25. for had the second been a different one, and the people's property, they would have accused him of theft as well as sacrilege respecting that.

Ver. 31. *And Joash said unto all that stood against him, &c.*] Against his son; that were his accusers and adversaries, and required him to be given up to them, that they might put him to death: *will ye plead for Baal?* what, Israelites, and plead for Baal! or what need is there for this, can't he plead for himself? *will ye save him?* what, take upon you to save your god! can't he save himself? he ought to save both himself and you, if he is a god, and not you save him: *he that will plead for him, let him be put to death, whilst it is yet morning*: immediately, before noon, for it was now morning when they came to him; this he said to terrify them, and to express the hatred he now had of idolatry, and the just sense of its being punishable with death by the law of God. This he may be supposed to say, to save his son from their present wrath and fury, hoping by that time to find out some ways and means for his safety: *if he be a god, let him plead for himself, because one hath cast down his altar*: if he is a god, he knows who has done it, and is able to avenge himself on him, and put him to death himself that has done it, and therefore leave it with him to plead his own cause, and avenge his own injuries; this he said, deriding the deity; for though Joash had been a worshipper of Baal, yet he might be now convinced by his son of the sinfulness of it, and of the necessity of a reformation, in order to a deliverance from the Midianites, for which he had a commission, and had perhaps informed his father of it; or however he was not so attached to Baal, but that he preferred the life of his son to the worship of him.

Ver. 32. *Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal, &c.*] That is, Joash called his son Gideon by that name; who, some think, is the same with Jerombalus, the priest of the god Jevo, or Jehovah; from whom Sanchoniatho, an ancient Phœnician writer, as Philo Byblius says [w], received the principal things in his history respecting the Jews: *saying, let Baal plead against him, because he hath thrown down his altar*; giving this as the reason of the name of Jerubbaal he called him by, which signifies, *let Baal plead*; let Baal plead his own cause, and avenge himself on Gideon for what he has done to him, and put him to death if he can.

Ver. 33. *Then all the Midianites, and the Amalekites, and the children of the east, &c.*] The Arabians, see ver. 3. *were gathered together*; not as being alarmed with this fact of Gideon in destroying the altar of Baal, and so came to avenge it; but it was their usual time of gathering together to come into Canaan, being harvest-time, as appears by Gideon being employed in threshing, to fetch away the increase of the earth, as they had done for some years past: *and went over*; the river Jordan, which lay between the Midianites and the Israelites: *and pitched in the valley of Jezreel*; a very large, delightful, and fruitful plain; of which see the note on Hos. i. 5. a very proper place for such a large number to pitch on, and from whence they might receive much; and a suitable place to bring the increase of the land to, from the several parts of it, which was the business they came upon; and as this lay on the borders of Issachar and Manasseh, it was not far from Gideon, and this gave him an opportunity of exerting himself, and executing his commission.

Ver. 34. *But the spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, &c.*] Not the spirit of prophecy, as Maimonides [x], who calls this spirit the first degree of prophecy, but a spirit of fortitude and courage, as the Targum; the spirit of God filled him, or, as in the Hebrew text, *clothed* [y] him with zeal, strength, and might, moved and animated him to engage with this great body of people come into the land, to ravage and waste it, and to attempt the deliverance of Israel from their bondage: *and he blew a trumpet*; as an alarm of war, and as a token to as many as heard to resort to him, and join with him in the common cause against the enemy: *and Abiezer was gathered after him*; the Abiezrites, one of the families of the tribe of Manasseh, of which Gideon and his father's house were; and even it is probable the inhabitants of Ophrah, who were Abiezrites, being now convinced of their idolatry, and having entertained a good opinion of Gideon as a man of valour, and who, in the present emergence, they looked upon as an hopeful instrument of their deliverance, and therefore joined him.

Ver. 35. *And he sent messengers through all Manasseh, &c.*] Of which tribe he was; not only he called by

[w] Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 1. p. 31.
[x] Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 45.
[y] לבשה induit, Pagninus, Montanus, &c. Vid. Maimon. ut supra. So Homer often represents his heroes as clothed with fortitude and courage; see Iliad. 17.

the trumpet that part of the tribe, the Abiezrites, who were within the sound of it, but the rest of the tribe at a greater distance from him he sent messengers to, acquainting them with his design, and inviting them to his assistance. Some think this refers both to the half-tribe of Manasseh within Jordan, and the other half-tribe on the other side Jordan; but that is not very probable, only the half-tribe within it is meant: *who also was gathered after him;* obeying the summons and invitation he gave them by the messengers: *and he sent messengers unto Asher, and unto Zebulun, and unto Naphtali;* which three tribes lay nearest to him on the north; but he sent not to the inhabitants of the tribe of Ephraim, which lay to the south, and which afterwards occasioned a quarrel, ch. viii. 1. *and they came up to meet them:* that is, the inhabitants of the above three tribes, at least many of them, came up from the places of their habitations to meet Gideon, and those that were associated with him, at their place of rendezvous.

Ver. 36. *And Gideon said unto God,* &c.] Not to a prophet of God who was there, of whom he asked the following signs to be done, as Ben Gersom, but to God in prayer, as Abarbinel: *if thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said:* not that he doubted of it, but was willing to have a confirmation of his faith; and perhaps his view was more for the encouragement of those that were with him than himself, that he desired the following signs; and though he had had one before, that was to shew that he was truly an angel that spoke to him, and not to ascertain the salvation that should be wrought by him; though that might be concluded from his being an angel that spoke to him, and assured him of it.

Ver. 37. *Behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the floor,* &c.] On the floor where he was threshing, where the angel first appeared to him, and which lay exposed to the open air, so that the dew might easily fall upon it: and *if the dew be on the fleece only:* the dew that falls from heaven in the night, when he proposed it should lie on the floor till morning: *and it be dry upon all the earth beside;* meaning not upon all the world, nor even upon all the land of Israel, but upon all the floor about the fleece: *then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said:* for the dew being a token of divine favour, see Hos. xiv. 5. it would shew that Gideon would partake of it, whilst his enemies would be dry and desolate, and ruin and destruction would be their portion.

Ver. 38. *And it was so,* &c.] The Lord condescended to work this miracle for the confirmation of his faith, and for the encouragement of those that were with him; the fleece was wet with the dew of heaven, and all the ground about it dry: *for he rose up early in the morning;* being eagerly desirous of knowing whether his request would be granted, and how it would be with the fleece: *and thrust the fleece together;* to satisfy himself whether the dew had fallen on it, and there was any moisture in it, which by being squeezed together he would more easily perceive: *and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl-full of water;* so that it appeared it had not only fallen on it, but it had taken in a large quantity of it; the word here used is the same as in ch. v. 25. see the note there; the Targum calls it a flagon.

Ver. 39. *And Gideon said unto God,* &c.] In the same way as before, and on the morning when he had been favoured with the sight of the above miracle: *let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once;* he was conscious to himself that it shewed great presumption and boldness in him to repeat his request, and that it had the appearance of great diffidence and distrust in him, after he had been indulged with such a sign to confirm his faith; but as it was not so much on his own account as others, and promising to ask no more favours of this kind, he hoped his boldness would not be resented: *let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece;* one time more with it, and that not to try the power of God, of which he had no doubt, but the will of God, whether it was the good pleasure of God to save Israel by his hand, and whether now was the time, or another: *let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew;* which might seem to be a greater, at least a plainer miracle than the former, and less liable to cavil and objection; for it might be urged, that a fleece of wool naturally draws in and drinks up moisture about it; wherefore that to be dry, and the ground all around it wet, would be a sure sign and evidence of the wonderful interposition of the power and providence of God, in directing the fall of the dew on the one, and not on the other.

Ver. 40. *And God did so that night,* &c.] The night following, the night being the season in which the dew falls: *for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground;* and this might signify, that not Gideon only, as before, should partake of the divine favour, but all the Israelites, who would share in the salvation wrought by him. Many interpreters observe, that all this is an emblem of the different case and state of the Jews and Gentiles under the different dispensations; that whereas under the former dispensation the Jews partook of the divine favour only, and of the blessings of grace, and enjoyed the words and ordinances with which they were watered, when the Gentiles all around them were like a barren wilderness; so, under the Gospel dispensation, the Gentiles share the above benefits to a greater degree, whilst the Jews are entirely destitute of them.]

CHAP. VII.

In this chapter we have an account of the army under Gideon gathered out of several tribes, which from 32,000 were reduced to 300, and we are told by what means this was done, ver. 1—8. and how he was directed to go into the host of the Midianites, where he heard one of them telling his dream to his fellow, which greatly encouraged him to believe he should succeed, ver. 9—15. also we are told the form and manner in

which he disposed of his little army to attack the Midianites, and the orders he gave them to observe, which had the desired effect, and issued in the total rout of that large body of people, ver. 16—22. and those that were not destroyed were pursued by persons gathered out of several tribes, and the passages of Jordan were taken by the Ephraimites, so that those that attempted their escape into their own country, there fell into their hands, ver. 23—25.

Ver. 1. *Then Jerubbaal, who is Gideon, &c.*] That being the name his father had lately given him, ch. vi. 32. *and all the people that were with him, rose up early*: encouraged by the signs and miracles wrought, by which he was assured of success; he was eager to be about his work, and therefore rose early in the morning, and got his army together, and marched to engage the enemy: *and pitched beside the well of Harod*: which he might choose for the refreshment of his army on occasion; or, however, so he was directed in Providence here, where a trial was to be made of them by water: this well, or fountain, seems to be the same with that in 1 Sam. xxix. 1. it signifies fear and trembling, and might have its name either from the fear and trembling of the 22,000 Israelites, whose hearts were dismayed at the Midianites, and they were ordered to return home; or from the fear and trembling of the Midianites, who were discomfited here; the former seems to be the true reason, see ver. 3. *so that the Midianites were on the north side of them*: which Gideon, no doubt, judged to be an advantageous post to him: *by the hill of Moreh, in the valley*; the valley of Jezreel, one of the mountains of Gilboa, as is supposed; the Targum is, "by the hill which looks to the plain;" from whence he could have a view of the Midianitish army, and the disposition of it. Some think this hill had its name from the Midianitish archers; but, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, from there being a watch here to direct the ways, or to give notice to the inhabitants of the valley when an army came against them; though some take it to be a school of some eminent teacher in those days[z].

Ver. 2. *And the Lord said unto Gideon, the people that are with thee* are *too many, &c.*] It appears, by what follows, that there were 32,000 of them, which was but a small army to engage with one of 100,000 more than they; for such was the army of the Midianites and their associates, see ch. viii. 10. but the people were too many, says the Lord, *for me to give the Midianites into their hands*; who would be apt to ascribe the victory to themselves, and not to the Lord; to their number, strength, and valour, and not to the hand of the Lord: *lest Israel vaunt themselves against me, saying, mine own hand hath saved me*; or glory over me, take the glory from me, and ascribe it to themselves, boasting that by their power and prowess they had obtained the victory.

Ver. 3. *Now therefore go to, proclaim in the ears of the people, &c.*] Such a proclamation as follows, was, according to the law of God, to be made when Israel went out to battle against their enemies, Deut. xx. 8. though it looks as if Gideon would not have made such proclamation, had he not been directed to it by the Lord, his army being so small in comparison of the enemy; and perhaps Gideon might understand that law to have respect only to war made for the enlargement of their country, and not for defence against invaders: *saying, whosoever is fearful and afraid*; to engage in battle, because of the number of the enemy: *let him return, and depart early from Mount Gilead*; where it seems they now were, being the same with the hill of Moreh, or adjoining to it; a mountain in the tribe of Manasseh, so called either from its likeness to Mount Gilead on the other side Jordan; or rather in memory of Gilead, the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, from whence the half-tribe sprung, which was on this side, as well as that on the other; and perhaps this name might be given to the mount, to shew that they were of the same tribe, though separated by Jordan: now the fearful and faint-hearted had leave given them by this proclamation to return home directly; and as both armies lay so near, and it might reasonably be expected the battle would be the next day, they are directed to get away in the morning, as early as they could, that they might not be seen, and so be filled with shame themselves, and discourage others. Though some think Mount Gilead, on the other side Jordan, is meant, from whence it is supposed many came to Gideon, ch. vi. 35. and now are ordered to return back, as many as were fearful; and instead of *from*, they render the word *to*, or *towards*, or *beyond* Gilead. Kimchi thinks the word we render *depart early* has the signification of surrounding, a diadem being expressed by a word from hence, which encompasses the head, Isa. xxviii. 5. and so the sense is, that they were ordered to go round about Mount Gilead, and so return home; but it rather may signify their hasty departure and speedy flight, like that of a bird, Psal. xi. 1. *and there returned of the people* 22,000; *and there remained* 10,000; so that they were in all 32,000: now though these of their own accord came and joined Gideon with an intention and resolution to stand by him, and fight the enemy, yet when they came and saw what a large host they had to engage with, and how small the army was with Gideon, their hearts failed them, and they were glad to take the advantage of the proclamation.

Ver. 4. *And the Lord said to Gideon, the people are yet too many, &c.*] Though they were but just the number that Barak had with him, when he attacked Sisera's army and got the victory, which yet was ascribed to God, whose hand was manifestly seen in it; but as these might be supposed to be able men of valour that remained, they were too many for God to have that glory he intended to display in this victory: *bring them down unto the water*; from the hill on which they were, to a brook that ran at the bottom of it, perhaps a stream from the fountain or well of Harod, ver. 1. *and I will try them for thee there*, or *purge them*[a], as silver is purged from dross, so the word signifies, as Kimchi observes, the righteous from the wicked, as he thinks; who, with others, suppose that by those who bowed on their knees to drink, were such as had been used to bow the knee to Baal, and the rest not, and so one were discerned from the other;

[z] See Weemse's Christian Synagogue, l. 1. c. 6. sect. 5.

[a] ואצרפנו defæcabo, Drusius; eliquabo, seu purgabo, Piscator.

but this trial was only for the sake of Gideon, to direct him whom he should take with him, and whom not: *and it shall be*, that *of whom I say unto thee, this shall go with thee, the same shall go with thee; and of whomsoever I say unto thee, this shall not go with thee, the same shall not go*; by the different manner of his men drinking at the water, after related, Gideon knew not who should go with him, and who not, whether they that bowed down to drink, or only lapped the water; this was determined by the mouth of the Lord, as follows.

Ver. 5. *So he brought them down to the water*, &c.] His whole army of 10,000 men: *and the Lord said unto Gideon, every one that lappeth of the water with his tongue, as a dog lappeth, him shalt thou set by himself*; this has led some, as particularly Grotius, to think of the Egyptian dogs; of whom Ælianus relates[b], that they don't drink at once freely, and to satiety, being afraid of the crocodiles in the river; but run about the bank, and by stealth snatch a little here, and a little there, and so satisfy themselves: but the allusion here is to dogs in common, whose usual way it is not to sup in, and drink a draught, but by putting out their tongues to lick and lap water with them, as Aristotle[c] says all creatures do that have teeth like saws; and the likeness between the drinking of these men, to be observed, lay not in any thing else but in the single action of lapping; for they first took the water in the hollow of their hands, out of the stream, and then lapped it, as in ver. 6. whereas a dog does not, and cannot take water that way; and this lapping was standing upright, whereas dogs in common, as Ælianus in the same place suggests, bow themselves, and lap as much water as will satisfy their thirst; and by this these men were distinguished from those that bowed on their knees to drink; for had they not taken up water in their hands, they must have bowed down on their knees to have lapped, as well as those did, to sup it, or take in a large draught of it; now all those that thus lapped were to be set apart by themselves; but whether they were to go with Gideon or not, as yet he knew not: *likewise every one that boweth down on his knee to drink*; were to be set by themselves also, but which of those were to go with him is after related.

Ver. 6. *And the number of them that lapped*, putting *their hand to their mouth*, &c.] That is, that took up water in the hollow of their hands, which they lifted up to their mouths, and so lapped it, as the Egyptians about the Nile are said[d] to do, who drank not out of pots and cups, but used their hands to drink with: *were 300 men*; only such a number out of 10,000: *but all the rest of the people bowed down upon their knees to drink water*; even 9,700; and it was the custom of some nations, as the Ichthyophagi, or fish-eaters, to cast themselves with their face to the ground, and drink after the manner of oxen[e].

Ver. 7. *And the Lord said unto Gideon, by the 300 men that lapped I will save and deliver the Midianites into thine hand*, &c.] It is hard to say what character this action of the 300 is expressive of, whether of weakness or of courage. Some think that those who drank upon their knees were faint and weary, and men of intemperance, and indulged themselves, and were unfit for war, whilst those that only lapped a little water to refresh themselves appeared to be eager, and in haste and readiness to engage in it; and so Ben Gersom takes those that bowed to be slothful persons, and those that lapped courageous and mighty men, and so were ordered to be taken and go along with Gideon; and this agrees with the method before taken, to dismiss the fearful, and only take those that were men of courage; but Josephus[f] is of opinion that they that drank upon their knees were the men of spirit and courage, and those that lapped, such who drank hastily, with trembling, and through fear of the enemy, and these were ordered to go with Gideon, and not the other: and indeed this most displays the glory of God to save Israel, and deliver them from the Midianites by a handful of such poor dispirited creatures. Though it seems that all the 10,000 men were men of courage; and this method was taken not to distinguish those that were the most courageous from those that were the least so, but only to reduce the number that should be engaged in this battle; for it being the summer-season, it may reasonably be supposed that the greater part of the army was very thirsty, and would kneel down to take a large draught of water, when those that were not so thirsty would be the fewer number, and so taken: *and let all the other people go every man to his place*; all the rest, who bowed on their knees to drink, which were 9,700, these were ordered to march homewards; though perhaps before they got home, hearing of the victory, they returned and joined in the pursuit, ver. 23.

Ver. 8. *So the people took victuals in their hands, and their trumpets*, &c.] That is, the 300 took victuals of those that departed, as much as was necessary for them, and also their trumpets, being directed thereunto by Gideon, no doubt; perhaps they took all the trumpets they had; however, as many as would furnish every man with one. And from hence it appears, that these 300 that were ordered to stay and go with Gideon were unarmed men, at least could carry no arms in their hands; for in one hand they carried their victuals, and in the other hand their trumpets, so that the salvation wrought by them would most clearly appear to be of the Lord: *and he sent all the rest of Israel every man unto his tent*; not to his tent in the army, but to his own house, in the tribe and city to which he belonged: *and retained these 300 men*; that had lapped water, to engage with the Midianites and their associates: *and the host of Midian was beneath him in the valley*; in the valley of Jezreel; for it seems as if Gideon, after he had brought down his men to the water to be tried, went up to the hill again with his 300 men only, to wait the divine orders, when he should attack the army of Midian below him.

[b] Var. Hist. l. 1. c. 4.
[c] Hist. Animal. l. 8. c. 6.
[d] Achilles Tatius, l. 4.
[e] Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 532.
[f] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 3.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him*, &c.] The night after there had been so great a reduction of his army, from 32,000 to 300: *arise, get thee down unto the host, for I have delivered it into thine hands*; that is, go down from the hill where he and his little army were, to the valley of Jezreel, where lay the numerous host of Midian; assuring him, that though the disproportion was so very great, the army of Midian should be delivered into his hands; and it was enough that the Lord had said it, for him to believe it; but in such circumstances that he was, it is no wonder that he had his fears and misgivings of heart, wherefore it follows:

Ver. 10. *But if thou fear to go down*, &c.] With his little army, to attack a numerous host in the night, then he is directed to take this step first: *go thou with Phurah thy servant down to the host*: in a private manner; perhaps this man was his aid-de-camp, or however a trusty servant in whom he could confide, as well as valiant: more it was not proper to take in such a secret expedition, and the fewer the better to trust, and less liable to the observation of the enemy; and yet it was proper to have one with him, being company and animating, and who would be a witness with him of what should be heard; in like manner, and for like reasons, as Diomedes and Ulysses went into the Trojan army[y].

Ver. 11. *And thou shalt hear what they shall say*, &c.] The Midianites, or what shall be said by any of them; for though it was the night-season, and so not a time for much conversation, as it may be supposed to be the dead of the night; yet something would be said and heard, which is a clear proof of the prescience of God respecting future contingent events: *and afterwards shall thine hands be strengthened*: and his heart encouraged by what he should hear: *to go down into the camp*: in an hostile manner, with his 300 men, after his return to them: *then went he down with Phurah his servant*: first privately, only they two, leaving his little army on the hill: and came *unto the outside of the armed men* that were *in the host*: the sentinels, who were without-side the camp, and stood complete in armour to guard it; and they came as near to them, in as still and private manner as they could, without being discovered. The Septuagint version is, "to the "beginning of the 50 that were in the host:" and the Syriac and Arabic versions, "to the captain of the "fifty;" these might be a party of the out-guards, consisting of fifty men, with one at the head of them, placed for the safety of the army in the night-season, and to give notice of any approach to them, or attempt on them.

Ver. 12. *And the Midianites and the Amalekites, and the children of the east*, &c.] The Arabians, who with the Amalekites joined the Midianites in this expedition: *lay along in the valley*; in the valley of Jezreel, in their tents, which overspread the valley, or at least great part of it: *like grasshoppers for multitude*; or locusts, which usually come in great numbers, and cover the air and the sun where they fly, and the earth where they light, as they did the land of Egypt; this army consisted at least of 135,000 men, as is clear from ch. viii. 10. *and their camels were without number, as the sand is by the sea-side for multitude*; an hyperbolical expression, setting forth the great number of them which the countries of Midian and Arabia abounded with; and were very proper to bring with them, to load and carry off the booty they came for, the fruits of the earth; see ch. vi. 4, 5.

Ver. 13. *And when Gideon was come*, &c.] With his servant, near and within hearing the talk and conversation of the out-guards or sentinels: there was *a man that told a dream unto his fellow*; his comrade that stood next him, and was upon guard with him; perhaps it was a dream he had dreamt the night before, or this self-same night, being just called up to take his turn in the watch, and so it was fresh upon his mind: *and said, behold, I dreamed a dream, and, lo*: thus it was as I am going to relate; twice he uses the word *behold*, or *lo*, the dream having very much struck and impressed his mind, and was what he thought worthy of the attention of his comrade: *a cake of barley bread tumbled into the host of Midian*; barley bread, Pliny[z] says, was the most ancient food; the word for *cake*[a] signifies a *shadow*, and may design the appearance of a barley loaf; or something like one to him appeared in the dream: or *a noise*; the noise of it rolling and tumbling, so that it seemed to the soldier that he heard a noise, as well as saw something he took for a barley loaf. Jarchi observes, that it signifies a cake baked upon coals, and it seemed to this man as if it came smoking hot from the coals, tumbling down an hill, such an one where Gideon and his army were, and rolling into the host of Midian, which lay in a valley: *and came unto a tent*: or, *the tent*[b]; the largest and most magnificent in the host; and Josephus[c] calls it expressly the king's tent, and the Arabic version the tent of the generals: *and smote it that it fell*; which might justly seem strange, that a barley loaf should come with such a force against a tent, perhaps the largest and strongest in the whole camp, which was fastened with cords to stakes and nails driven into the ground, so as to cause it to fall: yea, it is added, *and overturned it, that the tent lay along*; turned it topsy-turvy, or turned it *upwards*[d], as the phrase in the Hebrew text is; it fell with the bottom upwards; it was entirely demolished, that there was no raising and setting of it up again.

Ver. 14. *And his fellow answered and said*, &c.] As the dream was no doubt from God, so the interpretation of it was; it was he that put into the mind of the soldier's comrade to whom he told it to interpret it as follows; or otherwise in all likelihood he would never have thought of it: *this is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel*; that is, this signifies nothing else, and a fit emblem it was of him and his little army. A cake is but a small thing, and, let it come tumbling as it will, can have no force or strength in it equal to overturn a tent; and a cake of barley is mean and contemptible;

[y] Homer. Iliad. 10. ver. 222, &c.
[z] Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 7.
[a] צליל umbra, vid. Gussetium, p. 715. strepitus, Tigurine version; so Kimchi & Ben Gersom; subcinericius, V. L. tortus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[b] האהל.
[c] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 4.
[d] למעלה desuper, Pagninus, Montanus; superne, Tigurine version.

and a cake baked under ashes, or on coals, is what is soon and hastily done, and fitly represented the smallness and weakness of Gideon's army, their meanness and contemptibleness; the Israelites being, as Josephus[e] represents the soldier saying, the vilest of all the people of Asia; and those that were with Gideon were suddenly and hastily got together, raw and undisciplined, and very unfit to engage the veteran troops of the united forces of Midian, Amalek, and Arabia. It appears from hence that Gideon's name was well known in the camp of Midian, what was his descent, and his character as a valiant man, which is meant by *a man of Israel;* namely, a courageous mighty man, and the very name of him might strike with terror: for *into his hands hath God delivered Midian and all his host;* which the man concluded from this dream, and the interpretation of it suggested to him from God, and impressed upon his mind; which he speaks of with the greatest assurance and confidence, which he was inspired to do, for the strengthening of Gideon, and the encouragement of him to come down with his army, and fall on the host of Midian.

Ver. 15. *And it was so, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream, and the interpretation thereof,* &c.] Or, *the breaking of it*[f]; the dream itself being like something closed up and sealed, and the interpretation of it was like the breaking of a seal, and discovering what is hid under it; or like a nut, the kernel of which cannot be come at till the shell is broken: *that he worshipped;* bowed his head with an awful reverence of God, and a sense of his divine Majesty, and worshipped him by sending an ejaculatory prayer and praise to him; and so the Targum, "and he praised;" praised God for this gracious encouragement he had given, the assurance of victory he now had; for he saw clearly the hand of God in all this, both in causing one of the soldiers to dream as he did, and giving the other the interpretation of it, and himself the hearing of both: *and returned into the host of Israel;* such an one as it was, consisting only of 300 unarmed men: *and said, arise;* from their sleep and beds, it being the night-season; and from their tents, and descend the hill with him: *for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian;* he made now no doubt of it, it was as sure to him as if it had been actually done; hence Gideon is renowned for his faith, though he sometimes was not without his fits of diffidence; see Heb. xi. 32.

Ver. 16. *And he divided the 300 men into 3 companies,* &c.] One hundred in a company, partly to make the better figure, a shew of an army, with a right and left wing, and partly that they might fall upon the camp of Midian in different parts: *and he put a trumpet in every man's hand;* they that returned of the trumpeters having left their trumpets behind them, whereby there was a sufficient number for 300 men; and these were put into their hands, that when they blew them together, the noise would be very great; and it would seem as if they were an exceeding great army, and so very much terrify their enemies: *with empty pitchers, and lamps with the pitchers;* the pitchers were of earth, and so easily broken, and would make a great noise when clashed against each other; and these were empty of water, or otherwise would not have been fit to put lamps into, and the lamps put in them were not of oil; for then, when the pitchers were broken, the oil would have run out; but were a kind of torches, made of rosin, wax, pitch, and such-like things; and these were put into the pitcher, partly to preserve them from the wind, and chiefly to conceal them from the enemy, till just they came upon them, and then held them out; which in a dark night would make a terrible blaze, as before they served to give them light down the hill into the camp.

Ver. 17. *And he said unto them, look on me, and do likewise,* &c.] Observe what I do, and do the same, in blowing a trumpet, breaking a pitcher, and shouting with the words expressed by him: *and, behold, when I come to the outside of the camp;* where the sentinels stood, and the watch was set: *it shall be, that as I do, so shall ye do;* and not before; a trumpet was not to be blown, nor a pitcher broken, nor a torch held out, nor a word spoken, till just they came to the outside of the camp: and then they were to observe the motions of Gideon, and do as he did.

Ver. 18. *When I blow with a trumpet, I and all that are with me,* &c.] He being at the head of one of the three companies, ver. 19. perhaps the middlemost, which might stand for the body of the army; and the other two be one to the right and the other to the left of him, and so could more easily discover his motions: *then blow ye the trumpets also on every side of all the camp;* for it seems they were so disposed as to be around the camp, which when the trumpets were blown at once on every side, with such a blaze of light, and crashing of the pitchers, must be very terrifying, as if there was no way for them to escape, and especially when they should hear the following dreadful sounds: *and say,* the sword *of the Lord, and of Gideon:* or for the Lord, and for Gideon; and which may be supplied, either the fight is for the Lord, and for Gideon; or the victory is for the Lord, and for Gideon; we supply it from ver. 20. The name Jehovah, these Heathens had often heard, as the God of Israel, would now be dreadful to them, and the name of Gideon also; whose name, as appears by the interpretation of the dream, was terrible among them; for which reason Gideon added it, and not out of arrogance and vanity; and puts it after the name of the Lord, as being only an instrument the Lord thought fit to make use of, otherwise all the glory belonged to him.

Ver. 19. *So Gideon, and the* 100 *men that were with him,* &c.] Which was one of the three companies his army was divided into, and which company he had the command of particularly: *came unto the outside of the camp, in the beginning of the middle watch;* the second watch, for the night was divided into three watches; for though in after-times there were four watches, among the Romans[h], and which the Jews received from them; hence in the New Testament we read of the fourth watch; yet in earlier times, with the Jews

[e] Ut supra.
[f] שברו fractionem ejus, Vatablus, Drusius; fracturam ejus, Piscator.

[h] Liv. Hist. l. 26. c. 24. Suidas in voce [illegible], & in voce [illegible].

and other eastern nations, there were but three watches, as affirmed by Jarchi and Kimchi on the place: and very wisely did Gideon fix on this watch for the time of his coming; for had he come at the first watch, many as yet might not have been in bed, or at least not fallen asleep; and had he come in the third watch, many might have been awake out of their sleep, and others up; but he took this time, a little after midnight, in the dead of the night, when the whole army was fast asleep: *and they had but newly set the watch;* the first watch were just gone off, and the second were placed in their room; but since such an observation seems in a good measure unnecessary, for as Gideon came in the beginning of the watch it must in course be newly set; rather the words may be rendered, *in raising they raised up the watch* [i]; that is, Gideon and his men did it by their approach; and they might call to them on purpose to give the alarm to the army, who upon that would at once hear the sound of the trumpets, and the clattering of the pitchers, and see the torches burning, to their great surprise: *and they blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers that* were *in their hands:* as soon as they came up to the watch and had raised them; this did Gideon and his hundred men.

Ver. 20. *And the three companies blew the trumpets, and brake the pitchers,* &c.] The other two, observing what Gideon and his company did, followed their example, and at the same time blew their trumpets, and broke their pitchers; for that there were four companies, three besides Gideon's, as Kimchi and Ben Melech suggest, there is no reason to believe: *and held the lamps in their left hands;* which they took out of the pitchers when they broke them, and holding them up in their left hands, gave a great blaze of light, which must be very surprising to the host of Midian, just awaked out of their sleep: *and the trumpets in their right hands to blow* withal; and which they continued blowing, the sound of which must be very dreadful, since it might be concluded, from such a number of trumpets, that there must be a vast army: *and they cried, the sword of the Lord and of Gideon;* signifying that was drawn against the Midianites, and they must expect to be cut in pieces by it, since the sword was Jehovah's, sent and commissioned by him, and was put into the hand of Gideon as an instrument, with which execution would be done, the Lord helping him. The Targum is, "the sword of the Lord, and "victory by the hand of Gideon;" which victory was to be ascribed to the sword and power of God. This was an emblem of the efficacy of the word of God, accompanied with his power, to the destruction of the kingdom of Satan; the blowing of the trumpets may denote the ministration of the Gospel, the great trumpet to be blowed by the apostles and ministers of the word; the holding forth the lamps may signify the same, the light of the divine word in the ministers of it, and the holding forth of it to others; and which is carried in earthen vessels, frail mortal men; and done that the excellency of the power may appear to be of God, and not of men: and the sword of the Lord is the word of God in the mouths of ministers, accompanied by the power of God; for it can only be through God that such weapons of warfare can become mighty to do the execution that is done by them; see 2 Cor. iv. 7. and x. 4, 5. blowing of trumpets, and then a cry or shout of the soldiers to terrify the enemy, were used in later times [k].

Ver. 21. *And they stood every man in his place around the camp,* &c.] To see the salvation of God, and that it might most clearly appear to be his own doing; and indeed, had they gone into it, they could have done nothing: they had no weapons in their hands, a trumpet in one hand, and a lamp in the other; though this their position served to increase the terror of the enemy, who might suppose that they stood either to light and introduce a large army at the back of them; or to light the forces already in the midst of them, whilst they destroyed them; which latter seems rather to be the thing their imaginations were possessed with, since they fell to slaying their fellows, supposing them to be enemies, as in the following verse: *and all the host ran, and cried, and fled;* or *were broken* [l]; as some render the first word, their lines were broken; they could not put themselves in rank and file, but were thrown into the utmost confusion; and cried as being in the utmost danger of their lives, and fled for their safety as fast as they could; see Isa. xxvii. 13. Heb. vi. 18.

Ver. 22. *And the* 300 *men blew the trumpets,* &c.] Kept blowing them to continue and increase the terror of the enemy, and still held the lamps in their hands, and stood as torch-bearers to light the Midianites and their associates to destroy one another, as follows: *and the Lord set every man's sword against his fellow throughout the host;* and so slew one another; either suspecting treachery, as Grotius, and so in revenge, wrath, and indignation, drew their swords on each other; or through the terror and amazement they were in at the sounds they heard, and the blazing torches dazzling their eyes, they knew not what they did, or who they fell upon, taking their friends for foes, supposing the Israelites were got into their camp; and the rather they might be led into this mistake, since there were people of different languages among them, as Josephus [m] observes; but the thing was of God, it was he that took away their reason and judgment from them, and infatuated them, and filled their imaginations with such strange apprehensions of things; and threw into their minds such terror and amazement, and directed them to point their swords at one another: *and the host fled to Beth-shittah in Zererath;* that is, which was left of it, which had not destroyed each other; the first of these places should be read Beth-hashittah; and perhaps had its name from the *shittah* or *shittim* trees which might grow near it in plenty, or the houses in it might be built of shittim-wood; or it may be here stood a temple formerly dedicated to some deity of this name, and near it a grove of the above trees. Zererath, Kimchi observes, is written with two *reshes*,

[i] הקם הקימו את השמרים suscitando suscitaverunt custodes, Pagninus, Montanus.
[k] At tuba terribilem sonitum, &c. Virgil Æneid. 9.

[l] וירץ confracta, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.
[m] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 5.

or R's, to distinguish it from another place called Tzeredah; but where either of these places mentioned were cannot be particularly said; though it is highly probable they were in the tribe of Manasseh, and in the way to Jordan, whither in all probability the Midianites would steer their course to escape to their own land: *and to the border of Abel-meholah unto Tabbath;* the former of these was the birth-place of Elisha the prophet, 1 Kings xix. 16. and it appears very plainly that it was in the tribe of Manasseh, being mentioned with other places in that tribe, 1 Kings iv. 12. Jerom [s] under this word says, there was in his time a village in Aulon, or the plain, 10 miles from Scythopolis to the south, which was called Bethabula; and the Targum is, "to the border of the plain of "Abel-meholah;" but of Tabbath we nowhere else read.

Ver. 23. *And the men of Israel gathered themselves together,* &c.] Not out of all the tribes, but out of those which lay nearest, and which are particularly mentioned: *out of Naphtali, and out of Asher, and out of all Manasseh;* and these seem to be the same persons out of those tribes who first joined Gideon, but were separated from his army; both those that were fearful, and those that bowed their knees to drink, and who perhaps had not gone far before they heard of the defeat and flight of the Midianites; and therefore though they had not courage to face the enemy, at least most of them, yet had spirit enough to pursue a flying enemy; wherefore they returned, or however directed their course the nearest way, where they supposed they fled: *and pursued after the Midianites;* and those that were with them.

Ver. 24. *And Gideon sent messengers throughout all Mount Ephraim,* &c.] To raise the inhabitants of it, who lay nearer Jordan, to which the Midianites would make, in order to intercept them in their flight; or however get possession of the fords of Jordan before them, and hinder their passage over it: *saying, come down against the Midianites;* for though he had routed them, and they were fled before him, yet he had not men enough with him to destroy them; and besides, as they had their camels to ride on, and he and his men only on foot, they could not come up with them: *and take before them the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan;* namely, all the fords and passages over Jordan, reaching from the lake of Gennesaret to Beth-barah, the same with Bethabara, John i. 28. which was a passage over Jordan; or these waters were, as Kimchi thinks, distinct from those of Jordan; and were waters that lay in the way of the flight of the Midianites, before they came to Beth-barah, their passage over Jordan; and Jarchi thinks they were waters, which divided between Syria and the land of Canaan, which is not likely; others think the waters are the same with Jordan, and render the words, *take the waters*—even Jordan [t]; gain the passes over that before them, and so prevent their escape to their own land: *then all the men of Ephraim;* that is, great numbers of them, whose hearts were inclined to, and whose situation lay best for this service: *gathered themselves together;* in a body, at some place of rendezvous appointed: *and took the waters unto Beth-barah and Jordan;* took possession of all the passes, and guarded them, as Gideon directed.

Ver. 25. *And they took two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb,* &c.] The one signifies a *raven,* and the other a *wolf*; which were either nicknames given them because of their voraciousness and cruelty, or which they took themselves, or their ancestors before them, to make themselves terrible to others; so the Romans had the families of the Corvini, *&c. and they slew Oreb upon the rock Oreb;* perhaps they found him in a cave of the rock, and dragging him out slew him, from whence the rock afterwards had its name. So we read of the rock Corax in Homer [u], which was in Ithaca, and another high mountain of the same name in Ætolia, mentioned by Livy [w], and which signifies the same as Oreb. This is a different rock or mountain from Horeb, the same with Sinai, from whence the law was given; which always ought to be written with an H or Ch, to distinguish it from this; though that is written Oreb by Lactantius [x], and so by Milton [y], contrary to the propriety of the language: *and Zeeb they slew at the wine-press of Zeeb;* the Targum is, the plain of Zeeb, which, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom suppose, was in the form of a wine-press, having high lips or hills around it, and which afterwards took its name from this prince being slain in it: *and pursued Midian;* the rest of the Midianites, even beyond Jordan, those that got over it: *and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side Jordan;* that is, when he had passed over it the next morning, as Jarchi remarks; for after this we read of Gideon's going over Jordan, ch. viii. 4. unless this is said by way of anticipation; though the phrase will bear to be rendered, *on this side Jordan,* for it signifies both. It seems they cut off the heads of those two princes, and presented them to Gideon, as it has been usual to bring the heads of enemies to kings and conquerors; see 1 Sam. xvii. 54. and 2 Sam. iv. 2, 8.

CHAP. VIII.

IN this chapter we are told how Gideon pacified the Ephraimites, who complained because they were not sent unto to fight the Midianites, ver. 1, 2, 3. how he pursued the Midianites, until he took their two kings, and on his return chastised the men of Succoth and Penuel, because they refused to relieve his men with food as they were pursuing, ver. 4—17. how he slew the two kings of Midian, ver. 18—21. and after this

[s] De loc. Heb. fol. 89. M.

[t] Nempe Jordanis aquas, Junius & Tremellius; nempe Jordanem, Piscator.

[u] Odyss. 12. prope finem.

[w] Hist. l. 36. c. 30.

[x] De vera Sap. l. 4. c. 17.

[y] Paradise Lost, l. 1. ver. 7.

conquest refused to take the government of Israel when offered him, ver. 22, 23. how he requested of the Israelites the ear-rings they had taken from the Midianites, with which he weakly made an ephod, which proved a snare to his house, ver. 24—27. how that the people were in peace forty years during his life, and that he had a numerous issue, and died in a good old age, ver. 28—32. but that after his death the Israelites fell into idolatry, and were ungrateful to his family, ver. 33, 34, 35.

Ver. 1. *And the men of Ephraim said unto him, &c.*] To Gideon, when they brought him the heads of Oreb and Zeeb; taking this to be a proper opportunity to expostulate and chide with him, when they had done so much service: *why hast thou served us thus;* neglected them, overlooked them, which they took as a reproach to them, and as if he had bore them ill will: *that thou calledst us not when thou wentest to fight with the Midianites?* that he did not call them first, when he called other tribes, as Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, when they were as near or nearer, and more nearly allied, being both the descendants of Joseph; and were the tribe that Jacob had given the preference to; and being of proud spirits they envied the glory that Gideon, who was of the tribe of Manasseh, had got; and by which they were jealous he would advance that tribe above theirs: *and they did chide with him sharply;* used rough words and ill language, and threw out many keen and biting expressions, which discovered great anger and wrath, envy and ill will.

Ver. 2. *And he said unto them, &c.*] In a very mild and gentle manner, giving soft words, which turn away wrath: *what have I done in comparison of you?* he and his men, he signifies, had only blew trumpets, broke pitchers, and held torches; it was the Lord that did all, and set the Midianites one against another to slay each other; and in the pursuit as yet he had only picked up and slain some common soldiers, they had taken two princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, and had brought their heads in triumph to him: is *not the gleaning of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abiezer?* the family of Abiezer, of which Gideon was; the meaning is, that whereas he began the fight, which may be called the vintage, and they had finished it, which was like gleaning; yet what they did last was much preferable to what was done by him at first; or the princes of Midian, which they had taken in the pursuit, and was like gleaning after a vintage, were equal, yea, superior to all the camp of Midian, or that part of it that had fallen into his hands. The Targum is, "are not the weak of the house of Ephraim "better than the strong of the house of Abiezer?"

Ver. 3. *God hath delivered into your hands the princes of Midian, Oreb and Zeeb, &c.*] A high honour this conferred upon you, and with which you may be well contented: *and what was I able to do in comparison of you?* what he had done in defeating and pursuing the army of Midian, in slaying and taking any of them prisoners, was nothing in comparison of what they had done: nay, he signifies that he was not capable of doing any thing worth mentioning without them; the glory of finishing this conquest was reserved for them: *then their anger was abated towards him when he had said that;* it being what gratified their pride and was pleasing to them; and this conduct of Gideon shewed him to be a wise and humble man.

Ver. 4. *And Gideon came to Jordan, and passed over, &c.*] That river; see the note on ch. vii. 25. *he and 300 men that were with him;* at the defeat of the Midianites in the valley of Jezreel; so that neither at that, nor in the pursuit of them hitherto, had he lost one man: *faint, yet pursuing* them: they were faint with being up all night, and continually blowing their trumpets; and had been upon the pursuit of their enemies ever since the defeat; and yet, though they were so faint, they did not leave off the pursuit, but were eager at it.

Ver. 5. *And he said to the men of Succoth, &c.*] The inhabitants of that place, the principal men of it, which lay in his way as he was pursuing the Midianites in their flight to their own country; for this was a city on the other side Jordan, and in the tribe of Gad, and was inhabited by Israelites, Josh. xiii. 27. it had its name from the booths or tents which Jacob erected here, Gen. xxxiii. 17. *give, I pray you, loaves of bread unto the people that follow me;* he did not desire them to quit their habitations and families, and join him in pursuing his and their enemies, or to furnish him and his men with arms; only to give them some provisions, and that not dainties, but loaves of bread; or *morsels of bread*[t], and broken pieces; and these he did not demand in an authoritative manner, as he might have done as a general, but in a way of entreaty; and the arguments he uses are, *for they be faint;* for want of food, through the long fatigue from midnight hitherto, in the pursuit of the enemy, and which was not over: *and I am pursuing after Zebah and Zalmunna, kings of Midian;* who had fled with 15,000 men, and were now, as Jarchi conjectures, destroying the countries of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; and now Gideon and his men were closely pursuing them, in hopes of taking them, and so complete the conquest, and thoroughly deliver Israel from their bondage on both sides Jordan, the benefits of which these men of Succoth would share with others; these were the arguments, and cogent ones they were, to persuade them to give his weary troops some refreshment.

Ver. 6. *And the princes of Succoth said, &c.*] The chief magistrates of the place made answer, one in the name of the rest; for the word *said* is in the singular number: are *the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thine hands;* that is, are they taken prisoners, and handcuffed, or their hands bound behind them, and put into the hands of Gideon, to do with them as he pleased? no, they were not; and they suggest they never would, deriding him and his small number of men as not a match for these kings, whom, perhaps a little before, they had seen pass by with 15,000 men; with whom his little army would not be able to encounter, should they turn and fall upon them, which they supposed would be the case; and therefore, say they, when these are in thine hands, which they thought would never be, it will be time enough *that we should give bread to thine army?* for they feared, should they do that, these

[t] ככרות לחם buccellas panis, Vatablus; tractus panis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so the Targum.

kings would hear of it, and they should suffer for it, and their bondage be harder than it was before; so selfish and diffident in themselves, so cruel and uncompassionate to their brethren, and so ungrateful to their deliverers, which stirred up the spirit of this humble and good man to great resentment.

Ver. 7. *And Gideon said*, &c.] In answer to the princes of Succoth: *therefore when the Lord hath delivered Zebah and Zalmunna into mine hand;* of which he made no doubt, having the promise of God that he would deliver the host of Midian into his hand, on which his faith rested; and having it in great part performed already, most firmly believed the full performance of it, see ch. vii. 7, 9. *then I will tear your flesh with the thorns of the wilderness, and with briers;* which grew in a wilderness near this city, and from whence, as Kimchi thinks, it had its name; the word Succoth being used for thorns in Job xli. 7. and the sense is, either that he would scourge them with thorns and briers; or, as the Targum, thrust their flesh upon them; which Kimchi interprets of casting their naked bodies upon thorns and briers, and then treading on them with the feet; or draw a cart over them, as they thus lay, in like manner as it was usual to do when corn was threshed out; see Isa. xxviii. 27.

Ver. 8. *And he went up thence to Penuel*, &c.] A place not far from Succoth, and to which also Jacob gave name, from the Lord's appearing to him there face to face, Gen. xxxii. 30. but here was nothing of God in this place now: *and spake unto them likewise;* desired bread for his men, as he had of the inhabitants of Succoth: *and the men of Penuel answered him as the men of Succoth had answered him;* denied him his request in the same jeering manner.

Ver. 9. *And he spake also unto the men of Penuel*, &c.] In a threatening way, as he had spoken to the men of Succoth: *saying, when I come again in peace;* having conquered all his enemies, and delivered Israel from their bondage, and restored peace and prosperity to them, of which he had no doubt: *I will break down this tower;* pointing to it, and which stood in their city, and in which they placed their confidence; and when he threatened them, boasted of it as their security.

Ver. 10. *Now Zebah and Zalmunna were in Karkor*, &c.] Jerom[u] under this word says, there was in his time a castle called Carcaria, a day's journey from Petra, which was the metropolis of Idumea; but whether the same with this is not clear: *and their host with them, about 15,000 men:* to which number Gideon and his 300 men were very unequal; and yet, faint and weary as they were, closely pursued them, attacked and conquered them. Josephus[w] very wrongly makes this number to be about 18,000: *all that were left of the hosts of the children of the east;* the Arabians, who with the Amalekites joined the Midianites in this expedition; and perhaps the remainder of the army chiefly consisted of Arabians, the others having mostly suffered in the valley of Jezreel, and at the fords of Jordan: *for there fell 120,000 men that drew sword;* besides infirm men, women, and children, which may reasonably be supposed; so that this host consisted of 135,000 fighting men.

Ver. 11. *And Gideon went up by the way of them that dwell in tents*, &c.] That is, of the Arabians and Kedarenes, who dwelt in tents for the sake of feeding their flocks, as the Targum and Jarchi; he did not pursue them in the direct road, but went a roundabout way, where these people dwelt, that he might surprise the host of the kings of Midian at an unawares: and he came upon them, *on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah;* the first was in the tribe of Manasseh, and the latter in the tribe of Gad, and both it seems were on the confines of those tribes; see Numb. xxxii. 35, 42. the Targum calls the latter Ramatha; both words have the signification of height in them, this city very probably being built on an eminence. According to Bunting[x] Penuel was two miles from Succoth, Nobah two miles from Penuel, and Jogbehah four miles from Nobah, and Karkor four miles from Jogbehah, whither he pursued the kings, and took them, after he had discomfited the army: *and smote the host, for the host was secure;* having got over Jordan, and it being night very probably, they thought themselves safe from Gideon's army, who they could have no thought that they would come up with them so soon, being on foot, weary, and fatigued.

Ver. 12. *And when Zebah and Zalmunna fled*, &c.] Their host being smitten and thrown into confusion by the sudden approach of Gideon's army; and who probably attacked them in somewhat like manner as before, blowing their trumpets, and calling out the sword of the Lord and of Gideon; which were such terrifying sounds to them, that they fled at once: *he pursued after them, and took the two kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, and discomfited all the host;* or terrified them, so that they fled some one way and some another, and the kings being left alone were easily taken.

Ver. 13. *And Gideon the son of Joash returned from battle*, &c.] To Penuel and Succoth, to chastise them for their ill treatment of him and his men: *before the sun was up;* by which it appears that it was in the night that he fell upon the host at Karkor, which must be the night following; it could not be the same night in which he had defeated them in the valley of Jezreel; though Vatablus thinks this battle was begun and finished in one night; but there were, according to this history, so many things done after the first defeat, as sending messengers to Mount Ephraim and the Ephraimites, upon the taking the fords of Jordan, and bringing the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon, expostulating with him, and his answer to them, and his stay at Succoth and Penuel; which make it more probable that the day following was spent in the pursuit, and that it was the night after that that the whole affair was finished; and before sun-rise Gideon returned to Penuel and Succoth again; so Ben Gersom and Abarbinel; but according to the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, this phrase is to be rendered, *before the sun set*, whilst it yet appeared, and was above the horizon; and so it must be in the day-time that he pursued the two kings and took them, and returned before sun-set.

[u] De loc. Heb. fol. 90. B.
[w] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 6. sect. 5.
[x] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 109.

Abendana observes the word for *sun* may be the name of a place, and so the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions call it the ascent of Ares or Heres; as if it was the name of the place from whence Gideon returned, so called in like manner as the ascent of Akrabbim, and the like.

Ver. 14. *And caught a young man of the men of Succoth, and inquired of him,* &c.] Just before he came to the city, he spied a young man which belonged to it, and laid hold on him, and inquired of him about the chief magistrates of the city, who they were, what their names, and their places of abode: *and he described unto him the princes of Succoth, and the elders thereof, even 77 men;* by which it appears that this was no inconsiderable city to have so many princes and elders in it; these the young man described to Gideon, what sort of men they were, what their names, and where they dwelt: or *he wrote unto him*[y]; wrote down their names, and what part of the city they dwelt in; or Gideon took down in writing for himself their names and places of abode from the young man, that he might not forget: and in this Gideon shewed great wisdom, and strict justice; being desirous to punish only the delinquents, and not the innocent with the wicked, the people with their rulers; for though he asked bread of the men of Succoth, the answer was returned in the ill-natured manner it was by the princes.

Ver. 15. *And he came unto the men of Succoth,* &c.] Entered the city, and bespoke the inhabitants of it in the following manner: *and said, behold, Zebah and Zalmunna, with whom ye did upbraid me;* as not in his hands, and never would be, he being with his 300 men an unequal match to them with 15,000; but he had taken them, and brought them with him, and perhaps spared them for this very reason, to let them see they were in his hands, and now calls upon them to behold them with their own eyes, concerning whom they had flouted and jeered him: *saying,* are *the hands of Zebah and Zalmunna now in thy hand, that we should give bread unto thy men that are weary?* he delivers their own express words, which he had carefully observed and laid up in his memory, for their greater conviction and confusion; only adds the character of his men, that they were *weary*, to expose their vile ingratitude the more, that they should refuse them a few loaves of bread, who were faint and weary in the service of them.

Ver. 16. *And he took the elders of the city,* &c.] All of them, especially those of them who had been most guilty, and had them to a proper place, where they might be made public examples of: *and thorns of the wilderness, and briers;* which were near at hand, and soon cut up, for which he gave orders to proper persons: *and with them he taught the men of Succoth;* either the inhabitants of the place, as distinct from the elders, by whose punishment he taught them to be cautious not to follow such examples, or to behave ill to their superiors; or the princes and elders of the city are meant by the men of it, whom Gideon taught or chastised with thorns and briers; and so it is usual with us for a parent or master to say to his child or servant that has offended, I will *teach* you to do so or so, or to do otherwise, when he threatens to chastise: or *with them he made* them *to know*[z]; that is, their sin and the heinousness of it, by the punishment he inflicted on them. Abarbinel thinks the word *know* has the signification of mercy in it, as in Exod. ii. 25. in that he did not punish in general the men of that city, only the elders of it. The Targum is, "he broke upon them, or by them, the men of "Succoth;" so Jarchi and others; that is, he broke the briers and thorns upon them, scourging them with them; or rather broke and tore their flesh by them: whether they died or no is not certain.

Ver. 17. *And he beat down the tower of Penuel,* &c.] As he threatened he would, ver. 9. whether this was before or after he had chastised the elders of Succoth, is not clear; one would think by the course he steered going from Succoth to Penuel, as he went, he should come to Penuel first at his return; however, he demolished their tower in which they trusted: *and slew the men of the city:* perhaps they might, as Kimchi conjectures, resist when he went about to beat down their tower; on which a fray might ensue, in which they were slain; or they might upon his approach, sensible of the offence they had given him, fly to their tower for safety, and were killed in it when that was beaten down about them. In what manner this was done is not said; no doubt they had instruments in those days for demolishing such edifices.

Ver. 18. *Then said he unto Zebah and Zalmunna,* &c.] Not at Penuel or Succoth, but when he had brought them into the land of Canaan, and perhaps to his own city Ophrah: *what manner of men were they whom ye slew at Tabor?* Mount Tabor, to which these men had betaken and hid themselves, in some caves and dens there: see ch. vi. 2. and these kings some little time before the battle had taken them, and slew them, of which it seems Gideon had notice; and some of his brethren being not to be found, he suspected they were the persons, and therefore asked this question: *and they answered, as thou art, so were they;* very much like him in countenance and stature, stout, able-bodied men, of a graceful and majestic appearance. Abarbinel takes it to be a curse on Gideon, be thou, or thou shalt be, as they are; as they died by the hand of the Midianites, so shalt thou; but the former sense seems best, and agrees with what follows: *each one resembled the children of a king;* being brought up in a delicate manner, as these persons seemed to have been: according to Jarchi and Kimchi, the sense is, they were like him, and had all one and the same form and lovely aspect, resembling kings' children; but according to Ben Gersom they were in general very much like Gideon, and one of them was like his children, who were then present, particularly his eldest son, as appears from ver. 20. It is said in the Misnah[a] all the Israelites are the children of kings.

[y] ויכתב אליו & scripsit ad eum, Montanus, Piscator; & scripsit sibi, Pagninus, Munster; so some in Drusius.

[z] וידע et cognoscere fecit, Montanus; so some in Vatablus; notificavit, Piscator.

[a] Sabbat, c. 14. sect. 4.

Ver. 19. *And he said, they were my brethren, even the sons of my mother,* &c.] His brethren by his mother's side, but not by his father's side; or the phrase *the sons of my mother* is added, to shew that he did not mean brethren in a large sense, as all the Israelites were, but in a strict sense, being so nearly related as his mother's children: as *the Lord liveth, if ye had saved them alive, I would not slay you:* for not being Canaanites, he was not obliged by the law of God to put them to death, and by the law of nations, as they had surrendered themselves, and were made prisoners of war, they ought to have been saved; but as they appeared to be murderers, and had slain the Israelites in cold blood, they deserved to die; and the persons they had slain being Gideon's brethren, he was the avenger of blood, and it became him to put them to death.

Ver. 20. *And he said unto Jether, his first-born, up, and slay them,* &c.] Being the near kinsman of his father's brethren, whom these kings had slain, was a proper person to avenge their blood on them; and the rather Gideon might order him to do it, for the greater mortification of the kings, to die by the hand of a youth; and for the honour of his son, to be the slayer of two kings, and to inure him to draw his sword against the enemies of Israel, and embolden him to do such exploits: *but the youth drew not his sword, for he feared, because he was yet a youth;* his not drawing his sword was not out of disobedience to his father, but through fear of the kings; not of their doing him any hurt, being bound; but there was perhaps a ferocity, as well as majesty in their countenances, which made the young man timorous and fearful.

Ver. 21. *Then Zebah and Zalmunna said, rise thou and fall upon us,* &c.] Since they must die, they chose rather to die by the hand of so great a man and valiant a commander as Gideon, which was more honourable than to die by the hand of a youth: *for as the man is, so is his strength;* signifying, that as he was a stout able man, he had strength sufficient to dispatch them at once, which his son had not, and therefore they must have died a lingering and painful death: wherefore as they consulted their honour, so their ease, in desiring to die by the hand of Gideon: *and Gideon arose, and slew Zebah and Zalmunna;* nor was it unusual in those early times for great personages, as judges and generals, to be executioners of others, as were Samuel and Benaiah, 1 Sam. xv. 33. 1 Kings ii. 25, 34. *and took away the ornaments that* were *on their camels' necks:* the Targum calls them chains, as in ver. 26. no doubt of gold; so the horses of King Latinus[b] had golden poitrels or collars hanging down their breasts. They were, according to Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Gersom, in the form of the moon; see Isa. iii. 18. some have thought that these were worn in honour of Astarte, or the moon, the goddess of the Phœnicians, from whom these people had borrowed that idolatry.

Ver. 22. *Then the men of Israel said unto Gideon,* &c.] Some time after his return, the chief men of Israel having met in a body, and consulted matters among themselves, sent a deputation to Gideon with an offer of the government of them: *rule thou over us, both thou and thy son, and thy son's son also;* by which they meant, that he would take the kingly government of them, and which they proposed to settle in his posterity for ages to come; for, as a judge in Israel, he had a sort of rule and government of them under God already, but amounted not to regal power and authority; and this was what the people of Israel were fond of, that they might be like their neighbours; and this they tempted Gideon with, who had done such very wonderful and extraordinary things for them, which they allege as a reason: *for thou hast delivered us from the hand of Midian;* from the bondage they were in to them, and therefore fit to be a king over them.

Ver. 23. *And Gideon said unto them, I will not rule over you,* &c.] Not that he declined the government of them as a judge, to which he was raised of God, but as a king, for which he had no authority and call from God; the choice of a king belonging to him, and not to the people: *neither shall my son rule over you;* which Abarbinel thinks he spake as a prophet, and under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit; for after his death neither Jether his eldest son, nor any of the rest of his legitimate sons, ruled over them; for they were all slain by Abimelech, the son of his concubine, who was made king: *the Lord shall rule over you;* as he did; their government was a theocracy, which they would have changed, but Gideon would not agree to it.

Ver. 24. *And Gideon said unto them, I would desire a request of you,* &c.] Which he thought they would scarcely deny, and it was now a fair opportunity to make it, since they had offered him a crown, or to be king over them: and the favour he asked was, *that you would give me every man the ear-rings of his prey;* or, *an ear-ring of his prey;* for it is in the singular number; every man one ear-ring, as Abarbinel interprets it; for though they might have more, yet only one ear-ring of every man is desired: *for they had golden ear-rings, because they were Ishmaelites:* so the Midianites and Ishmaelites are spoken of as the same, they being mixed and dwelling together, or very near each other, Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28, 36. and Kimchi accounts for it thus, why the Midianites are called Ishmaelites; because they were the sons of Keturah, and Keturah was Hagar the mother of Ishmael. The Targum calls them Arabians, and who it seems used to wear ear-rings, as men in the eastern countries did; see Gen. xxxv. 4. Exod. xxxii. 2, 3. So Pliny says[c] in the east it was reckoned ornamental for men to wear gold in their ears.

Ver. 25. *And they answered, we will willingly give them,* &c.] Or, *in giving we will give*[d]; give them with all their hearts, most freely and cheerfully: *and they spread a garment, and did cast therein every man the ear-rings of his prey;* every man one, which would amount to no more than 300; though perhaps those who joined in the pursuit might take many more, or otherwise the weight of them would not amount to what in the next verse they are said to weigh.

Ver. 26. *And the weight of the golden ear-rings he requested was* 1,700 *shekels of gold,* &c.] Which, as

[b] Virg. Æneid. l. 7. v. 279.
[c] Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 37.

[d] נתון נתן dando dabimus, Pagninus, Montanus.

Scheuchzer[e] computes, was 810 ounces, 5 drachms, 1 scruple, and 10 grains, of the weight of physicians; but as reckoned by Montanus[f] amounted to 850 ounces, and were of the value of 6,800 crowns of gold; and, according to Waserus[g], it amounted to 3,400 Hungarian pieces of gold, and of their money at Zurich upwards of 15,413 pounds, and of our money 2,380 pounds: *besides ornaments*; such as were upon the necks of the camels, ver. 21. for the same word is used here as there: *and collars*; the Targum renders it a crown, and Ben Melech says in the Arabic language the word signifies clear crystal; but Kimchi and Ben Gersom take them to be golden vessels, in which they put *stacte*, or some odoriferous liquor, and so were properly smelling-bottles: *and purple raiment that was on the kings of Midian*; which it seems was the colour that kings wore, as they now do; so Strabo[h] says of the kings of Arabia, that they are clothed in purple: *and besides the chains that were about their camels' necks*; which seem to be different from the other ornaments about them, since another word is here used; now all these seem to have been what fell to his share, as the general of the army, and not what were given him by the people.

Ver. 27. *And Gideon made an ephod thereof*, &c.] That is, of some of this gold; for such a quantity could never have been expended on an ephod only, even taking it not for a linen ephod, but such an one as the high-priest wore, made of gold, of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, with curious work, together with a curious girdle of the same work; unless we suppose such a breastplate with it, of 12 precious stones, as Aaron had; and with little images of teraphim or cherubim in it, as Dr. Spencer thinks[i]. The Jewish commentators generally understand this ephod to be made as a memorial of the great salvation God had wrought by his hands for Israel, and of the wonderful things done by him; so Jarchi, Kimchi, and Ben Gersom; but such a garment, whether worn by him, or hung up in some certain place, seems not so proper and pertinent to perpetuate the memory of his victories, as a monument or pillar would have been; it looks therefore more likely to be done with a religious view, which afterwards was perverted to superstitious uses; and whereas Gideon had built an altar already by the command of God, and had sacrificed upon it, he might think himself authorized as a priest, and therefore provided this ephod for himself; or however for a priest he might think of taking into his family, and so use it as an oracle to consult upon special occasions, without going to Shiloh, the Ephraimites having displeased him in their rough expostulations with him; and so R. Isaiah interprets it of a kind of divination or oracle which gave answers: *and put it in his city, even in Ophrah*; hung it up in some proper place as a monument of his victories, as is generally thought; or in a structure built on purpose for it, to which he might resort as to an oracle: *and all Israel went thither a-whoring after it*; made an idol of it and worshipped it, and so committed spiritual fornication, which is idolatry. Some render it, *after him*[k]; not after the ephod, but after Gideon; that is, after his death, so Jarchi; no ill use was made of it in Gideon's time, though he cannot be altogether excused from sin and weakness in making it; but after his death it was soon made an ill use of: *which thing proved a snare to Gideon and to his house*; it was a snare to him if he consulted it as an oracle, which could not be without sin, since the only Urim and Thummim to be consulted were in the breastplate of the high-priest at the tabernacle; and it was what led his family into idolatry, and was the ruin of it, as well as it reflected great discredit and disgrace upon so good and brave a man: some read the words[l] *to Gideon, that is, to his house*; or family; he being so good a man himself, it is not thought that he could be insnared into idolatry itself; though it is apparent that men as wise and as good have fallen into it, as particularly Solomon.

Ver. 28. *Thus was Midian subdued before the children of Israel*, &c.] By the hand of Gideon humbled and brought under, their power over Israel was broken, and they delivered out of their hands: *so that they lifted up their heads no more*; in a proud and haughty manner to insult them, and in an hostile way to invade and oppress them; such a blow was given them that they could not recover themselves, nor do we read of any effort of theirs ever after, or of their giving or attempting to give any disturbance to Israel, or any other nation: *and the country was in quietness forty years in the days of Gideon*; that is, the land of Canaan; it was free from wars with Midian, or any other people, and enjoyed undisturbed peace and tranquillity. According to Bishop Usher[m], this was the 40th year from the rest restored by Deborah and Barak; and, according to Abarbinel and others, these 40 years are to be reckoned from the beginning of the servitude; that is, the seven-years' oppression under the Midianites are included in them; but I cannot see that in this instance, and in others before met with, years of bondage can be counted with years of peace and prosperity, and go under that general name. The true sense seems to be, that after the Israelites had been in subjection to the Midianites for seven years, and Gideon had delivered them, that from thenceforward they had rest and quietness 40 years, which in all probability was the time Gideon lived after his victories.

Ver. 29. *And Jerubbaal the son of Joash*, &c.] That is, Gideon, Jerubbaal being another name of his; see ch. vi. 32. and vii. 1. *went and dwelt in his own house*; which was at Ophrah, as appears from ch. ix. 5. the war being ended, he disbanded his army, and retired to his own house; not that he lived altogether a private life there, but as a judge in Israel.

Ver. 30. *And Gideon had 70 sons of his body begotten*, &c.] Not after his victories, for it is plain he had children before; mention is made of Jether, his first-born, as a youth able to draw a sword, and slay with it, ver. 20. but this was the number of all his sons, both before and after, and a large number it was; and the phrase *of his body begotten*, or *that went out of his*

[e] Physica Sacra, vol. 3. p. 463.
[f] Tubal Cain, p. 15.
[g] De Numis. Heb. l. 2. c. 10.
[h] Geograph. l. 16. p. 539.

[i] De leg. Heb. l. 3. c. 3. Dissert. 7. sect. 3.
[k] אחריו post ipsum, Vatablus.
[l] So Junius & Tremellius, Noldius, p. 280. No. 1205.
[m] Annal. Vet. Test. p. 43.

thigh, is used to shew that they were his own sons, begotten in wedlock, and not sons that he had taken into his family by adoption, or that he was father-in-law to, having married a woman or women that had sons by a former husband; but these were all his own: *for he had many wives*: which, though not agreeable to the original law of marriage, was customary in those times, and even with good men, and was connived at; and this is a reason accounting for his having so many sons.

Ver. 31. *And his concubine that was in Shechem*, &c.] Which was not an harlot, but a secondary or half-wife; such were generally taken from handmaids, and of the meaner sort, and were not in such esteem as proper wives, had not the management of household affairs, only a share in the bed, and their children did not inherit. This concubine of Gideon's seems not to have been taken into his house at all, but lived at Shechem, perhaps in her father's house, and here Gideon met with her when he went to Shechem as a judge to try causes; her name, according to Josephus [l], was Druma: *she also bare him a son*: as his other wives did; perhaps all the children he had were sons, and this was one over and above the 70, and not to be reckoned into that number: *whose name he called Abimelech*: which signifies, *my father a king*: which he gave him either in memory of the offer made him to be king of Israel, or through foresight of what this son of his would be; or he might be moved to it by the mother from pride and vanity, and which name might afterwards inspire the young man to be made a king, as he was; and the account given of his name is because of the narrative of him in the following chapter.

Ver. 32. *And Gideon the son of Joash died in a good old age*, &c.] Having lived it seems forty years after his war with Midian, blessed with a large family, much wealth and riches, great credit and esteem among his people, and in favour with God and men: *and was buried in the sepulchre of Joash his father, in Ophrah of the Abiezrites*: a city which belonged to the family of the Abiezrites, who were of the tribe of Manasseh, in which Gideon lived, and his father before him; and where there was a family-vault, in which he was interred. In the days of this judge 'tis supposed [m] was the famous expedition of the Argonauts to Colchis, to fetch from thence the golden fleece.

Ver. 33. *And it came to pass, as soon as Gideon was dead, that the children of Israel turned again*, &c.] From God, and the pure worship of him, to idolatry: *and went a-whoring after Baalim*: the gods of the Phœnicians and Canaanites, the several Baals of other nations, the lords many which they served; these they committed spiritual whoredom with; that is, idolatry: particularly *and made Baal-berith their god*: which was the idol of the Shechemites, as appears from a temple being built at Shechem for it, ch. ix. 5. and had its name either from Berytus, a city of Phœnicia, of which Mela [n] and Pliny [o] make mention, and where this Baal might be first worshipped; it was 400 furlongs from Sidon, and was in after-times a seat of learning [p]; of this city was Sanchoniatho, a Phœnician historian, who is said to receive many things he writes about the Jews from Jerombalus, supposed to be Jerubbaal, or Gideon; see the note on ch. vi. 32. and who tells [q] us, that Cronus or Ham gave this city to Neptune and the Cabiri, and who also relates [r] that Beruth is the name of a Phœnician deity. Though it may be rather this idol had its name from its supposed concern in covenants, the word Berith signifying a covenant; and so the Targum and Syriac version call him the lord of covenant; and the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions are, "and they made a covenant "with Baal, that he should be their god;" as if he had his name from hence; though rather from his presiding over covenants, as Janus is said [s] to do, and from his avenging the breach of them, and rewarding those that kept them; the same with Jupiter Fidius Ultor, and Sponsor [t] with the Romans, and Horcius [u] with the Greeks.

Ver. 34. *And the children of Israel remembered not the Lord their God*, &c.] Or, as the Targum, the worship of the Lord their God; they forgot him, and forsook him, which shewed base ingratitude: *who had delivered them out of the hands of their enemies on every side*: not only out of the hands of Midian, but all other nations round about them, as Edom, Moab, Ammon, &c. not one attempting to oppress them.

Ver. 35. *Neither shewed they kindness to the house of Jerubbaal*, namely *Gideon*, &c.] But, on the contrary, great unkindness and cruelty, slaying his 70 sons, as related in the following chapter: *according to all the goodness which he had shewed unto Israel*: in exposing his life to danger for their sake, in delivering them out of the hands of their oppressors, in administering justice to them, in protecting them in their civil and religious liberties, and leaving them in the quiet and peaceable possession of them.

C H A P. IX.

THIS chapter contains an account of the craft and cruelty of Abimelech, by which he got himself made king of the Shechemites, ver. 1—6. of the parable of Jotham, the youngest son of Gideon, concerning the trees, in which he exposes their folly in making Abimelech king, and foretels the ruin of them both,

[l] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 1.
[m] Gerard. Voss Chronolog. Sacr. Dissert. 1. p. 4.
[n] De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 12.
[o] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20.
[p] Eunapius in Vita Proæresii, p. 147.
[q] Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 1. p. 38.
[r] Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 1. p. 36.
[s] Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 12. Latinæque genus, &c Vid. Liv. Hist. l. 8. c. 5, 6.
[t] Vid. Kipping. Antiqu. Roman. l. 1. c. 1. p. 48.
[u] Pausan. Eliac. 1. sive l. 5. p. 326. Sophocles in Philoctete, prope finem.

ver. 7—21. of the contentions which arose between Abimelech, and the men of Shechem, increased by Gaal the son of Ebed, ver. 22—29. who was drawn into a battle with Abimelech, and beaten and forced to fly, ver. 30—41. but the quarrel between Abimelech and the men of Shechem ceased not, but still continued, which issued in the entire ruin of the city and the inhabitants of it, ver. 42—49. and in the death of Abimelech himself, according to Jotham's curse, ver. 50—57.

Ver. 1. *And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem, unto his mother's brethren,* &c.] It seems that though the mother of Abimelech lived at Shechem, he was taken and brought up in his father's house at Ophrah, where he was when he died; and from hence he came to Shechem, to pay a visit to his uncles there; whether his mother was now living, is not certain: *and communed with them;* about the death of his father, the state of his family, and the government of Israel: *and with all the family of the house of his mother's father;* that descended from his grandfather, the several branches of them, and of the family, the heads of them at least: *saying,* as follows.

Ver. 2. *Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem,* &c.] Which, though the Targum calls the inhabitants of the place, Ben Melech better interprets it the lords of Shechem, as the phrase will bear to be rendered; for it is more likely he would have this first whispered and suggested to the principal men of the city, before the common people were acquainted with it, and indeed in order to use their influence with them: *whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are* 70 *persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you?* intimating thereby, that though Gideon his father had refused the regal government when offered him, it was but reasonable that his sons, or some one of them, should be tried, whether it would be acceptable to them; nay, he would insinuate, that the sons of Gideon, who were 70 in number, were either contending with one another about it, or contriving to divide the government among them, and therefore desired it might be moved to consideration, whether it would not be more eligible to fix upon some one person to be their ruler, than to be under the government of 70; or, in other words, whether it was not better to have one king than 70 kings; but in reality there was no necessity for any consultation about this matter, the sons of judges never succeeded their fathers in government; nor does it appear that any of Gideon's sons had any thought about it, nor any desire to be made kings, as appears from Jotham's parable; and this was only a wicked insinuation of this man's, with an ambitious view of getting the kingdom to himself, as follows: *remember also that I am your bone and your flesh:* was of the same tribe and city with them, born among them, his mother always living with them, and he having now many near relations by his mother's side that dwelt there; and therefore whilst they had this affair of government under consideration, he would have them think of him to be their king, which would be to their honour, and to their advantage, to have one so nearly related to them on the throne, from whom they might expect many favours.

Ver. 3. *And his mother's brethren spake of him in the ears of the men of Shechem all these words,* &c.] Got them together in some certain place, and laid before them all that Abimelech had suggested to them, and spake in his favour to them: *and their hearts inclined to follow Abimelech, for they said, he is our brother;* being fond of kingly government, as the Israelites generally were, it seemed most agreeable to them to have one king over them, and none more acceptable than one so nearly related to them, who they doubted not, from his alliance to them, would be ready to oblige them on all occasions.

Ver. 4. *And they gave him* 70 *pieces of silver out of the house of Baal-berith,* &c.] The temple of their idol; of this name see ch. viii. 33. out of the money which had been dedicated to his service by free-will offering, or out of a bank which they deposited there for greater safety, and perhaps out of a superstitious notion of its being more prosperous and successful: of what value these pieces were is not certain; by pieces of silver, commonly shekels are meant; but these are thought to be of too little value to be given to a man to raise an army with, or carry on a scheme to advance himself to the throne; and talents are judged to be too large a sum for such a city to contribute out of a temple of theirs, and that but lately built, as it must be since the death of Gideon; they are therefore thought to be pounds, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; however, in the tale of them there seems to be some reference to the number of Gideon's sons, who were to be destroyed by bribing men with this sum, which was the scheme concerted between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; *wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him;* perhaps 70 of them, giving to each a piece or pound of silver; these were a base scoundrel sort of people, that lived in an idle scandalous manner, a sort of freebooters, that lived upon what they could lay hold on in a way of force and rapine; men of light heads and empty brains, and whose pockets were as light and empty as their heads, and fit to engage in any enterprise, though ever so barbarous, for the sake of a little money.

Ver. 5. *And he went to his father's house at Ophrah,* &c.] Which, according to Bunting [a], was 10 miles from Shechem: *and slew his brethren the sons of Jerubbaal, being* 70 *persons, upon one stone:* in which he was assisted by the ruffians he had hired with 70 pieces of silver; these were laid one after another upon one and the same stone, as being convenient for the execution of them; or as serving as an altar on which they were sacrificed to Baal, out of whose temple the money was taken to hire the executioners with. They are said to be 70 that were slain, though one escaped, the round number being given, as in many other instances, as in Gen. xlvi. 27. John xx. 24. *notwithstanding, yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left;* or remained alive, not out of compassion to his youth, but because he could not be found: *for he hid himself;* for no doubt Abimelech, and his crew, were most forward to lay hold of the eldest, and sacrifice them first, as being

[a] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p 111.

most in his way; this gave Jotham the youngest not only notice of their design, but an opportunity of providing for his safety, or however his friends; for it may be rendered, as in some versions, *he was hidden*[b], that is, by others.

Ver. 6. *And all the men of Shechem gathered together*, &c.] Upon the return of Abimelech, after he with his banditti had committed the execrable murder of his brethren: *and all the house of Millo*; which was either the men of a place near to Shechem, or of his brother's family, or of some grand leading family in Shechem; or it may mean the town-hall, where the principal inhabitants met in full house, as Millo signifies, on this occasion: *and went and made Abimelech king*; which was a most bold and daring action; being done without asking counsel of God, without which no king was to be set over Israel, and by a single city, without the knowledge, advice, and consent of the body of the people of Israel: *by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem*; the place where they met together, and did this business in voting Abimelech to be king, was near a place where a pillar was set in Shechem; or by the oak of the pillar in Shechem, and so may mean the stone under an oak, which Joshua placed there as a testimony between God and the people, Josh. xxiv. 25, 26, 27. and here, in the same place where Joshua convened the people of Israel, and made his last speech to them, was this business done.

Ver. 7. *And when they told it to Jotham*, &c.] Or when it was told him that Abimelech was made king in Shechem by some of his friends: *he went and stood in the top of Mount Gerizzim*; a mount near Shechem; it hung over the city, as Josephus says[c], and so a very proper place to stand on and deliver a speech from it to the inhabitants of it; who, as the same writer says, were now keeping a festival, on what account he says not, perhaps to Baal-berith their idol: over-against this mountain was another, called Ebal, and between them a valley; and very likely they were assembled in this valley, where the children of Israel stood when the blessings were delivered from Gerizzim, and the curses from Ebal; and if so, Jotham might be heard very well by the Shechemites: *and he lifted up his voice, and cried*; that he might be heard by them: *and said unto them, hearken unto me, ye men of Shechem, that God may hearken unto you*; which was a very solemn manner of address to them, tending to excite attention, as having somewhat of importance to say to them, and suggesting, that if they did not hearken to him, God would not hearken to them when they cried to him, and therefore it behoved them to attend: it is an adjuration of them to hearken to him, or a wish that God would not hearken to them if they were inattentive to him.

Ver. 8. *The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them*, &c.] This is an apologue or fable, and a very fine and beautiful one; it is fitly expressed to answer the design, and the most ancient of the kind, being made seven hundred years before the times of Æsop, so famous for his fables, and exceeds any thing written by him. By the trees are meant the people of Israel in general, and the Shechemites in particular, who had been for some time very desirous of a king, but could not persuade any of their great and good men to accept of that office: *and they said unto the olive-tree, reign thou over us*: a fit emblem of a good man, endowed with excellent virtues and qualifications for good, as David king of Israel, who is compared to such a tree, Psal. lii. 8. Jarchi applies this to Othniel the first judge; but it may be better applied to Gideon, an excellent good man, full of fruits of righteousness, and eminently useful, and to whom kingly government was offered, and was refused by him; and the men of Shechem could scarcely fail of thinking of him, and applying it to him, as Jotham was delivering his fable.

Ver. 9. *But the olive-tree said unto them*, &c.] In reply to the request of the trees: *should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man*; by *fatness* oil is meant, pressed out of the fruit of the olive-tree, and which was much made use of both in the burning of the lamps in the tabernacle, and in many sacrifices, as the meat-offerings and others, whereby God was honoured; and it was also made use of in the investiture of the greatest personages with the highest offices among men, as kings, priests, and prophets, as well as eaten with pleasure and delight by all sorts of men, and even by the greatest, and so men are honoured by it: *and go to be promoted over the trees*; desert so useful a station, in which it was planted and fixed, to move to and fro, as the word signifies, and reign over trees; suggesting that it was unreasonable, at least not eligible to a good man to desert a private station in life, to which he was called of God, and in which he acted with honour and usefulness to others, and take upon him a public office, attended with much care and trouble, and with neglect of private affairs, and with the loss of much personal peace and comfort.

Ver. 10. *And the trees said to the fig-tree*, &c.] Another useful and fruit-bearing tree, and to which also good men are sometimes compared, see Cant. ii. 13. *come thou*, and *reign over us*: which Jarchi applies to Deborah, but may be better applied to one of Gideon's sons, who, though they had not a personal offer of kingly government themselves, yet it was made to them through their father, and refused, as for himself, so for them; and had it been offered to them, they would have rejected it, as Jotham seems to intimate by this parable.

Ver. 11. *And the fig-tree said unto them*, &c.] Rejecting the offer made: *should I forsake my sweetness and my good fruit*; for such the fruit of the fig-tree is, sweet and good: so Julian[d] the emperor shews from various authors, Aristophanes, Herodotus, and Homer, that nothing is sweeter than figs, excepting honey, and that no kind of fruit is better, and, where they are, no good is wanting: *and go to be promoted over the trees?* the same is designed by this as the former.

Ver. 12. *Then said the trees unto the vine*, &c.] Another emblem of good and useful men; and it may be observed, that Jotham takes no notice of any trees but

[b] נסתר ἐκρύβη, Sept. absconditus est, V. L. qui absconditus fuit, Tigurine version; so the Targum.

[c] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 2.

[d] Opera, par. 2. ep. 24. Sarapioni, p. 142.

fruitful ones till he comes to the bramble, and them only such as were well known, and of the greatest use, in the land of Judea, as olives, figs, and vines, see Deut. viii. 8. Hab. iii. 17. *come thou*, and *reign over us*; this Jarchi applies to Gideon; but since there are three sorts of trees brought into the fable, and when the kingdom was offered to Gideon, it was proposed to him, and to his son, and his son's son, and refused, some reference may be had unto it in this apologue. Abarbinel thinks three sorts of men are intended as proper persons for rule and government, as honourable ones, such as are wealthy and rich, and also of good behaviour to God and man, as Gideon's sons were; but Abimelech was all the reverse.

Ver. 13. *And the vine said unto them*, &c.] By way of denial and refusal, as the other two: *shall I leave my wine, which cheereth God and man*; which being used in the drink-offerings was acceptable to God, and of a sweet savour to him, Numb. xv. 7. and being drank by man, revives, refreshes, and makes glad, when before sorrowful, drooping, faint, and weary, Psal. civ. 15. though some by Elohim, rendered God, understand great personages, as men of quality, magistrates, &c. and by *man* the common people, and so in ver. 9. *and go to be promoted over the trees?* all speak the same language, being of the same sentiment.

Ver. 14. *Then said all the trees unto the bramble*, &c.] Perceiving they could not prevail upon any of the useful and fruitful trees to take the government of them, they unite in a request to a bramble, scarce to be called a tree, and however a very barren and fruitless one, yea, hurtful and distressing: *come thou*, and *reign over us*: this respects Abimelech, and describes him as a mean person, the son of a concubine, as having no goodness in him, not any good qualifications to recommend him to government, but all the reverse, cruel, tyrannical, and oppressive; and this exposes the folly of the Shechemites, and their eagerness to have a king at any rate, though ever so mean and despicable, useless and pernicious.

Ver. 15. *And the bramble said unto the trees*, &c.] Accepting of their offer at once: *if ye in trust anoint me king over you*; suspecting they were not hearty and cordial in their choice and call to the kingly authority over them: then *come* and *put your trust in my shadow*; promising protection to them as his subjects, requiring their confidence in him, and boasting of the good they should receive from him, as is common with wicked princes at their first entering on their office; but, alas! what shadow or protection can there be in a bramble? if a man attempts to put himself under it for shelter, he will find it will be of no use to him, but hurtful, since, the nearer and closer he comes to it, the more he will be scratched and torn by it: *and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon*: signifying, that if they did not heartily submit to his government, and put confidence in him, and prove faithful to him, they should smart for it, and feel his wrath and vengeance, even the greatest men among them, comparable to the cedars of Lebanon; for thorns and brambles catching fire, as they easily do, or fire being put to them, as weak as they are, and placed under the tallest and strongest cedars, will soon fetch them down to the ground: and the words of the bramble, or Abimelech, proved true to the Shechemites, he is made to speak in this parable.

Ver. 16. *Now therefore, if ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king*, &c.] If they had done this conscientiously, and in the uprightness of their hearts, to take such a base man, and a murderer, and make him their king, which Jotham doubted, and put it in this manner to them, that they might consider of it themselves: *if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal, and his house*; if they could think so, which surely they could not, when they reflected upon the murder of his family they had consented to: *and have done unto him according to the deservings of his hands*; to his memory, and to his family, according to the merit of his works which he had performed on their account, next mentioned.

Ver. 17. *For my father fought for you*, &c.] In the valley of Jezreel, and at Karkor, where with 300 men he routed and destroyed an army of 135,000: *and adventured his life far*; which, according to our version, may seem to have respect to his going over Jordan, and following the Midianites, fleeing into their country, and fighting them at Karkor, at a great distance from his native place; but the phrase in the original text is, *he cast away his life afar off*[*], made no account of it, exposed it to the greatest danger; or, as the Targum, "he delivered his life as it were to destruction:" *and delivered you out of the hand of Midian*: from the oppression and bondage of the Midianites, under which they had laboured seven years.

Ver. 18. *And ye are risen up against my father's house this day*, &c.] Which was an instance of great ingratitude in them, after such services done for them, and favours received by them: *and have slain his sons, 70 persons on one stone*; excepting one, himself, and he was intentionally slain, their design was to cut off every one; and all being slain but one, the round number is given, and this being so large, is the rather observed; and though Abimelech committed the fact, the men of Shechem were accessory to it, they gave him money, with which he hired men to assist him in it, see ver. 21. and it is very probable they were privy to his intention, and encouraged him to it; and certain it is they shewed their approbation of it, by making Abimelech king after it, and therefore they are justly charged with it: *and have made Abimelech, the son of his handmaid, king over the men of Shechem*; which was both to the disgrace of Gideon, and his family, and of themselves too, that a base son of his should be made their king; when it would have been more to the credit of Gideon, and his family, that he had lived in obscurity, and had not been known as a son of his; and this was to the reproach of the men of Shechem, and especially to the princes thereof; for, by the men of Shechem are meant the lords, and great men thereof, as Kimchi observes; and great contempt is cast on Abimelech himself, who is here represented as making a very poor figure, being by extraction the son of an handmaid, and king only over the men of Shechem; and who made him so for no other reason but this,

[*] וישלך את נפשו מנגד & projecit animam suam a longe, Pagninus; vel eminus, Montanus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

because he is your brother; not because he had any right to the kingdom, or had any qualification for it, but because his mother lived among them, and her family belonged to them, and so he was related to many of them, and they hoped on that account to have preferment and favours from him.

Ver. 19. *If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal and his house this day,* &c.] If they could in their consciences think and believe they had done well, and acted the faithful and upright part by him and his family, which he left with them to consider of: then *rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you;* may you be happy in him as a king, and he be happy in you as his subjects, and live peaceably and comfortably together; and this he suggests as a test of their former conduct, that should this alliance between Abimelech and them be attended with happiness, which he could not believe would be the case, then it would seem that they had done a right part by Gideon and his family; but if they should be unhappy together, as he supposed they would, then it would be clear that they had acted a base and disingenuous part by his father's family.

Ver. 20. *But if not,* &c.] If it appeared that they had not acted uprightly and sincerely in this matter: *let fire come out of Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo;* let wrath, rage, and fury, break out from Abimelech like fire, and issue in the destruction of those that made him king, both those of Shechem and of Millo: *and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech;* let them be incensed against Abimelech, and seek his ruin, and procure it: the sense is, that he wishes that strife, contention, and quarrels, might arise among them, and they mutually destroy each other; the words are imprecative of evil upon them both, and which had its exact fulfilment.

Ver. 21. *And Jotham ran away, and fled,* &c.] Having delivered his fable, and the application of it, he made his escape, having the advantage of being on the top of a mountain, at some distance from the people, and perhaps they might not be inclined to do him any hurt: *and went to Beer;* which some take to be the same with Baalath-beer in the tribe of Simeon, Josh. xix. 8. Jerom[f] says, the village Bera, whither Jotham fled, is eight miles from Eleutheropolis to the north; but Mr. Maundrell[g], who was in those parts in 1697, gives us a better account of it; and, according to him, it is about two hours and a half's travel from Beth-el to it, and three hours and one-third from it to Jerusalem; Beer, he says, enjoys a very pleasant situation, on an easy declivity, fronting southward; at the bottom of the hill it has a plentiful fountain of excellent water, from which it had its name: *and dwelt there for fear of Abimelech his brother;* how long he dwelt there is not certain, and we hear no more of him after this. Josephus says[h] he lay hid in the mountains three years for fear of Abimelech, which perhaps he concluded from Abimelech's reigning three years, as follows.

Ver. 22. *When Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel.*] The people in general consenting to what the men of Shechem had done, at least not opposing it, all being desirous of a king, and therefore put up with a mean person, rather than have none; though it is amazing they should, and that they had not rose up as one man against Abimelech, and avenged the blood of the sons of Gideon, who had been so useful and serviceable to them; it is indeed said that he reigned over all Israel, and his reign, such as it was, was very short, as is often the case with wicked princes.

Ver. 23. *Then God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem,* &c.] Permitted, yea, gave a commission to Satan, the evil spirit, to go among them, who stirred up suspicions, jealousies, hatred, and ill will to one another, and sowed the seeds of discord and contention among them; or God gave them up to their own hearts' lusts, to think ill of one another, grow jealous, and meditate revenge: *and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech;* did not openly declare their minds, but secretly conspired against him, and privately consulted ways and means to get rid of him, and shake off his government.

Ver. 24. *That the cruelty done to the 70 sons of Jerubbaal might come,* &c.] That vengeance might come on the authors of it; so things were ordered in Providence that this might come to pass: *and their blood be laid upon Abimelech their brother, which slew them;* be charged to his account, and he suffer for shedding it: *and upon the men of Shechem which aided him in killing of his brethren;* by giving him money to hire men to go with him to do it, and perhaps by words encouraging the assassins, and who might be of the city of Shechem.

Ver. 25. *And the men of Shechem set liers in wait for him in the top of the mountains,* &c.] Of Ebal and Gerizzim, which were near Shechem, by the way of which he passed when he came to that city, and these they set there, either to slay him, or to seize his person, and bring him to them: *and they robbed all that came along that way by them;* that belonged to Abimelech and others also; and this they did to shew their contempt of his government, and that they were no longer under it, and every man did what was right in his own eyes, as if they had no governor over them; though some think this was done to draw him thither to secure his subjects from such rapine and violence, that they might have an opportunity to lay hold upon him, or this they did on purpose to begin a civil war; *and it was told Abimelech;* that they lay in wait for him, and so he kept himself from them.

Ver. 26. *And Gaal the son of Ebed came with his brethren, and went over to Shechem,* &c.] Who this Gaal was, and who his brethren, and from whence he came, and the place he went over, are all uncertain. Jarchi thinks he was a Gentile, and it looks, by some speeches of his afterwards, as if he was a descendant of Hamor, prince of Shechem, in the times of Jacob, who, since the expulsion of the Canaanites, his family had retired to some distant parts; but hearing of a difference between Abimelech and the Shechemites,

[f] De loc. Heb. fol. 89. I.
[g] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 64, 66.
[h] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 2.

Gaal, with some of the family, came over, perhaps over Jordan, to make what advantage he could of it: *and the men of Shechem put their confidence in him*; freely told him their mind, the ill opinion they had of Abimelech, and what was their design against him; and he assuring them he would take their part, and defend them to the uttermost, they depended on him, and therefore very securely went about their business in the fields, as follows.

Ver. 27. *And they went into the fields, and gathered their vineyards*, &c.] Before they kept within the city, and durst not stir out to gather in the vintage, the time being come, for fear of the troops of Abimelech; for their lying in wait for him, and the robberies committed being made known to him, he had prepared to raise some forces, and attack them, of which they had had information; but now being encouraged with the protection of Gaal, they ventured out to gather their grapes in their vineyards without fear: *and trode* the grapes, *and made merry*: sung songs and danced, as was usual at the in-gathering of the fruits of the earth, and treading the wine-press, Isa. xvi. 10. Jer. xviii. 33. though Abendana thinks this joy and merriment were made to their idol, to whom they gave the praise of their vintage, they should have done to the true God, and what follows may seem to confirm it: *and they went into the house of their god*: the temple of Baal-berith, ver. 5. *and did eat and drink*; in their idol-temple, as was the manner of idolaters to do, bringing their first-fruits to rejoice, and make glad with: *and cursed Abimelech*: wished they had never seen him and known him, hoped they should be rid of him in a little time, and that he would meet with his deserved disgrace and punishment; and this they did in that very temple from whence they had taken money to assist him in making way for his government of them; so fickle and changeable were they.

Ver. 28. *And Gaal the son of Ebed said*, &c.] As they were then making merry, drinking and carousing: *who is Abimelech, and who is Shechem, that we should serve him?* who is this Abimelech the Shechemite? or who is he more than Shechem, the old prince of this place, long ago dispossessed of it? the one is no better than the other, nor has a better title to rule and government than the other, that we should serve him; nay, of the two, the descendants of the old Shechem have the best title: *is not he the son of Jerubbaal?* that pleaded against Baal, and threw down his altar, the god you now serve: *and Zebul his officer?* has he not set him over you? not content to rule you himself, he has set up another as an officer over you under him, and thus you are like to be governed in a tyrannical manner, and oppressed: *serve the men of Hamor—for why should we serve him?* that is, rather serve them than him; which was speaking very contemptuously of his government, preferring the descendants of Hamor, the old Canaanitish prince, that ruled in this place, to Abimelech; and if Gaal was a descendant of his, he spoke in good earnest, and thought this a proper opportunity to get the government of the city restored to him and his family, since their old religion and idolatry were established among them; and if they had received the one, why not the other?

Ver. 29. *And would to God this people were under my hand*, &c.] Or government, that I were but the ruler of their city, and general of their forces: *then would I remove Abimelech*: from his kingly office, and rid Shechem of him, and all the country round about, and indeed remove him out of the world: *and he said to Abimelech*: as if he was present, in a hectoring and blustering manner; or he said what follows to his officer under him, that represented him; or he sent a messenger to him, saying, *increase thine army, and come out*: bidding him defiance, challenging him to come into the open field and fight him, and bring as many forces along with him as he could or would, not doubting but he should be a match for him; and the men of Shechem would see they had nothing to fear from him, having such a man as Gaal at the head of them; this he said to engage the Schechemites to make him their ruler.

Ver. 30. *And when Zebul the ruler of the city*, &c.] Whom Abimelech had placed there under him: *heard the words of Gaal the son of Ebed, his anger was kindled*; because he spoke slightly of him, and wished to have his place; perhaps before Zebul was inclined to be on the side of the Shechemites against Abimelech, or at least dissembled that he was; but now, being incensed at the words of Gaal, determined to take the side of Abimelech, and let him know how things were carrying on against him.

Ver. 31. *And he sent messengers unto Abimelech privily*, &c.] In a secret manner, unknown to Gaal and the men of Shechem; or *craftily*, as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it, still dissembling, notwithstanding his anger, to be in the interest of Gaal, and the men of Shechem, as appears indeed afterwards by a shew of friendliness with Gaal, ver. 36. though, according to Joseph Kimchi and Ben Gersom, Thormah is the name of the place where Abimelech was, the same with Arumah, ver. 41. and the sense is, that he sent messengers to Abimelech at Thormah or Arumah: *saying, Gaal the son of Ebed, and his brethren, be come to Shechem*; a family that Abimelech well knew, and if they were of the race of the old Canaanites, he would easily perceive their design: *and, behold, they fortify the city against thee*; by repairing its fortifications, or adding new works; or *besiege*[1] it, which, as that is done by placing an army around it without, that none can come out of it, so by setting a watch within, and upon the walls, and at the gates of it, that none can come in, which is here meant; though some interpret it of their design to besiege the city Thormah, where Abimelech was, of which he gives him notice; or rather they set the city against thee, make the inhabitants thine enemies.

Ver. 32. *Now therefore up by night*, &c.] The night following, that no time might be lost: *and the people that is with thee*; the troops he had with him; not only such he had for his own guards, but what he had been raising, having intelligence before this of the revolt of the Shechemites from him: *and lie in wait in the fields*; he thought it most advisable for

[1] צרים obsident, Paguinus, Munster, Drusius; obsidere cogitant, Piscator.

him to march with the forces he had, from the place where he was in the night, and less liable to be discovered, and remain in the fields of Shechem till morning, and then come upon the Shechemites before they were aware, and surprise them.

Ver. 33. *And it shall be,* that *in the morning, as soon as the sun is up, thou shalt rise early, and set upon the city,* &c.] For being with his forces advanced near to it by a march in the night, he would be able by sun-rising to attack the city before the inhabitants were up to defend it, and so surprise them: *and, behold, when he and the people that* is *with him come out against thee;* that is, Gaal, and the men with him, as many as he upon a surprise can get together: *thou mayest do to them as thou shalt find occasion:* as the situation of things would direct him, and he, in his wisdom, and according to his ability, and as opportunity offered, would see plainly what was fit and right to be done; Zebul did not pretend to advise him further, but left the rest to his discretion, as things should appear to him.

Ver. 34. *And Abimelech rose up, and all the people that* were *with him, by night,* &c.] According to the advice of Zebul: *and they laid wait against Shechem in four companies;* he divided his army into four parts, which he placed on the four sides of the city, at some distance from it, to act as they should have opportunity, to find ways and means of getting into it on either quarter.

Ver. 35. *And Gaal the son of Ebed went out,* &c.] He rose up early that morning, being a man of vigilance and activity, and perhaps had some intelligence of the preparations of Abimelech, his design against the city, though he did not expect he was so near at hand: *and stood in the entering of the gate of the city:* to see whether the guards were on their duty within, and whether he could observe any thing without, any approaching danger: *and Abimelech rose up, and the people that were with him, from lying in wait:* came out of their ambush, and appeared just as Gaal was at the gate.

Ver. 36. *And when Gaal saw the people, he said to Zebul,* &c.] Who was up as early, and came to the gate of the city, to see how things went, and whether there was any appearance of Abimelech and his forces, and whether any opportunity offered to let him into the city; and it seems as if he came and stood by Gaal, and appeared friendly with him: *behold, there come people down from the tops of the mountains;* the mountains of Ebal and Gerizzim, which were near to Shechem: *and Zebul said unto him, thou seest the shadow of the mountains, as* if they were *men;* either deriding him, as being just out of his bed, and his eyes scarce open, that he could not discern shadows from men; or rather as being of such a timorous spirit, that he was afraid of shadows; or else he said this, putting on an air of seriousness, as if he really believed this to be the case, on purpose to deceive him, and keep him from talking about them, whilst Abimelech and his men made further advances before Gaal could make any preparation to meet them.

Ver. 37. *And Gaal spake again, and said,* &c.] Looking towards the mountains, and taking another view of what he before saw, for further satisfaction: *see, there come people down by the middle of the land;* either in the valley between the two mountains; or rather those he first saw on the top of the mountains were now come down about the middle of them, called in the Hebrew text the navel, from the prominence of the mountains thereabout, or because the navel is in the middle of the body, as this part of them was the middle on which he saw them. R. Isaiah interprets it, between the two cities: *and another company come along by the plain of Meonenim:* of which we read nowhere else. Montanus renders it, *the oak of Meonenim;* or of the soothsayers; oaks being had in great esteem with idolaters for their oracles and divinations; and perhaps this was a place, whether an oak or a plain, where such persons used to meet to make their divinations.

Ver. 38. *Then said Zebul unto him,* &c.] Not being able to put him off any longer, and willing to take the opportunity to upbraid him with what he had said: *where is now thy mouth,* wherewith *thou saidst, who is Abimelech, that we should serve him?* darest thou say the same thou hast done, and utter the contemptuous language concerning Abimelech, asking who he was, that he should be served? Here he is, speak to his face; what are become of those boasts and brags, and great swelling words, what thou wouldest do if thou hadst the command of this city? *is not this the people thou hast despised?* as small and insignificant, bidding Abimelech increase his army, and come out and fight: *go out, I pray thee, now, and fight with them;* and shew thyself to be a man of courage, and not a mere blusterer, a man that can use his sword as well as his tongue.

Ver. 39. *And Gaal went out before the men of Shechem,* &c.] At the head of them, to meet Abimelech, having gathered together as many, and put them in as good order, as he could, and the time would admit of: *and fought with Abimelech;* without the city.

Ver. 40. *And Abimelech chased him, and he fled before him,* &c.] Abimelech got the better of him in the battle, and obliged him to give way, and he pursued him closely as he was fleeing: *and many were overthrown and wounded, even unto the entering of the gate;* or, *they fell many wounded* [k], or slain, as the Targum; that is, many were killed and wounded, as in the battle, so in the pursuit, and lay all the way to the entrance into the gate of the city, to which Gaal, and the men of Shechem, made for their safety, and got in.

Ver. 41. *And Abimelech dwelt at Arumah,* &c.] Called also Aruma as Jerom [l] says, and in his time called Remphtis; it seems to be not far off from Shechem, he returned to the place where he was before, see ver. 31. contenting himself with the advantage he had got, and waiting when another opportunity would offer, which quickly did, to be revenged on the Shechemites: *and Zebul thrust out Gaal and his brethren, that they should not dwell in Shechem:* there seems to have been two parties in Shechem before, one that hated Abimelech, and another more friendly to his interest; by which means Zebul his officer kept his post, and

[k] ויפלו חללים & ceciderunt vulnerati multi, Pagninus, Montanus.

[l] De loc. Heb. fol. 94 B.

Gaal could not get the government into his hand; and now by the loss in the late battle, who were Abimelech's sworn enemies, and the disgrace Gaal fell into by being beaten, Zebul was able, so far able to carry his point, as to drive Gaal and his brethren out of the city; though he had not strength to put him to death, or to seize him and deliver him into the hands of Abimelech.

Ver. 42. *And it came to pass on the morrow*, &c.] The day after the battle: *that the people went out into the field*; some think to fight, and try the event of another battle, in order to be freed from Abimelech, but that seems not so likely: rather to finish their vintage, as Josephus [l], or to till their ground, to plough and sow, which quickly came on after the vintage was ended; and this they might do the more securely, since Abimelech had withdrawn himself and his forces to his place of habitation, and so concluded he would not soon at least return to them; and the rather they might think he would be more easy with them, since Gaal was thrust out from among them: *and they told Abimelech*; or it was told Abimelech, that the people came out into the field, and so an opportunity offered to him to come and cut them off, as they were at their business unarmed.

Ver. 43. *And he took the people*, &c.] That is, the forces he had with him at Arumah: *and divided them into three companies*; each having a separate leader, and the command of one of them he had himself: *and laid wait in the field*; in the field of Shechem, one company in one part, and one in another part of the field: *and looked, and, behold, the people were come forth out of the city*; he watched them when they did: *and he rose up against them, and smote them*; the companies rose up out of their ambush, in different parts, and killed them.

Ver. 44. *And Abimelech, and the company that was with him*, &c.] Which he had the particular command of; or *the heads* [m], for in the company with him, as Kimchi observes, were great men; and so the Septuagint renders it, the princes that were with him: *rushed forward, and stood in the entering of the gate of the city*; to prevent the people that were in the field getting into it, and any from coming out of it to their relief: *and the two other companies ran upon all the people that were in the fields, and slew them*; so that by this means none escaped.

Ver. 45. *And Abimelech fought against the city all that day*, &c.] By throwing stones or arrows into it: *and he took the city*; it was surrendered to him, not being able to stand out against his forces: *and slew the people that was therein*; all but those that were of his own family and his friends; all that had taken up arms against him, or had shewn their dislike of his government, and were his enemies: *and beat down the city*; the houses in it, and walls of it, though it was his native place: *and sowed it with salt*; not to make it barren, for he would rather then have sowed the field, though this would not have had any effect of that kind, for any time at least; but to shew his detestation of it, because of the ill usage he had met with, and as a token of its perpetual destruction, to which he devoted it, determining that if it was in his power it should never be rebuilt; but it was hereafter, and became again a very flourishing city in Jeroboam's time. Thus the Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, in the year 1162, when he took Milain, not only ploughed it up, but sowed it with salt; and in memory of it there is a street in it, now called *la contrada della Sala* [n]: besides, Abimelech did this to deter other cities from rebelling against him; for if he so used his own city, more severely, if possible, would he use others.

Ver. 46. *And when all the men of the tower of Shechem heard* that, &c.] That the city of Shechem was taken, the inhabitants of it slain, the city beaten down, and sowed with salt; by which it appears that this tower was not within the city, for then the men of it would have seen what was done, and not be said only to hear it; though it was not far from it, and possessed by Shechemites, and whither some of the principal inhabitants had now fled for safety; perhaps it is the same with the house of Millo, and so that part of Jotham's curse, which respected that, had now its accomplishment, otherwise no account is given of it: *they entered into an hold of the house of the god Berith*; not thinking themselves safe enough in the tower, they betook themselves to the temple of Baal-berith their god, see ver. 4. and ch. viii. 33. which was a strong fortified place, as temples often were; or however had a strong hold belonging to it, and hither they fled, either because of the greater strength of the place, or because of the sanctity of it, and imagining Abimelech would not destroy it on that account; and the rather, because of the supply he had from it, which enabled him to raise himself to the government of Israel.

Ver. 47. *And it was told Abimelech*, &c.] Who had his spies about, and particularly to observe the motions of the men in this tower: *that all the men of the tower of Shechem were gathered together*; in the hold of the temple of Baal-berith.

Ver. 48. *And Abimelech got him up to Mount Zalmon*, &c.] A mountain near Shechem, and thought to be the same with Salmon in Psal. lxviii. 14. which seems to have had its name from the shade of the trees which grew upon it: *he and all the people that were with him*; his whole army: *and Abimelech took an ax in his hand, and cut down a bough from the trees*; which grew upon Mount Zalmon: *and took it, and laid it on his shoulders*; and carried it along with him: *and said unto the people that were with him, what ye have seen me do, make haste, and do as I have done*; take an ax, and every man cut down a bough with all possible haste, and lay it on his shoulder.

Ver. 49. *And all the people likewise cut down every man his bough, and followed Abimelech*, &c.] With their boughs on their shoulders, so that they were men that seemed to be as trees walking: *and put them to the hold, and set the hold on fire upon them*; upon the men in it, or with them, the boughs of trees; it is probable the hold was made of wood, and so could the more easily be set on fire. Jarchi says it was a wood or forest, where they bent the trees, and divided

[l] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 4.

[m] והראשים & capita, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; & principes, Vatablus.

[n] Sigonius de regn. Ital. l. 13, & 14.

them round about, and made a fence of them; but they would scarcely have left the tower for such a shelter: *so that all the men of the tower of Shechem died also*; fire being put to the hold, and they burnt in it; the Vulgate Latin version adds, with fire and smoke; for they being boughs of trees just cut down, with which they set fire to the hold, they would not burn easily and clearly, but make a prodigious smoke, with which many might be suffocated, as others burnt with fire; and it is unaccountable that Josephus[o] should say that faggots of dry wood were taken, and with them fire set to the hold, when the text is so express for it that they were boughs of green trees just cut off: *about 1,000 men and women*: but the above historian makes them to be many more; he says the men were about 1,500, and the rest a great multitude; this literally fulfilled Jotham's curse.

Ver. 50. *Then went Abimelech to Thebez*, &c.] Which, according to Ben Gersom, had rebelled against him; it was near to Shechem. Adrichomius says[p], the ruins, where he thinks stood the city of Thebez, were but one furlong from Neapolis or Shechem, where, to the left of Jacob's well, were to be seen ruins of a large town, marble stones, whole pillars, and other signs of large palaces, and the soil wonderfully fruitful; and Jerom says[q], that in his time there was a village called Thebes, on the borders of Neapolis or Shechem, as you go to Scythopolis, 13 miles from it. It must be near Shechem, inhabited by Shechemites, to fulfil Jotham's curse, ver. 20. *and encamped against Thebez, and took it*, it seems not to have held out long, being deserted by its inhabitants, who fled to the tower, as follows.

Ver. 51. *But there was a strong tower within the city*, &c.] The tower of Shechem was without the city, but this within, as towers generally are: *and thither fled all the men and women, and all they of the city*; men, women, and children, man and maid servants, all the inhabitants of the city; the tower being a large place, having not only many rooms in it, but perhaps a large area in the midst of it, as well as it had battlements on the top of it: *and shut it to them*; the gates of it, and which no doubt they strongly barred and bolted, to keep out the enemy: *and gat them up to the top of the tower*; to observe the motions of Abimelech, and annoy him as much as they could with what they carried with them, as stones, and the like.

Ver. 52. *And Abimelech came unto the tower*, &c.] With his army to besiege it: *and fought against it*; using all the methods he could to oblige those in it to surrender: *and went hard unto the door of the tower to burn it with fire*; in order to get entrance into it; and perhaps the tower was built of stone, so that no other part could be set fire to; and to do this he drew near to the door himself, for nothing more is meant by the phrase, *went hard*, than drawing near in his own person to the door; hazarding his life in the enterprise, being so bent upon it, thinking to do by this tower what he had done to the hold of the temple of Baal-berith.

Ver. 53. *And a certain woman cast a piece of a millstone*, &c.] Of the upper millstone, as the word signifies, which is observed by Jarchi and other Jewish commentators; this with other stones being carried up to the top of the tower, to do what execution they could with them: and a woman observing Abimelech making up to the door of the tower, took up this piece of millstone, and threw it down *upon Abimelech's head, and all to break his skull*: she did it with that view, though it may as well be rendered, or *she*, or *it broke his skull*[r]; it made a fracture in it, which was mortal. Abendana observes, and so others, that that was measure for measure, a righteous retaliation, that as he had slain 70 of his brethren on one stone, he should die by means of a stone.

Ver. 54. *Then he called hastily to the young man his armour-bearer*, &c.] Perceiving it was a mortal blow that was given him, and he should soon expire; and that the cast of the stone was by the hand of a woman, and therefore he was in haste to have the young man come to him: *and said unto him, draw thy sword and slay me, that men say not of me, a woman slew him*: it being reckoned very ignominious and reproachful to die by the hand of a woman, and especially any great personage, as a king or general of an army[s]; to avoid this, he chose rather to be guilty of suicide, or of what cannot well be excused from it, and so died a self-murderer; which, added to all his other sins, he seemed to have no sense of, or repentance for; and the method he took to conceal the shame of his death served the more to spread it; for this circumstance of his death could not be given without the reason of it, and which was remembered and related punctually near 200 years afterwards, 2 Sam. xi. 21.

Ver. 55. *And when the men of Israel saw that Abimelech was dead*, &c.] That is, those that were with him, the men of his army, who were all Israelites: *they departed every man to his place*; disbanded themselves, and went every one to their own home, and so the inhabitants of Thebez escaped the vengeance of Abimelech.

Ver. 56. *Thus God rendered the wickedness of Abimelech which he did unto his father*, &c.] To the disgrace of his father's character, and to the hurt of his father's family: *in slaying his seventy brethren*; excepting one, which was a piece of unheard-of wickedness, attended with most sad aggravations; the shedding such blood required blood to be shed again, and it was righteous judgment God rendered to him; this and the following verse contain the remarks made upon this history by the writer of it, who, as we have seen, in all probability, was the Prophet Samuel.

Ver. 57. *And all the evil of the men of Shechem*, &c.] In aiding Abimelech to slay his brethren, and in making him king after so foul a fact committed: *did God render upon their heads*; by suffering Abimelech to beat down their city, and destroy the inhabitants of it, and by burning the hold in which the men of the tower of Shechem were, and them in it: *and upon them came the curse of Jotham the son of Jerub-*

[o] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 4.
[p] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 70.
[q] De loc. Heb. 93. D.

[r] ותרץ את גלגלתו & confregit cranium ejus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Tigurine version.
[s] O turpe fatum! fœmina Herculeæ necis
Auctor feretur —— Seneca Oetæo.

baal: both upon Abimelech, and the men of Shechem, they being destroyed by one another, as Jotham imprecated they might, and foretold they would, see ver. 20.

CHAP. X.

THIS chapter gives an account of two judges of Israel, in whose days they enjoyed peace, ver. 1—5. after which they sinning against God, came into trouble, and were oppressed by their enemies 18 years, and were also invaded by an army of the Ammonites, ver. 6—9. when they cried unto the Lord for deliverance, confessing their sin; but he had first refused to grant them any, though upon their importunity and reformation he had compassion on them, ver. 10—16. and the chapter is concluded with the preparation made by both armies for a battle, ver. 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *And after Abimelech there arose to defend Israel*, &c.] To save, deliver, and protect Israel; which does not necessarily imply that Abimelech did; for he was no judge of God's raising up, or the people's choosing, but usurped a kingly power over them; and was so far from saving and defending them, that he involved them in trouble and distress, and ruled over them in a tyrannical manner, and left them in the practice of idolatry: it only signifies that after his death arose a person next described to which this may well be attributed, that he was raised up as a judge by the Lord; and though we read of no enemies particularly, that he delivered the people from in his days, yet it is not impossible nor unlikely that there might be such, though not made mention of; besides, he might be said to save them, as the word signifies, in that he was an happy instrument of composing those differences and dissensions, which Abimelech had occasioned, and of recovering them from the idolatry they had fallen into in his times, and of protecting them in their liberties, civil and religious: and this was *Tola the son of Puah, the son of Dodo, a man of Issachar;* he was of the tribe of Issachar, and bore the same name as the eldest son of Issachar did, as his father Puah had the name of the second son of Issachar, 1 Chron. vii. 1. and as for Dodo his grandfather, this is elsewhere mentioned as the name of a man, as it doubtless is here, 2 Sam. xxiii. 9, 24. though some copies of the Targum, the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, render it, the son of his uncle, or father's brother; meaning that his father Puah was the son of Abimelech's uncle, or father's brother, and so was one of the family which was raised up to be a judge after his death; but it is not likely that Gideon, the father of Abimelech, and Puah, the father of this man, should be brethren, when the one was of the tribe of Manasseh, and the other of the tribe of Issachar: *and he dwelt in Shamir in Mount Ephraim:* that is, when he became judge in Israel he removed to this place, as being in the midst of the tribes, and near the tabernacle of Shiloh, and so fit for a judge to reside in, to whom the people might apply from all parts to have justice and judgment administered to them. It is called Shamir in Mount Ephraim, to distinguish it from another of the same name in the mountain of Judah, Josh. xv. 48. it seems to have its name from the thorns which grew about it.

Ver. 2. *And he judged Israel 23 years, and died*, &c.] He did not take upon him to be king, as Abimelech did, but acted as a judge, in which office he continued 23 years, and faithfully discharged it, and died in honour: *and was buried in Shamir;* the place where he executed his office. It is said[t], that in the first year of Tola, the son of Puah, Priamus reigned in Troy.

Ver. 3. *And after him arose Jair, a Gileadite*, &c.] Who was of the half-tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, which inhabited the land of Gilead, and who is the first of the judges that was on that side Jordan; it pleased God, before the government was settled in a particular tribe, to remove it from one to another, and to honour them all, and to shew that though the two tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, were separated from their brethren by the river Jordan, they were not neglected by the Lord; and generally speaking judges were raised up in all those parts which were most oppressed, and liable to be oppressed by their enemies, as Gilead by the Ammonites; wherefore this, and the next judge that followed him, Jephthah, were of Gilead: *and judged Israel 22 years;* protected them from their enemies, administered justice to them, and preserved them in the true religion.

Ver. 4. *And he had 30 sons that rode upon 30 ass-colts*, &c.] Which to ride on in those times was reckoned honourable, and on which judges rode in their circuit, ch. v. 10. and such might be these sons of Jair, who were appointed under him to ride about, and do justice in the several parts of the country, as Samuel's sons were judges under him, 1 Sam. viii. 1. *and they had 30 cities, which are called Havoth-jair unto this day, which* are *in the land of Gilead;* or the villages of Jair. There were some of this name that belonged to Jair, a son of Manasseh, in the times of Moses, Numb. xxxii. 41. and these may be the same, at least some of them; for they were but 23 he had, whereas these were 30, 1 Chron. ii. 22. and these coming by inheritance to this Jair, a descendant of the former, and he being of the same name, and these cities perhaps repaired and enlarged by him, the name of them was continued and established, for it is not reasonable to suppose, as some have done, that this is the same Jair that lived in the times of Moses, who, if so, must have lived more than 300 years, an age men did not live to in those times.

Ver. 5. *And Jair died, and was buried in Camon.*] A city of Gilead, as Josephus[u] calls it; Jerom[w], under this word Camon, makes mention of a village in his

[t] Juchasin, fol. 136. 1.
[u] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 6.
[w] De loc. Heb. fol. 90. B.

times, called Cimana, in the large plain six miles from Legion to the north, as you go to Ptolemais; but, as Reland[x] observes, this seems not to be the same place, but rather this is the Camon Polybius[y] speaks of among other cities of Peræa, taken by Antiochus.

Ver. 6. *And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] After the death of the above judges they fell into idolatry again, as the following instances shew: *and served Baalim, and Ashtaroth,* as they had before, ch. ii. 11, 13. see the notes there: and, besides these, also *the gods of Syria;* their gods and goddesses, Belus and Saturn, Astarte and the Dea Syria, Lucian writes of: *and the gods of Zidon;* the goddess of the Zidonians was Ashtaroth, 1 Kings xi. 5. and it seems they had other deities: *and the gods of Moab;* the chief of which were Baal-peor and Chemosh, Numb. xxv. 2. 1 Kings xi. 7. *and the gods of the children of Ammon;* as Milcom or Molech, 1 Kings xi. 5, 7. *and the gods of the Philistines;* as Dagon the god of Ashdod, Beelzebub the god of Ekron, Marnas the god of Gaza, and Derceto the goddess of Ascalon: *and forsook the Lord, and served not him;* not even in conjunction with the above deities, as Jarchi and others observe; at other times, when they worshipped other gods, they pretended to worship the Lord also, they served the creature besides the Creator; but now they were so dreadfully sunk into idolatry, that they had wholly forsaken the Lord and his worship at the tabernacle, and made no pretensions to it, but entirely neglected it.

Ver. 7. *And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel,* &c.] His anger burned like fire, he was exceedingly incensed against them, nothing being more provoking to him than idolatry, as after mentioned: *and he sold them into the hands of the Philistines, and into the hands of the children of Ammon;* that is, delivered them into their hands, and they became subject and were in bondage to them, as such are that are sold for *slaves:* part of them, that lay to the west of the land of Israel, fell into the hands of the Philistines; and another part, which lay to the east, were oppressed by the children of Ammon, particularly those that were on the other side Jordan came into the hands of the latter.

Ver. 8. *And that year they vexed and oppressed the children of Israel,* &c.] The Philistines on one side, and the children of Ammon on the other; meaning either that year in which Jair died, as Jarchi; or the first year they began to bring them into bondage, as R. Isaiah: *and from that year,* as Kimchi and Ben Melech, that they vexed and distressed them, they continued to vex and distress them 18 *years;* or, as Abarbinel interprets it, *with that year,* they vexed and oppressed them eighteen years, that is, so many more, or reckoning that into the number of them; and these eighteen years of their oppression are not to be reckoned into the years of Jair's government, and as commencing from the fourth of it, as Bishop Usher, Lightfoot, and others; for it does not appear that there was any oppression in his days, but from the time of his death to the raising up of Jephthah a new judge: and the people oppressed by the children of Ammon during that time were *all the children of Israel that were on the other side Jordan, in the land of the Ammonites, which is in Gilead;* even the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh.

Ver. 9. *Moreover, the children of Ammon passed over Jordan,* &c.] Not content with the oppression of the tribes on the other side Jordan, which had continued 18 years, they came over Jordan into the land of Canaan to ravage that, and bring other of the tribes into subjection to them, particularly the three next mentioned, which lay readiest for them, when they were come over Jordan: *to fight also against Judah, and against Benjamin, and against the house of Ephraim;* who lay to the south and the south-east of the land of Canaan, and were the first the Ammonites had to fight with and subdue, when they had crossed Jordan to the east of it: *so that Israel was sore distressed;* by the Ammonites in the east, threatening those three tribes mentioned, and the Philistines on the west, who gave disturbance to the tribes that lay nearest them, as Asher, Zebulun, Naphtali, Issachar, and Dan; and this distress was begun the same year in different parts, by different enemies.

Ver. 10. *And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord,* &c.] In this their distress, seeing nothing but ruin and destruction before their eyes, their land being invaded by such powerful enemies in different quarters; this opened their eyes to a sense of their sins, the cause of it, and brought them to a confession of them: *saying, we have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim;* had been guilty not only of sins of omission, neglecting the pure worship of God, but also of sins of commission, even of gross idolatry, in serving Baalim, and other gods, before mentioned.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord said unto the children of Israel,* &c.] By a prophet he sent unto them, as Kimchi and Abarbinel, see ch. vi. 8. whom Ben Gersom takes to be Phinehas, but he could not be living at this time; or by an angel, a created one, sent on this occasion; or the increated one, the Son and Word of God, who might appear in an human form, and to whom all that is here said is applicable: did *not* I deliver *you from the Egyptians;* by bringing them out of subjection and bondage to them, and by delivering them out of their hands at the Red sea: *and from the Amorites;* the kings of Sihon and Og, whose countries were taken from them, and put into their hands, when they attempted to stop them in their march to the land of Canaan: *from the children of Ammon;* when they joined with the Moabites against them, ch. iii. 13. *and from the Philistines?* in the times of Shamgar, ch. iii. 31.

Ver. 12. *The Zidonians also,* &c.] Who were left in the land to distress them, though there is no particular mention of them, and of the distress they gave them, and of their deliverance from it, which yet is not at all to be questioned: *and the Amalekites;* both quickly after they came out of Egypt, Exod. xvii. 13. and when they were come into the land of Canaan, joining the Moabites and the Midianites against them, ch. iii. 13. and vi. 3. *and the Maonites did oppress you;*

[x] Palestina Illustr. tom. 2. p. 679.

[y] Hist. l. 5.

meaning either the old inhabitants of Maon, a city in the mountains of Judah, near to which was a wilderness of this name, Josh. xv. 55. 1 Sam. xxiii. 24. or rather a people of Arabia, called by Strabo[a], and Diodorus Siculus[b], Minæans, the same with Mehunim, mentioned with the Arabians, 2 Chron. xxvi. 7. and who perhaps came along with the Midianites, when they oppressed Israel; though some have thought of the old inhabitants of Beth-meon and Baal-meon, Numb. xxxii. 38. Jer. xlviii. 23. *and ye cried unto me, and I delivered you out of their hands;* all those mercies and deliverances are mentioned to aggravate their sins, that notwithstanding the Lord hath so often and so eminently appeared for them, yet they deserted him and his worship, and fell into idolatry. Jarchi observes, that here are seven salvations or deliverances mentioned in opposition to the seven sorts of false gods or idols they had served, ver. 6.

Ver. 13. *Ye have forsaken me, and served other gods,* &c.] Since they had been so remarkably saved, time after time, and delivered from so many powerful enemies, which was dreadful ingratitude: *wherefore I will deliver you no more;* which is not to be understood absolutely, since after this he did deliver them, but conditionally, unless they repented of their idolatries, and forsook them. This is said to bring them to a sense of their sin and danger.

Ver. 14. *Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen,* &c.] For they were their choice, and not what they were obliged to serve through persecution, and by compulsion of others, and whom they needed not, having the Lord Jehovah to be their God; and they are bid not seriously, but in an ironical or sarcastic way, to call upon them for help in this their time of distress, in whose power it was not to relieve them: *let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation;* if they can, whom you have served in your prosperity.

Ver. 15. *And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, we have sinned,* &c.] By serving other gods particularly: and they seemed to have a true sense of their sin, and their confessions of it to be ingenuous, by what follows: *do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee;* inflict what punishment he would upon them, as famine or pestilence, they could not but own it would be just and righteous, and what their sins deserved: *deliver us only, we pray thee, this day;* out of the hands of men; they chose rather to fall into the hands of God; and however he thought fit to deal with them, they entreated that this once he would save them out of the hands of their enemies.

Ver. 16. *And they put away the strange gods from among them,* &c.] Which was an evidence of the truth of their repentance, and shewed their confessions and humiliations to be genuine: *and served the Lord;* and him only, both in private and public; in the observance of duties, both moral and ceremonial; in an attendance on the service of the sanctuary, and by offering sacrifices to God there, according to his will: *and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel;* which is to be understood after the manner of men; for grief properly does not belong to God, there being no passion in him; but it denotes a carriage or behaviour of his, which shews what looks like sympathy in men; a love and affection for Israel, notwithstanding their ill behaviour to him, and a change of his dispensations in Providence towards them, according to his unchangeable will; so Maimonides[b] understands it of the good will and pleasure of God, to cease from afflicting the people of Israel; but Abarbinel is of opinion that this refers to the soul of Israel, which was shortened and contracted, as the word signifies, because of the labour of servitude, the affliction and distress they were in.

Ver. 17. *Then the children of Ammon were gathered together,* &c.] By a crier, as Jarchi; they had passed over Jordan, as in ver. 9. and had been distressing three of the tribes of Israel on that side; but now being informed, by an herald at arms, that the children of Israel, on the other side Jordan, were risen up in defence of their country, rights, and liberties, the children of Ammon came back and repassed Jordan: *and encamped in Gilead;* in the land of Gilead, part of which belonged to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other part to the half-tribe of Manasseh: *and the children of Israel assembled themselves together, and encamped at Mizpeh;* of which name there were several cities in the land of Israel, on both sides Jordan; this must design a place on the other side Jordan, either in the tribe of Gad or Manasseh, for it seems there was of this name in each, see Gen. xxxi. 49. Josh. xi. 3.

Ver. 18. *And the people* and *princes of Gilead said one to another,* &c.] Being thus assembled and encamped: *what man* is he *that will begin to fight with the children of Ammon?* for though the forces were assembled together for battle, yet it seems they had no general to command them, and lead them on to it: *he shall be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead;* this they ordered to be proclaimed, to encourage some person to take the command of them, and go before them to battle, promising him that he should be judge or governor over all the tribes on that side Jordan.

CHAP. XI.

THIS chapter gives an account of another judge of Israel, Jephthah, of his descent and character, ver. 1, 2, 3. of the call the elders of Gilead gave him to be their captain-general, and lead out their forces against the Ammonites, and the agreement he made with them, ver 4—11. of the message he sent to the children of Ammon, which brought on a dispute between him and them about the land Israel possessed on that side Jordan the Ammonites claimed; Israel's right to which Jephthah defended, and made it clearly to appear, hoping thereby to put an end to the quarrel without shedding of blood, ver. 12—27. but the children of Ammon not attending to what he said, he prepared to give them battle, and previous to it he made

[a] Geograph. l. 16. p. 528.
[b] Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 175.

[b] Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 41.

a vow, and then set forward and fought them, and got the victory over them, ver. 28—33. and the chapter concludes with the difficulties Jephthah was embarrassed with upon his return home, on account of his vow, and the performance of it, ver. 34—40.

Ver. 1. *Now Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty man of valour*, &c.] Jephthah had his name of Gileadite either from his father, whose name was Gilead, or from the city and country in which he was born, which is most likely, and so was of the same country with the preceding judge; and he was a man of great strength and valour, and which perhaps became known by his successful excursions on parties of the enemies of Israel, the Ammonites, being at the head of a band of men, who lived by the booty they got from them: *and he was the son of an harlot;* the Targum says, an innkeeper; and, according to Kimchi, she was a concubine, which some reckoned no better than an harlot, but such are not usually called so; some Jewish writers will have her to be one of another tribe his father ought not to have married; and others, that she was of another nation, a Gentile, so Josephus [c]; and, according to Patricides [d], he was the son of a Saracen woman; but neither of these are sufficient to denominate her a harlot: *and Gilead begat Jephthah;* he was his son; this was a descendant of Gilead the son of Machir, the son of Manasseh, called after the name of his great ancestor.

Ver. 2. *And Gilead's wife bare him sons*, &c.] It seems that, after the birth of Jephthah, Gilead took him a lawful wife, who bore him sons: *and his wife's sons grew up;* to the estate of men: *and they thrust out Jephthah;* out of his father's house, his father in all likelihood being dead, or he would not have suffered it, and what follows confirms it that he was dead: *and said unto him, thou shalt not inherit in our father's house;* as he might not, if the son of an harlot, or of a woman of another tribe, or of a concubine; though as Kimchi, from their Rabbins, observes, the son of such an one might, provided his mother was not an handmaid nor a stranger. And it looks as if this was not rightly done, but that Jephthah was injuriously dealt with by his brethren, of which he complains: *for thou art the son of a strange woman:* or of another *woman* [e], that was not their father's lawful wife; or of a woman of another tribe, as the Targum; or of another nation, as others, prostitutes being used to go into foreign countries to get a livelihood, and hide the shame of their families; hence a strange woman, and a harlot, signified the same [f], see ver. 1.

Ver. 3. *Then Jephthah fled from his brethren*, &c.] Being ill used by them, and a man of spirit and courage, and could not bear to be treated with contempt, nor to live in a dependence on others, and therefore sought to make himself another way: *and dwelt in the land of Tob;* which Kimchi and Ben Gersom think was the name of the lord and owner of the land; Abarbinel interprets it, a good land, as Tob signifies, so the Targum; but others the name of a city or country, and conjecture it may be the same with Ish-tob, and which was not far from the children of Ammon, since they sent thither for assistance, 2 Sam. x. 6. Jerom [g] takes it for a country, in which Jephthah dwelt, but says no more of it. Junius says it was on the entrance of Arabia Deserta, see 1 Maccab. v. 13. 2 Maccab. xii. 17. where the inhabitants of it are called Tobienians or Tubienians: *and there were gathered vain men to Jephthah;* not wicked men, but empty men, whose pockets were empty; men without money, as Abarbinel interprets it, had nothing to live upon, no more than Jephthah, and he being a valiant man, they enlisted themselves under him: *and went out with him;* not on any bad design, as to rob and plunder, but to get their living by hunting; or rather by making excursions into the enemy's country, and carrying off booty, on which they lived. Josephus [h] says he maintained them at his own expense, and paid them wages.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass in process of time*, &c.] Some time after Jephthah had been expelled his father's house, and he was become famous for his martial genius, and military exploits; or at the close of the 18-years' oppression of the children of Israel by the Ammonites, or some few days after the children of Israel were gathered together at Mizpeh, that the people and princes of Gilead were preparing for war with Ammon, and were thinking of a proper person to be their general: *that the children of Ammon made war against Israel;* not only repassed Jordan, and encamped in Gilead, but began to attack them in some place or another, at least threatened them with it, and made motions towards it.

Ver. 5. *And it was so, that when the children of Ammon made war against Israel*, &c.] Were preparing for it, and had assembled their forces near them, and had began to make some efforts against them: *the elders of Gilead went to fetch Jephthah out of the land of Tob;* they did not send messengers to him, but went themselves, partly to shew greater respect to him, and partly in hopes of better success, being aware of objections he would make, which they could better answer themselves than a deputation.

Ver. 6. *And they said unto Jephthah, come and be our captain*, &c.] The general of their army, to conduct and lead on their forces; they did not propose him to be their king, being convinced by Abimelech's conduct that such a step would be wrong; nor did they say any thing of his being their judge, having no other view than to serve their present exigence; besides, a judge was not one chosen by the people, but raised up of God, and which honour was conferred on Jephthah afterwards: *that we may fight with the children of Ammon;* with judgment, courage, and success; they did not make this proposal to him to save themselves from being engaged in the war, but that they might have one skilful in military affairs at the head of them, to instruct them in the art of war, and lead them on in a regular manner, and animate them by his brave example.

Ver. 7. *And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead*,

[c] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 7.

[d] Apud Selden. de Success. ad leg. Ebr. c. 3. p. 32.

[e] אשה אחרת mulieris alterius, Pagninus, Montanus; exteræ, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Tigurine version.

[f] Pro uxore hanc peregrinam, Terent. Andria, act 1. scen. 1. l. 118.

[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 25. A.

[h] Ut supra.

&c.] In answer to their request; who though not backward to engage in the war with them, yet thought it proper to take this opportunity to upbraid them with their former unkindness to him: *did not ye hate me, and expel me out of my father's house?* for it seems some of these elders at least were his brethren; for who else could be thought to hate him, and through hatred to thrust him out of his father's house, but they? nor is it at all improbable that they were among the elders of Gilead, considering what family they were of: though indeed the magistrates of the city might be assisting to Jephthah's brethren in the expulsion of him, or however connived at it, when they should, as he thought, have protected him, and taken care that he had justice done him; for even though illegitimate, a maintenance was due to him: *and why are ye come unto me now, when ye are in distress?* intimating, that it was not love and respect to him, but necessity, that brought them to him with this request; and that since they used him so ill, they could not reasonably expect he should have any regard unto them.

Ver. 8. *And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah,* &c.] In reply to his objection: *therefore we turn again unto thee now;* being sensible of the injury they had done him, and repenting of it, of which their return to him was an evidence; it being with this view to remove the disgrace and dishonour that had been cast upon him, by conferring such honour on him, as to be their chief ruler: *that thou mayest go with us, and fight against the children of Ammon, and be our head over all the inhabitants of Gilead;* the end of their coming to him was not only to bring him back with them to his own country, and to fight against the Ammonites, and the defence of it, but to be the sole governor of it; not of all Israel, but of the tribes beyond Jordan, which inhabited the land of Gilead: more than this they could not promise, though he afterwards was judge over all Israel, notwithstanding there was a law in Israel, that no spurious person should enter into the congregation, or bear any public office; so it was a law with the Athenians [1], that unless a man was born of both parents citizens, he should be reckoned spurious, and have no share in the government, see ver. 2.

Ver. 9. *And Jephthah said unto the elders of Gilead,* &c.] Considering the former usage he had met with from them, and the character which he himself bore, and the fickleness of men, when their turn is served, was willing to make a sure bargain with them: *if ye bring me home again to fight against the children of Ammon;* that is, should he consent to go along with them, and fight their battle for them: *and the Lord deliver them before me;* or into his hands; on whom he depended for success, and not on his own courage and valour, and military skill: *shall I be your head?* not only captain-general of their forces during the war, but the chief ruler of them when that was ended.

Ver. 10. *And the elders of Gilead said unto Jephthah,* &c.] Assenting to his proposal, and not only giving their word for it, but their oath: *the Lord be witness between us, if we do not so according to thy words;* that is, make him head over them; they appealed to the omniscient God, and called on him to be a witness of their agreement to it, and swore by him they would fulfil it; or if they did not, that the Lord would take vengeance on them for it, and punish the breach of this covenant and oath in some way or another; the Targum of Jonathan is, "the Word of the Lord be a "witness between us," &c.

Ver. 11. *Then Jephthah went with the elders of Israel,* &c.] From the land of Tob into the land of Gilead, his native country: *and the people made him head and captain over them;* ratified and confirmed what the elders had promised, and by a general unanimous vote appointed him both to be the captain of their forces, and to be the chief ruler and governor of them. And this they did, though he was the son of an harlot; and according to the law in Deut. xxiii. 2. such an one was not to be a civil magistrate; but this was a case of necessity, and in which, no doubt, they were directed by the Lord, who could dispense with his own law: besides, they had come to such an agreement before they had pitched on any particular person, that who should begin to fight with the children of Ammon should be head over all the inhabitants of Gilead, so that they were obliged to it by their vote and decree, when they assembled at Mizpeh, where it is probable they consulted the Lord, and acted under his direction, ch. x. 17, 18. and where this was confirmed, as seems from the following clause: *and Jephthah uttered all his words before the Lord in Mizpeh;* where the congregation of Israel were assembled, and in which the Shechinah, or divine Majesty, dwelt, as is observed by Jarchi and Kimchi, and not Mizpeh in Josh. xi. 3, 8. as the latter says, but this was on the other side Jordan, in the land of Gilead; however, as it was a solemn meeting, the Lord was there, and, as in his presence, Jephthah rehearsed all that passed between him and the elders of Gilead; and, no doubt, in prayer to God, desired he would signify his approbation and ratification of their agreement, and would give him success in his undertakings against the children of Ammon.

Ver. 12. *And Jephthah sent messengers unto the king of the children of Ammon,* &c.] Being now declared chief and sole governor of the tribes on the other side Jordan, he acted in character, and as such sent messengers to the king of the Ammonites, to know the reason of his invading the land that belonged to Israel, being desirous of adjusting things in an amicable way, and to prevent the shedding of blood; in which he behaved as a good man, and not at all inconsistent with a man of valour and courage: *saying, what hast thou to do with me;* to invade my land, and disturb my people, what have I or they done to give occasion for it? *that thou art come against me to fight in my land?* he speaks in the language of a governor, and as a man of spirit concerned for the good of his country, and determined to defend the rights and liberties of it.

Ver. 13. *And the king of the children of Ammon answered unto the messengers of Jephthah,* &c.] Who this king of Ammon was is not said, however he returned an answer to Jephthah's messengers, which they brought to him, and it was to this purpose; that the reason of his invading the land, and bringing war into

[1] Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 6. c. 10. l. 13. c. 24. Suidas in voce [illegible]

it, was, *because Israel took away my land when they came out of Egypt;* not as soon as they came out of Egypt, for it was 39 years afterwards, and upwards, even a little before they entered into the land of Canaan; and the land they took was not theirs, but in the possession of Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites; though indeed, before their conquest of it, it had been in the hands of the Moabites and Ammonites, and who being confederates, or subjects of the same king, is here claimed by the king of the children of Ammon: *from Arnon even unto Jabbok, and unto Jordan;* the river Arnon was the border between Moab and the Amorites, and the river Jabbok was the border of the children of Ammon, Numb. xxi. 13, 24. the one was to the south of the country claimed, and the other to the north and to the west, which was Jordan, and the wilderness to the east, ver. 22. *now therefore restore these* lands *again peaceably;* this is demanded or proposed as terms or conditions of peace, and what would prevent a war, and nothing short of this would do it.

Ver. 14. *And Jephthah sent messengers again unto the king of the children of Ammon.*] Being willing to give him all the satisfaction he could, and if possible live peaceably with him, and prevent the effusion of blood.

Ver. 15. *And said unto him,* &c.] By his messengers: *thus saith Jephthah;* in a majestic style, as governor of Israel: *Israel took not away the land of Moab, nor the land of the children of Ammon;* they were charged not to take any, nor did they take any that belonged to any of these countries, or that was then in the possession of either of them, Deut. ii. 9, 19. what they did take was in the hands of Sihon and Og, and they had obtained it by conquest, and so no more belonging to either of these.

Ver. 16. *But when Israel came up from Egypt,* &c.] In order to go to the land of Canaan, which was higher than the land of Egypt, which lay low[k]: *and walked through the wilderness unto the Red sea;* which is to be understood not of their walking to it; when they first came out of Egypt, they indeed then came to the edge of the wilderness of Etham, and so to the Red sea, and walked through it as on dry land, and came into the wilderness of Shur, Sin, and Sinai; and after their departure from Mount Sinai they came into the wilderness of Paran, in which they were 38 years; and this is the wilderness meant they walked through, and came to Ezion-gaber, on the shore of the Red sea, Numb. xxxiii. 35. *and came to Kadesh;* not Kadesh-barnea, from whence the spies were sent, but Kadesh on the borders of Edom, from whence messengers were sent to the king of it, as follows.

Ver. 17. *Then Israel sent messengers unto the king of Edom,* &c.] The history of which may be read in Numb. xx. 14, *&c. saying, let me, I pray thee, pass through thy land;* the land of Edom, from the south to the north of it, according to Jarchi, which was the nearest and shortest way to the land of Canaan; so far were the Israelites from invading and seizing upon the properties of others, that they would not attempt to set their foot in another's country without leave; which they asked in an humble manner, promising to do no injury to any, but pay for whatever they ate and drank in their passage: *but the king of Edom would not hearken* thereto; or grant their request, but refused them passage through his country: *and in like manner they sent unto the king of Moab, but he would not* consent; that they should pass through his country, which lay, as Jarchi says, at the end of the land of Edom, to the west of it, and to the south of Canaan; and though we nowhere else read of their sending messengers to the king of Moab, and of the denial he made them, it is not at all to be doubted of, and the Jewish commentators observe, that it is clearly intimated by Moses, Deut. ii. 29. *as the children of Esau, who dwelt in Seir, and the Moabites which dwelt in Ar, did unto me;* which they interpret thus, as the children of Esau would not suffer Israel to pass through their land, when desired of them, so neither would the Moabites, when the same request was made to them: *and Israel abode in Kadesh;* quietly and peaceably, and did not attempt to force their way through either country, but continued in Kadesh some little time to consider what way they should take, and to wait for divine direction.

Ver. 18. *Then they went along the wilderness,* &c.] The wilderness of Paran, which lay along the borders of Edom; they went, according to Jarchi, from the west to the east on the south border of Edom and Moab: *and compassed the land of Edom, and the land of Moab;* all the south of the land of Edom, and all the south of the land of Moab; towards the sun-rising, as in Numb. xxi. 11. *and pitched on the other side of Arnon;* the river Arnon, which, according to Jarchi, was at the east end of the land of Moab, where began the country of Sihon and Og: *but came not within the border of Moab;* so far were they from attempting to take away any part of that land from the king of it, though ill-treated by him: *for Arnon was the border of Moab;* which divided between Moab and the Amorites, Numb. xxi. 13.

Ver. 19. *And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, the king of Heshbon,* &c.] Which was his royal city, where he had his palace, and kept his court, and is therefore particularly mentioned; and the rather, because he had taken it from the Moabites, and was part of that land now in dispute; and this Sihon was not only in possession of, when Israel sent messengers to him, but it was his royal seat, the metropolis of his kingdom, and he was called king of it: *and Israel said unto him, let us pass, we pray thee, through thy land unto my place;* the land of Canaan, prepared and reserved for them when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, promised by the Lord to their ancestors and to them, and given unto them, who is sovereign Lord of all; and all that Israel desired of Sihon was only a passage through his land to that, promising the same as to the king of Edom; see the history of it in Numb. xxi. 21, *&c.*

Ver. 20. *But Sihon trusted not Israel to pass through his coast,* &c.] For fear they should seize upon his dominions, and retain them; and the more fearful he might be, as he knew that his people were one of the seven nations of the Canaanites, whose land they were going to possess, and whom they were to destroy: *but Sihon gathered all his people together;* in some certain

[k] Χθαμαλᾶς Αἰγύπτου, Theocrit. Idyll. 17. ver. 79.

place, and armed them, and went out in an hostile manner against Israel in the wilderness to attack them; whereby it appears that he was the aggressor, and therefore Israel was not to be blamed, as not for defending themselves, so neither for seizing and possessing his country when they had conquered him: *and pitched in Jahaz, and fought against Israel*; there was a battle between them at the place mentioned, and the victory was on Israel's side, see Numb. xxi. 23.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord God of Israel delivered Sihon and all his people into the hand of Israel*, &c.] So that as Sihon, his people, and his country, fell into the hands of Israel through the victory the Lord gave them over him, they had a divine right to the land now in dispute: *and they smote them*; destroyed him and all his people, as they were ordered to destroy the seven nations of Canaan, of which the Amorites were one, Deut. vii. 1. *so Israel possessed all the land of the Amorites, the inhabitants of that country*; by means of the above victory they came into the lawful and rightful possession of all the land that belonged to the Amorites, who were at that time, and none else, the inhabitants of it; and therefore the Ammonites could have no claim to it, nor was any made till now.

Ver. 22. *And they possessed all the coasts of the Amorites*, &c.] Peaceably and quietly, nor did any pretend to call their right in question, or dispute their title, or give them any disturbance: *from Arnon unto Jabbok*; which was the length of the country, and the direction was from south to north, and reached from the river Arnon, the border of Moab, to the river Jabbok, the border of Ammon; so that it included no part of what was at this time in the possession of either: *and from the wilderness even unto Jordan*; which was the breadth of it, and its direction was from the west to the east, reaching from the wilderness of Arabia to the river Jordan.

Ver. 23. *So now the Lord God of Israel hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel*, &c.] It is his doing, and not the Israelites'; it is he that dispossessed the Amorites, and put the Israelites into the possession of their land, and therefore they enjoy it by a good tenure: *and shouldest thou possess it?* what through the blessing of God on their arms they have obtained by conquest, and he has settled them in; did they conquer, that thou should possess what they conquered? did their God put it into their hands to deliver it into thine? did they fight to recover for thee what thou hadst lost, and to put thee into the possession of it? did not they fight in their own defence, and their enemies and their land fell into their hands, and by the laws and right of nations became theirs? and canst thou expect to possess it? what reason is there for it?

Ver. 24. *Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess?* &c.] Chemosh was the idol of the Moabites, see Numb. xxi. 29. which has led some to think, that the present king of Ammon was also king of Moab, and who insisted on that part of the country, which formerly belonged to Moab, to be delivered to him, as well as that which had belonged to Ammon. Now since the land, which they now inhabited, as well as what they had lost, they had taken away from others, Deut. ii. 10, 11, 20, 21. having conquered them, and which they ascribed to the help and assistance they had from their idol, and possessed as his gift; Jephthah argues with them *ad hominem*, from the less to the greater: *so whomsoever the Lord our God shall drive out from before us, them will we possess*: we have surely as good a claim to what the Lord our God gives to us in a way of conquest, as you have, or can think you have, to what your idol, as you suppose, has given you: however, what we have got, or get this way, we are determined to possess, and keep possession of.

Ver. 25. *And now art thou any thing better than Balak the son of Zippor king of Moab?* &c.] This argument seems to strengthen the conjecture, that this king was king of Moab at this time, and so Balak was one of his predecessors. Now he is asked, whether he thought he was a wiser and more knowing prince than he, as to what was his right and due; or whether he had a better claim, or any additional one to the land in dispute the other had not; or whether he judged he was more able to regain what belonged to him: *did he ever strive against Israel?* for the land they took away from Sihon formerly in the possession of the Moabites? did he ever lay any claim to it, or enter into any dispute, or litigate with Israel about it? not at all: *or did he ever fight against Israel?* that is, on that account; no, he sent for Balaam to curse Israel, and sought to defend and secure his own country he was in possession of, which he thought was in danger by the Israelites being so near him; but he never made war with them under any such pretence, that they had done him any injury by inheriting the land they had taken from Sihon and Og, kings of the Amorites.

Ver. 26. *While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and her towns*, &c.] This was the principal city, which formerly belonged to the Moabites, and was taken from them by Sihon; who being conquered by Israel, it fell into their hands, and they inhabited it, and the towns adjacent to it, from that time to the present; see Numb. xxi. 25. *and in Aroer and her towns*; another city with its villages, taken at the same time, and ever since inhabited by the Israelites, even by the tribe of Gad, who rebuilt it; it lay near the river Arnon; see Numb. xxxii. 34. Deut. iii. 12. *and in all the cities that be along by the coasts of Arnon*; which lay along by the side of that river, which divided Moab from the kingdom of the Amorites; these Israel had dwelt in 300 years; and during this time, neither Balak king of Moab, nor any of his successors, had ever disputed Israel's title to those cities, or commenced a war with them on account of them; but they had continued in the peaceable enjoyment of them so long as 300 years; which are thus reckoned in the Jewish chronology [a]; Joshua governed Israel 28 years, Othniel 40, Ehud 80, Deborah 40, Gideon 40, Abimelech 3, Tola 23, Jair 22, and 18 years Israel was oppressed by the children of Ammon, which with the 6 years of Jephthah make just 300; so that, according to this computation, there were 6 years short of it; but being so near, the round number is given: *why therefore did ye not recover them within that time?* signifying they ought to have put in their claim sooner,

[a] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. Vid. Jarchium & Kimchium in loc.

and endeavoured to have recovered them long before this time, if they had any right unto them; wherefore Jephthah pleads prescription, and which in a course of time ought to take place; or otherwise the world would be full of endless contentions and controversies, and kingdoms and states would never be at peace, nor each one know and enjoy for certainty its proper domains.

Ver. 27. *Wherefore I have not sinned against thee,* &c.] Had done him no injury, not wronged him of any thing, nor had taken away any part of his country from him; this Jephthah said in the name of all Israel, of whom he was governor: *but thou doest me wrong to war against me;* meaning that he had no just cause to commence a war against Israel, but acted an injurious part; and seeing things could not be adjusted in an amicable way, but must be decided by the sword, he leaves the affair with the Lord, and appeals to him: *the Lord the Judge;* the Judge of the whole earth, the omniscient God, that knows all things, the right and wrong of every cause, on which side truth and justice lie: *be Judge this day between the children of Israel and the children of Ammon;* not that he expected a decision of the controversy between them would be made that precise and exact day; but that from henceforward the Lord would appear, by giving success to that party which was in the right in this contest.

Ver. 28. *Howbeit, the king of the children of Ammon hearkened not unto the words of Jephthah which he sent him.*] He attended not to the arguments Jephthah made use of, and did not choose to seem at least to be convinced by them, nor to regard the awful appeal he had made to the great Jehovah.

Ver. 29. *Then the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephthah,* &c.] The spirit of strength, as the Targum; of fortitude of mind, of uncommon valour and courage, and of zeal for God and Israel, and against their enemies; such a spirit as used to be given to men, when they were in an extraordinary manner raised up by the Lord, to be judges, saviours, and deliverers of his people; so that as Jephthah was before chosen by the people to be the general and head of the tribes beyond Jordan, he was raised up and qualified by the Lord now to be the judge of all Israel; of which the spirit of the Lord coming on him was a sufficient proof and evidence: *and he passed over Gilead and Manasseh;* the countries that belonged to Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; however, all that part of it which lay from the place where he was, to the land of the children of Ammon: *and passed over Mizpeh of Gilead;* which lay to the north of the land of Gilead, or tribe of Gad: *and from Mizpeh of Gilead he passed over to the children of Ammon;* did not stay for them, to bring on the war in the land of Gilead, but prevented it by carrying it into the land of the children of Ammon. It seems by this, that though the children of Ammon had encamped in Gilead some time before, ch. x. 17. yet for some reason or another they had decamped, and had retired into their own country; but yet threatening Israel with a war, and preparing for it.

Ver. 30. *And Jephthah vowed a vow unto the Lord,* &c.] Before he set out for the land of the children of Ammon, and to fight with them; hoping that such a religious disposition of mind would be regarded by the Lord, and be acceptable to him, and he should be blessed with success in his enterprise: *and said, if thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands:* though he was assured of the justness of his cause, and of his call to engage in it, he seems to have some little diffidence in his mind about the success of it; at least, was not fully certain of it.

Ver. 31. *Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me,* &c.] If this phrase, *to meet me,* is meant intentionally, then no other than an human creature can be meant; a child, or servant, or any other of mankind; for none else could come forth with a design to meet him: but if this is to be understood eventually, of what might meet him, though not with design, then any other creature may be intended; and it must be meant what came forth first, as the Vulgate Latin version expresses it, or otherwise many might come forth at such a time: *when I return in peace from the children of Ammon;* safe in his own person, and having conquered the Ammonites, and restored peace to Israel: *shall surely be the Lord's;* be devoted to him, and made use of, or the price of it, with which it is redeemed, in his service: *and I will offer it for a burnt-offering;* that is, if it is what according to the law may be offered up, as an ox, sheep, ram, or lamb; some read the words disjunctively, *or I will offer it,* &c. it shall either be devoted to the Lord in the manner that persons or things, according to the law, are directed to be; or it shall be offered up for a burnt-offering, if fit and proper for the service; so Joseph and David Kimchi, Ben Melech, and Abarbinel, with others, interpret it; but such a disjunction is objected to as improper and ridiculous, to distinguish two sentences, when the one is more general, and the other more special.

Ver. 32. *So Jephthah passed over unto the children of Ammon, to fight against them,* &c.] As in ver. 29, after he had made the above vow: *and the Lord delivered them into his hands:* when both armies met and engaged, victory was on the side of Jephthah; the Lord being with him, and giving him success, to whom all is justly ascribed.

Ver. 33. *And he smote them from Aroer,* &c.] A city which lay near the river Arnon, on the borders of Moab, Deut. iii. 12. *even till thou come to Minnith;* which seems to have been a place famous for wheat, Ezek. xxvii. 17. so David de Pomis [a] says it was a place where the best wheat grew. Jerom says [b] in his time was shewn a village called Manaith, 4 miles from Esbus (or Heshbon), as you go to Philadelphia. Josephus [c] calls it Maniathe, and it is thought by some to be the Anitha of Ptolemy [d], which he places in Arabia Petræa; even *twenty cities;* which he pursued them through and took: *and unto the plain of the vineyards, with a very great slaughter;* or, Abel Ceramim. Jerom says [e] in his time was seen a village called Abela, planted

[a] Tzemach David, fol. 61. 2.
[b] De loc. Heb. fol. 93. E.
[c] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 10.
[d] Geograph. l. 5. c. 17.
[e] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. K.

with vineyards, 7 miles from Philadelphia: *thus the children of Ammon were subdued before the children of Israel*; so that they were not able to oppress them any more.

Ver. 34. *And Jephthah came to Mizpeh unto his house*, &c.] Where he had uttered his words before the Lord, which had passed between him and the elders of Gilead, and from whence he set out to fight the children of Ammon, and whither he returned after he had got the victory over them, ver. 11, 29. and where it seems he had a house, and his family dwelt; for upon his being fetched from the land of Tob, he brought what family he had with him, and settled them at Mizpeh, whilst he went on the expedition against the children of Ammon: *and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him, with timbrels, and with dances*; accompanied with young women, having timbrels in their hands, and playing upon them, and dancing as they came along; expressing their joy at, and congratulating him upon, the victory he had obtained over the children of Ammon: *and she was his only child*; and so dear unto him, and upon whom all his hopes and expectations of a posterity from him depended: *besides her he had neither son nor daughter*; some read it, *of her* [f]; that is, she had neither son nor daughter; and so by this vow, be it understood in which way it may be, if fulfilled, she must die without any issue; though the phrase in the Hebrew text is, *of himself* [g]; he had none, though his wife whom he married might have sons and daughters by an husband she had before him, and so these were brought up in Jephthah's house as his children; yet they were not begotten by him, they were not of his body, not his own children; he had none but this daughter, which made the trial the more grievous to him; her name, according to Philo, was Seila.

Ver. 35. *And it came to pass, when he saw her*, &c.] She being the first person that presented to his view, as she was at the head of the virgins with their timbrels and dances: *that he rent his clothes*; as was the usual manner, when any thing calamitous and distressing happened; see Gen. xxxvii. 34. Job i. 20. *and said, alas, my daughter, thou hast brought me very low*; damped his spirits, sunk him very low, so that he was ready to drop into the earth, as we say; he that was now returning in triumph, amidst the acclamations of the people, in the height of his glory, and extolled to the skies, and perhaps elated in his own mind; on a sudden, at the sight of his daughter, was so depressed in his spirits, that he could not bear up; but was ready to sink and die away, all his honour being as it were laid in the dust, and nothing to him: *and thou art one of them that trouble me*; or among his troublers, and the greatest he ever met with; he had been in trouble from his brethren, when they drove him from his father's house, and he had had trouble with the children of Ammon to subdue them; but this was the greatest trouble of all, that his daughter should be the first that should meet him; of whom, according to his vow, he was to be deprived, and so all his future comforts, hopes, and expectations from her gone; and therefore ranks her among, and at the head of, his troublers: *for I have opened my mouth unto the Lord*; in a vow; not only had purposed it in his heart, but had expressed it with his lips: *and I cannot go back*; or retract it; looking upon himself under an indispensable obligation to perform it; of which, be it as it may, he seems to have had mistaken notions and apprehensions; for if his vow was to sacrifice her, as some think, he was not obliged to do it, since it was contrary to the law of God, and abominable in his sight; and besides, what was vowed to be the Lord's, or devoted to him, might be redeemed according to the law, a female for 30 pieces of silver, Lev. xxvii. 2, 3, 4. and if the vow was to separate his daughter from the company of men, and oblige her never to marry, such a power as this parents had not allowed them over their children, according to the laws of God or of men, in the Jewish nation; and therefore, be it which it will, what he had to do was to repent of this rash vow, and humble himself before God for making it, and not add sin to sin by performing it.

Ver. 36. *And she said unto him, my father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord*, &c.] The conditional word *if* may be left out, as it is not in the original text; for her father had told her that he had opened his mouth, or made a vow to the Lord, and had no doubt explained it to her what it was, though it is not expressed; she knew it respected her, as it had issued, and was concerning her, as appears by her after-request: *do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth*; which is a remarkable instance of filial subjection and obedience to a parent, and which perhaps was strengthened by a like mistaken notion as that of her father concerning the vow, that it could not be dispensed with; and therefore was moved under a sense of religion, as well as filial duty, to express herself in this manner, as well as by what follows: *forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance for thee of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon*; such was her public spirit, and the grateful sense she had of the divine goodness, in giving victory over Israel's enemies, and delivering them from them, with vengeance on them, she cared not what was done to her: yea, desired that what was vowed might be performed.

Ver. 37. *And she said unto her father, let this thing be done for me*, &c.] She had but one favour to ask of him, which she thought might be granted, without any breach of the vow: *let me alone two months*: she desired such a space of time might be allowed her before the vow took place; and the rather she might be encouraged to expect that her request would be granted, since no time was fixed by the vow for the accomplishment of it, and since the time she asked was not very long, and the end to be answered not unreasonable: *that I may go up and down upon the mountains*: or, *descend upon the mountains* [h]; Jephthah's house in Mizpeh being higher than the mountains; or there might be, as Kimchi and Ben Melech note, a valley between that and the mountains, to which she descended in order to go up to the mountains; see Josh. ix. 24. these she chose to make her abode, and take her walks in, during the time she asked, as being most fit for retirement and solitude; where she might

[f] ממנה Targum apud Kimchi. Vid. Masoram in loc. ex ea, so some in Vatablus.

[g] ממנו ex se, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius; so Noldius, p. 614. No. 1641.

[h] וירדתי על ההרים & descendam super montes, Pagninus, Montanus; descendamque ad montes, Tigurine version.

give up herself to meditation and prayer, and conversation with her fellow-virgins she would take with her, and so be wrought up to a greater degree of resignation and submission to her father's will, and to the will of God in it, as she might suppose: *and bewail my virginity, I and my fellows;* the virgins her companions; this she proposed to be the subject that she and her associates would dwell upon, during this time of solitude; and the rather, as this may be thought to be the thing contained in the vow, that as she was a virgin, so she should continue; by which means she would not be the happy instrument of increasing the number of the children of Israel, nor of being the progenitrix of the Messiah; upon which accounts it was reckoned in those times to be very grievous and reproachful to live and die without issue, and so matter of lamentation and weeping.

Ver. 38. *And he said, go,* &c.] He granted her request at once: *and he sent her away for two months;* as she desired: *and she went with her companions, and bewailed her virginity upon the mountains;* for the space of two months: the Jewish commentators make mention of an allegorical exposition of a writer[i] of theirs, who by mountains understands the sanhedrim, to whom she proposed to go, who perhaps might find a way for the loosing of the vow; but it is a question whether there was such a court then in Israel; and had there been one, and either she or her father had applied to it, in this case the priests would have pointed out what was to be done, and especially if the vow had any regard to the sacrifice of his daughter; and even to her virginity, which he had no power to oblige her to; but the literal sense is no doubt to be followed.

Ver. 39. *And it came to pass at the end of two months she returned to her father,* &c.] For the request she made was not a pretence to make her escape out of his hands; but having done what she proposed to do, and the time fixed for it being come, she returned to her father's house, and delivered herself to him: *who did with her* according *to his vow which he had vowed;* but what he did is a question, and which is not easily resolved; some think he really sacrificed her, through a mistaken sense of Lev. xxvii. 29. and which and his action are accounted for through his living a military life, and in a distant part of the country, and at a time when idolatry had greatly prevailed in Israel, and to such a degree as it had not before, and no doubt that branch of it, sacrificing children to Moloch; and Jephthah might think that though that was sinful, yet such a sacrifice might be acceptable to the Lord; and especially since his vow, as he thought, bound him to it; and how far the instance of Abraham offering up his son Isaac might encourage him to it, cannot be said: of this mind were Josephus[k], Jonathan Ben Uzziah the Targumist, and some other Jewish writers[l]; and many of the ancient Christian fathers, and many modern authors of every name among Christians; and it has been thought that the story of Iphigenia, who Capellus[m] thinks is the same with Jepthigenia, that is, the daughter of Jephthah, and was slain by her father Agamemnon, having several circumstances in it similar to this, is taken from hence: and there is much such a case as this related[n] of Idomeneus, a king of the Cretians, who upon his return after the destruction of Troy, being in a tempest, vowed, should he be saved, that he would sacrifice the first he met with to the gods; and as it was his son he first met with, he sacrificed him; or, as others say, would have done it, but was prevented by the citizens, and who on this account drove him from his kingdom. But others are of opinion that what Jephthah did according to his vow was, that he shut up his daughter, and separated her from the company of men, and obliged her to live unmarried all her days, and therefore she is said to bewail her virginity. Kimchi and Ben Melech say, he built a house for her without the city, where she dwelt alone, and knew no man; and where her father supported her, and obliged her to live all her days; and Abarbinel thinks, that the Romanists from hence learnt to build their cloisters to put their nuns in; and so Ben Gersom interprets this vow of her being separated from men, and devoted to the service of God; and which is the sense of many Christian interpreters. Now though Jephthah had no such power over his daughter, as to oblige her to perpetual virginity, nor did his vow bind him to it; for persons devoted to the Lord were not obliged to abstain from marriage, nor have we any instances of a monastic life in those times, nor among the Jews at any time; yet as he did something not right, which he thought his vow obliged him to, one would be rather tempted to think, in charity to him, that of the two evils he did the least; for if she was put to death, it must be done either by the magistrates, or by the priests, or by Jephthah himself; neither of which is probable: *and she knew no man;* never married, but lived and died a virgin: *and it was a custom in Israel;* the Targum adds, "that a man might not offer his son or his daughter "for a burnt-offering, as Jephthah the Gileadite did, "and did not consult Phinehas the priest; for had he "consulted Phinehas the priest, he would have redeemed her with a price;" so Jarchi, according to Lev. xxvii. 4. but each stood upon their honour, as the Jews say[o]; Jephthah being a king would not go to Phinehas, and Phinehas being an high-priest, and the son of an high-priest, would not go to a plebeian; and so, between them both, the maiden was lost: but the custom refers to what follows.

Ver. 40. That *the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite,* &c.] Either the death of her, as some, or her virginity, as others; though the word[p] used may signify to talk and discourse with her, to hold a confabulation with her, and comfort her, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it: to bring her some news, and tell her some diverting stories, to cheer and recreate her in her

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[i] Tanchuma.

[k] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 10.

[l] Bereshit Rabba, sect. 60, fol. 52. 3. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 37. fol. 176. 4.

[m] De Voto Jephthæ, sect. 12.

[n] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 22. Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 3. col. 664. in l. 11. col. 1634.

[o] Bereshit Rabba & Vajikra, ut supra; Midrash Kohelet, fol. 81. 3.

[p] לתנות ad alloquendum, Pagninus, Montanus; ut dissererent, Tigurine version; ut colloquerentur, Vatablus; ad confabulandum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

solitude." De Dieu observes, that the word signifies in the Arabic language to *praise*, or speak in commendation of a person or thing; and indeed in this sense it seems to be used in this book, ch. v. 11. *they shall rehearse*, that is, with praise and thanksgiving, *the righteous acts of the Lord*: and so the daughters of Israel went every year to the place where the daughter of Jephthah was, to speak in the praise of her, of her heroism, in so cheerfully submitting to her father's vow, and expressing such gratitude and joy at the same time for victory over the enemies of Israel; and this they did in her presence, and while she lived, to keep up her spirits; or it may be, in some public place, and even after her death, in memory of her, and to celebrate her praise. Epiphanius says[s], that in his time, at Sebaste, formerly called Samaria, they deified the daughter of Jephthah, and kept a feast for her every year. The meeting of the daughters of Israel, so long as the custom lasted, which perhaps was only during the life of Jephthah's daughter, was *four days in a year*; but whether they were four days running, or once in a quarter of a year, is not certain; the latter seems most probable.

CHAP. XII.

THIS chapter relates a quarrel between Jephthah and the Ephraimites, which was fatal to the latter, ver. 1—6. the time of Jephthah judging Israel, his death and burial, ver. 7. and it briefly makes mention of three more judges of Israel, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, ver. 8—15.

Ver. 1. *And the men of Ephraim gathered themselves together*, &c.] Or *cried*[t]; got together by a cry or proclamation made: in the Hebrew text it is, *a man of Ephraim*; not a single man, but a body of men, who met together and joined as one man. It is highly probable that there were no less than 50,000 of them; for 42,000 of them were slain, ver. 6. *and went northward*; or, *went over northward*[u]; that is, over the river Jordan, which lay between Gilead and Ephraim; and when they had crossed the river, they turned northward; for Mizpeh, where Jephthah lived, was in the north of the land, near Hermon and Lebanon, Josh. xi. 3. *and said unto Jephthah, wherefore passedst thou over to fight against the children of Ammon?* not over Jordan, but over that part of the land of Israel from the plain where Jephthah dwelt, to the country of the children of Ammon: *and didst not call us to go with thee?* they quarrel with him just in the same manner as they did with Gideon: these Ephraimites were a proud and turbulent people, and especially were very jealous of the tribe of Manasseh, of which both Gideon and Jephthah were; the one of the half-tribe on this side Jordan, and the other of the half that was on the other side; and they were jealous of both, lest any honour and glory should accrue thereunto, and they should get any superiority in any respect over them, since Jacob their father had given the preference to Ephraim; and this seems to lie at the bottom of all their proceedings: *we will burn thine house upon thee with fire*: that is, burn him and his house, burn his house and him in it; which shews that they were in great wrath and fury, and argued not only the height of pride and envy, but wretched ingratitude, and a cruel disposition; who, instead of congratulating him as Israel's deliverer, and condoling him with respect to the case of his only child, threaten him in this brutish manner.

Ver. 2. *And Jephthah said unto them, I and my people were at a great strife with the children of Ammon*, &c.] As to the cause of the war, or the reason of his going over to fight the children of Ammon, it was a strife or contention between the Gileadites and them, concerning their country; which the children of Ammon claimed as theirs, and the Gileadites insisted on it they had a just right to it; by which it appeared that this was not a personal contention between Jephthah and them; and therefore the Ephraimites had no reason to fall so furiously upon him particularly; and it was a contention which chiefly concerned the two tribes and a half, and not the rest; and so could not be blamed for defending themselves alone if they could, without interesting others in the quarrel: but this is not all he has to say, he adds, *and when I called you, ye delivered me not out of their hands*; it seems he had called them to assist in driving the enemy out of their coasts when there, and they refused to help him; though it is not elsewhere said, and it is not denied by them, so that it was false what they alleged; or however, since they declined giving him any assistance, when the children of Ammon were in his country, he could not expect they would join him in an expedition into theirs.

Ver. 3. *And when I saw that ye delivered me not*, &c.] Gave him no assistance against their common enemy, did not attempt to save him and his people out of their hands, but left them to defend themselves: *I put my life in my hands*; ready to deliver it up in the defence of his country; the meaning is, that he exposed himself to the utmost danger, hazarded his life in going with a few troops into an enemy's country to fight him, and so liable to lose his life; which was in as much danger, as some observe, as any brittle thing contained in the hand is in danger of falling, or of being snatched out of it: *and passed over against the children of Ammon*; took a long and fatiguing march over the land of Gilead into that of the children of Ammon, to fight with them: *and the Lord delivered them into my hand*; gave him victory over them, which shewed that his cause was just, and his call to engage in it clear: *wherefore then are ye come up unto me this day to fight against me?* who rather should have come with thanks to him for the service he had done, not

[s] Contr. Hæres. l. 2. Hæres. 55.
[t] ויצעקו ἐβόησε, Sept. clamatus, i. e. clamando convocatus, Piscator.
[u] ויעברו transivit, Pagninus, Montanus; transiverunt, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

only for the Gileadites, but for all Israel; for had he not fought against the children of Ammon, and conquered them, they would have soon not only overrun and oppressed Gilead, but would have come over Jordan, and dispossessed the other tribes, and particularly Ephraim, as they had done already, ch. x. 9. so that it was base ingratitude in these people to come to fight against Jephthah, who had fought for them, and wrought salvation for them.

Ver. 4. *Then Jephthah gathered together all the men of Gilead, and fought with Ephraim*, &c.] The Ephraimites not being pacified with the account Jephthah gave of the war between him and the children of Ammon, but continuing in their tumultuous outrage; he, being a man of spirit and courage, got as many of the Gileadites together as he could, and gave them battle: *and the men of Gilead smote Ephraim*; had the advantage of them, worsted them, killed many of them, and put the rest to flight: *because they said, ye Gileadites are fugitives of Ephraim among the Ephraimites, and among the Manassites*: what provoked them to fall upon them with the greater fury, and use them the more severely when they had the better of them, was their reproachful language to them, insulting the Gileadites, who perhaps were chiefly, if not all, of the half-tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan, of which Jephthah was, that they were the scum of the house of Joseph, that they had run away from their brethren, and dwelt in a corner of the land by themselves; and were of no account at all among Ephraim and Manasseh, and disclaimed by them both, and not esteemed by either. The Targum is, "the fugitives of Ephraim "said, what are ye Gileadites accounted of among the "Ephraimites, and among the Manassites?" on which Kimchi remarks, that those Ephraimites that came in this tumultuous manner, and insulted Jephthah, were a most abject company of men, the refuse of the tribe of Ephraim, shepherds who through necessity were obliged to come over Jordan with their flocks and herds for pasture: but the words may be rendered, *for they said, fugitives of Ephraim* are *ye*, even *the Gileadites*, who were, or being *between the Ephraimites and the Manassites*; that is, the Gileadites called the Ephraimites so, when they fled before them, and when they got at the fords of Jordan, which lay between Ephraim and the half-tribe of Manasseh on the other side Jordan: and they are in the next verse expressly so called.

Ver. 5. *And the Gileadites took the passages of Jordan before the Ephraimites*, &c.] Being either swifter of foot, or going a nearer and shorter way, being better acquainted with their own country: *and it was so, that when those Ephraimites which were escaped said, let me go over*; the fugitives of Ephraim, as before called, who ran away from the battle, made their escape, and the best of their way to the passages of Jordan, to get over there to their own country: *that the men of Gilead said unto him*; to every one of them, as they came up, art *thou an Ephraimite?* or an Ephrathite; for so it seems those of the tribe of Ephraim were called, as Jeroboam, 1 Kings xi. 26. *if he said, nay*: that he was not an Ephraimite;

Ver. 6. *Then said they unto him, say now Shibboleth*, &c.] Which signifies a stream or course of water, at which they now were; and so it was as if they had bid them say, "may I, or let me, pass over the stream of "this river;" so Jarchi; and this being the case, though it was done to try them, and by their pronunciation learn whether they were Ephraimites or no, they were not upon their guard, but in an hurry, and at once expressed the word as they commonly did: *and he said, sibboleth*; pronouncing the letter *shin* as if it was *sin*, or a *samech*; just as the French, as Kimchi observes, pronounce *s* like a *t*; and though the Gileadites and Ephraimites were of the same nation of Israel, and spoke the same language, yet their pronunciation differed, as did that of the Galilean Jews from others in the times of Christ, Matt. xxvi. 73. and so in all nations, among the Greeks, Romans, and among ourselves, people in different counties pronounce in a different manner; which Kimchi thinks was in the Ephraimites owing to the air or climate, as the French, he observes, pronounce *s* as a *t*, with a soft and gentle sound: *for he could not frame to pronounce it right*; or *thus* [t], as he was bid to do; being used to pronounce otherwise, he could not frame the organs of speech, or so dispose and order them as to say *shibboleth*; or he did not frame, order, and dispose [u]; he was not careful to do it, though with some care he could, being not aware of the design of the Gileadites in it: *then they took him and slew him at the passages of Jordan*: every one as they came thither, who could not say *shibboleth*; these they suffered not to pass over, but slew them: *and there fell at that time of the Ephraimites* 42,000; not at the passages of Jordan only; but what fell there, with those at the battle, and in the pursuit, amounted to this number; so that the Ephraimites paid dear for their pride and insolence.

Ver. 7. *And Jephthah judged Israel six years*, &c.] After the affair of the Ephraimites, he was acknowledged by all Israel as their judge and supreme governor, but did not live long; being perhaps depressed and worn away with grief, on account of his daughter, and other troubles that attended him: *then died Jephthah the Gileadite, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead*: it is not said in what city he was buried, but very probably it was in his own city Mizpeh, where he dwelt. Josephus [w] says it was in his own country, Sebee, a city of Gilead.

Ver. 8. *And after him Ibzan of Beth-lehem judged Israel.*] There were two Beth-lehems, one in the tribe of Zebulun, Josh. xix. 15. of which some think this man was; and another in the tribe of Judah, the city of Jesse and David, and of the Messiah; and Josephus says [x], Ibzan was of the tribe of Judah, of the city of Beth-lehem; and because Boaz was of the same place, and lived in the times of the judges, the Jewish Rabbins [y] are of opinion that he is the same with Ibzan; so Jarchi and Ben Gersom.

Ver. 9. *And he had* 30 *sons and* 30 *daughters*, &c.] Which was a very uncommon case for a man to have so many children, and those as to their sex to be equal. Between the former judge and him there was a great

[t] כן sic, Pagninus, Montanus.
[u] לא יכין non dirigebat, Montanus.
[w] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 12.
[x] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 7. sect. 13.
[y] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1.

difference, in respect of this circumstance of children; he had but one daughter, an only child; and she, by reason of his vow, not suffered to marry. Such a difference does God, in his all-wise Providence, make even among good men; nor is this any certain characteristic of a good man. Danaus had 50 daughters, and his brother Egyptus 50 sons, who were married to each other; and the husbands were all slain by their wives but one, on the wedding-night, and so far from being happy in them: but it was otherwise with this judge: whom *he sent abroad, and took in 30 daughters from abroad for his sons*: his daughters he sent abroad, or married them, to persons not of another nation, nor of another tribe, but of another family of the same tribe, and these he dismissed from him to live with their husbands; and he took in daughters of families in the same tribe to be wives to his sons, and who seem to have dwelt together; it being the custom then for sons, though married, to abide with their father, and their wives with them; as Abarbinel says is the custom at Zenobia unto this day: *and he judged Israel seven years*: and in his days the wars of Troy are said [z] to begin; but they began in the times of Jephthah his predecessor, and ended in his [a].

Ver. 10. *Then died Ibzan, and was buried in Bethlehem.*] He died at the end of his seven-years' government, and was buried in his native place; nothing memorable having happened during his being judge; this is all that is recorded of him.

Ver. 11. *And after him Elon a Zebulonite judged Israel*, &c.] One of the tribe of Zebulon: *and he judged Israel ten years*: administered justice to them, preserved them in the true religion, and from idolatry; though it does not appear that any enemies arose in his time against them, from whom he delivered them.

Ver. 12. *And Elon the Zebulonite died*, &c.] At the end of his ten-years' government: *and was buried in Aijalon in the country of Zebulun*: which is added to distinguish it from another Aijalon in the tribe of Dan, ch. i. 35.

Ver. 13. *And after him Abdon the son of Hillell, a Pirathonite, judged Israel.*] So called from Pirathon, where he was born, and which was in the tribe of Ephraim, as appears from ver. 15.

Ver. 14. *And he had 40 sons, and 30 nephews*, &c.] Or sons' sons, that is, grandsons; so that he lived not only to see his sons married, but his grandchildren grown up to men's estate; since it follows, *that rode on 70 ass-colts*: who were either employed by him to ride about on these animals, which in those times were reckoned honourable; see ch. v. 10. to administer justice throughout the nation in their circuits; or rather, not following any trade, or being concerned in husbandry, or feeding cattle, but being men of estates, rode about like gentlemen: *and he judged Israel 8 years*: in his time it is said [b] the city of Troy was destroyed; so Eusebius [c], who calls this judge Labdon, though he elsewhere [d] places it in the times of Eli; see on ver. 9.

Ver. 15. *And Abdon the son of Hillell the Pirathonite died*, &c.] At the end of his 8-years' government: *and was buried at Pirathon, in the land of Ephraim, in the mount of the Amalekites*: in the place where he was born, and from whence he had the name of a Pirathonite; and this was in the tribe of Ephraim, and the particular spot was Mount Amalek; so called either from the name of the person to whom it belonged, or because the Amalekites formerly dwelt in it; or rather because of some remarkable advantage got over them at this place: here, Josephus says [e], this judge had a magnificent funeral.

CHAP. XIII.

THIS chapter relates the birth of Samson, another of the judges of Israel, which was foretold by an angel to his mother, who told her husband of it, ver. 1—7. upon whose entreaty the angel appeared again, and related the same to them both, ver. 8—14. and who was very respectfully treated by the man, and by the wonderful things he did was known by him to be an angel of the Lord, which greatly surprised him, ver. 15—23. and the chapter is closed with an account of the birth of Samson, and of his being early endowed with the spirit of God, ver. 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord*, &c.] Committed idolatry, which was the evil they were prone unto, and were frequently guilty of: *and the Lord delivered them into the hands of the Philistines 40 years*: which according to Josephus [f] are to be reckoned from the death of the last judge, and the time of Samson's birth; or rather from some time after the death of Jephthah, particularly taking in the two last years of Ibzan, when the Ephraimites having been weakened through the slaughter of them by Jephthah, might encourage the Philistines to break in upon them: from which time to the birth of Samson were 20 years, and 20 more may be allowed before he could begin to deliver Israel out of their hands; so that the oppression lasted 40 years. According to others, it began at the same time as the oppression of the Ammonites did, though it lasted longer, ch. x. 7.

Ver. 2. *And there was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites*, &c.] Of the tribe of Dan, in which tribe Zorah was, and seems to have lain both on the borders of Judah and Dan, Josh. xv. 33. and xix. 41. see the notes there; and this man was not a mean man, but of rank and figure, a principal man in the country.

[z] Juchasin, fol. 136 1.
[a] Gerard. Vossii Isagoge Chron. dissert. 1. p. 4.
[b] Juchasin, ut supra.
[c] Evangel. Præpar. l. 10. c. 11. p. 494.
[d] Evangel. Præpar. l. 10. c. 11. p. 503.
[e] Ut supra, sect. 15.
[f] Ibid. c. 8. sect. 1.

according to Josephus[g]; though the Talmudists[h] say he was a plebeian: *whose name was Manoah*: which signifies *rest*, and has much the same signification as Noah; and by this name he was well known in those times, and among his people: *and his wife was barren, and bare not*; had no child, as the Targum; and it is observed by many, that several eminent persons were born of women that had been barren, as Isaac, Jacob, Samuel, and John the Baptist; and it is remarkable, that the strongest man that ever was was born of such a woman, as the following account relates. The name of this woman, the mother of Samson, is said[i] to be Zalalponith; see 1 Chron. iv. 3.

Ver. 3. *And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman*, &c.] According to Josephus[k], it was in a plain without the city; and that he appeared in the form of a man is certain from ver. 6, &c. but was not a mere man, a prophet of the Lord, nor a created angel, but the increated one, the Angel of the covenant, the Son and Word of God, who often appeared in an human form; since his name is said to be *Wonderful*, and he to do wonderful things, and is called *Jehovah*, ver. 18, 23. *and said unto her, behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not*: barren at that time, and so she had been ever since she was married to that time; and this is observed, that it might appear the more wonderful that she should after this have a child: *but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son*: which to do, must be ascribed to divine power, that one in her circumstances should bear a son; as the prediction of it was owing to divine omniscience, and a proof of it.

Ver. 4. *Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine nor strong drink*, &c.] Any liquor inebriating and intoxicating, neither new wine nor old wine, as the Targum, and so Jarchi; the reason of this appears in the next verse, because the child she should conceive and bear was to be a Nazarite, and to be one from his mother's womb; and from all such liquors, Nazarites, according to the law, were to abstain, Numb. vi. 3. *and eat not any unclean thing*; meaning not so much such sort of food as was forbidden by the law to be eaten, which every Israelite was to abstain from, but such as were peculiarly forbidden to Nazarites, as moist and dried grapes, or any thing made of the vine-tree, from the kernel to the husk, Numb. vi. 3, 4. The reason of this is, because the child in the womb is nourished with the same the mother is; and as this child was to be a Nazarite from the womb, and even in it, his mother was to abstain both from eatables and drinkables forbidden a Nazarite by the law.

Ver. 5. *For, lo, thou shalt conceive and bear a son*, &c.] Which is not only repeated for the confirmation of it, but that she might take notice that he was to be a Nazarite, and therefore must conform to every thing agreeable to the law of the Nazarites, and take care that it was observed in him: *and no razor shall come on his head*: to cut off the hair of it, not from the time of his birth to his death; for he was to be a perpetual Nazarite: other Nazarites during the time of their Nazariteship were not to suffer a razor to come upon them, but afterwards might; but for such an one as Samson, it was not lawful ever to suffer his hair to be cut off; see Numb. vi. 5. *for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb*: in which he was a type of Christ, who was sanctified by the Lord, separated from sinners, and called a *Nazarene*: was born of a virgin, as Samson was of a barren woman, and his birth foretold by an angel as this: *and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines*: for the salvation he wrought for Israel was not complete and perfect; it was only begun by him, and carried on in the times of Eli, Samuel, and Saul, and perfected by David. In this his antitype exceeds him, who is the author of the complete salvation of his people out of the hands of all their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world; though in this there is a great resemblance between Samson and our Lord Jesus, in that what he did he did himself alone; not at the head of an army, and with forces under him, as other judges; so Christ with his own arm, and of himself, and without others, wrought salvation for his people; see Isa. lxiii. 5.

Ver. 6. *Then the woman came and told her husband*, &c.] To whom it would be joyful news, as it was to her: *saying, a man of God came unto me*: he appeared in an human form, and therefore she calls him a man; and by his mien and deportment, and the message he brought, she concluded he was a man of God, that is, a prophet: by which name such persons went in those days; and so the Targum calls him a prophet of the Lord: but it is a mere conceit of Ben Gersom that it was Phinehas, who in all probability was not living; besides what is after related shews that this was a divine Person, and no other than the son of God: *and his countenance was like the countenance of an angel of God, very terrible*: for though she might never have seen an angel, yet it being a common notion that angels were very illustrious, of a beautiful form and of a shining countenance, and very majestic, she compares the mam she saw to one; for by being *very terrible*, is not meant that he was frightful, and struck her with horror, but venerable and majestic, which filled her with admiration: *but I asked him not whence he was, neither told he me his name*; this she added to prevent her husband's inquiring about his name and place of abode; and perhaps, as she came along, she reflected on herself that she did not ask those questions: which might be owing to the surprise she was in, partly at the awful and venerable appearance of the person, and partly at the joyful news he brought her; though it seems as if she did ask his name, but he did not tell her what it was.

Ver. 7. *But he said unto me, behold, thou shalt conceive and bear a son*, &c.] She says nothing of her barrenness, which the angel took notice of to her, that having been to her reproach: *and now drink no wine nor strong drink*; neither new wine nor old wine; so the Targum as before: *neither eat any unclean thing*: which was so in a ceremonial sense; otherwise every creature of God is good, and not to be called common or unclean: it here respects what was forbidden Nazarites to eat; see ver. 4. *for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb*: it is here added, what is not

[g] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 2.
[h] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 61. 1.

[i] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. Juchasin, fol. 10. 2.
[k] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 2.

before expressed, *unto his death*: for he was to be a perpetual Nazarite; some were only Nazarites for a time, for so many days or months, according to their vow; but this son was to be a Nazarite all his days, by the appointment of God; nor is it any objection to what is here said, that his hair was cut off before his death, which caused his Nazariteship to cease; since these words are not a prophecy, but a precept; and besides, that affair happened but a little before his death, he died quickly afterwards.

Ver. 8. *Then Manoah entreated the Lord*, &c.] Josephus[l] makes the woman to entreat the Lord; but the text is clear for it that it was Manoah that prayed: *and said, O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send unto us*: he believed that the man that came to his wife was a man of God, and that he was of his sending; nor was he incredulous of the message he brought, as appears by what follows: *and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born*; he believed there would be a child born, and he knew what was to be done to a Nazarite in common, according to the law of God respecting such, and the angel had mentioned somewhat to the woman; yet this being an extraordinary case, a Nazarite from his birth to his death, he was desirous of knowing what was further to be done; or if there was any thing more special and particular to be observed concerning him; which shewed his readiness and cheerfulness to obey the will of God in all things.

Ver. 9. *And God hearkened unto the voice of Manoah*, &c.] Heard his prayer and answered it: *and the angel of God came again unto the woman as she sat in the field*: who very likely returned to the same place where she was before, in hope her husband's prayers would be heard, and the man return and come to her where he had before met her; as well as she might be here retired for meditation and prayer; unless it can be supposed that she had business here to do, as keeping a flock of sheep, which women, and those great personages too, were wont to do in those times and countries, as Rebekah the sister of Laban, and the daughters of Jethro, prince of Midian: *but Manoah her husband was not with her*: the angel appeared to the woman again, because she would know him to be the same; whereas had he appeared to Manoah, especially alone, he could not have known whether he was the same or no. This clause is observed for the sake of what follows.

Ver. 10. *And the woman made haste, and ran*, &c.] It is not improbable what Josephus says[m], that she entreated the angel to stay a little till she fetched her husband, which he assented to, and then made all the haste she could to him, partly through eagerness to acquaint him with it, and partly that she might not make the prophet she took him to be wait too long: *and shewed her husband*; that his prayer was heard: *and said unto him, behold, the man hath appeared unto me that came unto me* the other *day*; or, as the Targum, *this day*: so Kimchi and Ben Melech; for the word *other* is not in the text. It is very probable it was the same day he came again he had appeared to her; perhaps it was in the former part of the day he first came to her, when she went home to her husband, and acquainted him with it, who prayed to the Lord that he might be sent again; and then she returned to her place in the field, and in the latter part of the day the angel appeared again.

Ver. 11. *And Manoah arose and went after his wife*, &c.] As soon as she had delivered the above, she made all the haste she could to the man again, lest he should think her too long, and depart; and it was proper enough she should go first, to direct her husband where the man was; Jarchi interprets it, after her counsel and advice: *and came to the man, and said unto him*, art *thou the man that spakest unto the woman?* meaning his wife then present: *and he said, I am*: the very same person; for though he was not a man, yet appearing in an human form was taken for one; and therefore makes answer according to the supposition of him, and was the self-same person, and in the same form he had appeared before.

Ver. 12. *And Manoah said, now let thy words come to pass*, &c.] Which was not only a wish that they might, but a prayer of faith that they would come to pass: *how shall we order the child? and how shall we do unto him?* he believed a child would be born, and as he was to be a Nazarite, he knew what were the rules and orders to be observed concerning one in common; but as he was to be an extraordinary one, he was desirous of knowing what particular laws and rules were to be observed with respect to him, or what more was to be done to him than to another: the words may be rendered, as in the margin of our Bibles, *what shall be the judgment of the child, and his work?* and seems to relate not to what should be done to it, but what that should do; for being an extraordinary Nazarite, he supposed that some extraordinary work would be done by him, and he was curious to know it; and so Abarbinel interprets it of his request to know things future and wonderful, that should be done after the child was grown up; but this the angel chose not to inform him of, since it might have been prejudicial to them, should the Philistines get knowledge that this child would be a judge and saviour of Israel, and do such and such things to them as he did, they would have sought to have slain his wife whilst she bare him, or the child when born; and it may be observed, that though the angel told the woman at first, that he should *begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines*, ver. 5. yet she said nothing of it to her husband, nor did the angel repeat it.

Ver. 13. *And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah*, &c.] Giving him no direct answer to his question, either what should be done to the child, or what that should do; only reminds of and repeats what he had said to his wife, which she should be careful to observe and would, and that was enough for him to know: *of all that I said to the woman, let her beware*; take care to abstain from every thing in eating and drinking, during the time of her going with-child, he had enjoined, which are particularly repeated in the next verse.

Ver. 14. *She may not eat of any thing that cometh of the vine*, &c.] Grapes moist or dried, kernels, or husks,

[l] Ut supra, sect. 3.

[m] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 3.

or any thing made of them: *neither let her drink wine, or strong drink*: as she was to be careful to abstain from such liquors, so her husband also is enjoined not to suffer her to drink any: *nor eat any unclean thing*: which was so by the law of Moses, and particularly by the law of the Nazarites: *all that I commanded her, let her observe*; both with respect to herself and the child.

Ver. 15. *And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord*, &c.] Being satisfied with what he had said, and perceiving that he chose to say no more, and was about to depart: *I pray thee let me detain thee, until we shall have made ready a kid for thee*: to eat a meal with them, in token of gratitude for the trouble he had been at in bringing these messages to them, taking him to be a man, a prophet of the Lord, for whom they were wont to make entertainments; and Abarbinel thinks Manoah proposed this, on purpose to detain him, in hope that while they were eating together he would reveal some secrets unto him.

Ver. 16. *And the angel of the Lord said unto Manoah*, &c.] In answer to his request: *though thou detain me, I will not eat of thy bread*: that is, should he be prevailed upon to stay awhile with him, until an entertainment should be got ready, he would not eat of any of his provisions; for *bread* is put for all eatables, or whatsoever he might provide for the entertainment: *and if*, or *but if* [r] *thou wilt offer a burnt-offering, thou must offer it unto the Lord*: if he meant to provide not a festival entertainment, but a sacrifice, then he should take care that he did not offer it to strange gods, as was now very much the custom with Israel in this their time of apostacy, ver. 1. but to the true Jehovah, and not to a servant of his, a prophet or an angel, but to himself: *for Manoah knew not that he was an angel of the Lord*; he took him to be a man, a prophet sent of God, and not an angel; and much less the increated one, to whom as such only the sacrifice could be offered.

Ver. 17. *And Manoah said unto the angel of the Lord, what is thy name*, &c.] Who art thou, and by what name art thou called? for since he could not prevail upon him to stay and eat a meal with him, he desired to know his name, and where he lived, that when he heard his name mentioned he might speak well of him, or send to him upon occasion; or if any message was sent from him, as Jarchi suggests, that he might shew a respect to him, and observe it: and particularly, *that when thy sayings come to pass, we may do thee honour?* say that such a prophet, whose name is such, and lives in such a place, foretold these things; or that they might send him a present, in gratitude for, and as a reward of his service and trouble; so the reward of a labourer, and the maintenance of a Gospel minister, is called *honour*, 1 Tim. v. 17. and thus Josephus [s] understood it, that they might give him thanks, and send him a present.

Ver. 18. *And the angel of the Lord said unto him*, &c.] Being so importunate, and pressing upon him: *why askest thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?* and not to be known; as his nature and essence as a divine Person, which may be meant by his name, is what passes knowledge, is infinite and incomprehensible; see Prov. xxx. 4. or *wonderful* [p]; which is one of the names of Christ, and fitly agrees with him, who is wonderful in his person, as God and man; in his incarnation, in his offices and relations, in his love to his people, and in all he is unto them, and has done for them; see Isa. ix. 6. and the note there.

Ver. 19. *So Manoah took a kid with a meat-offering*, &c.] The kid which he proposed to make an entertainment with, for the man of God, he took him to be, he fetched and brought for a burnt-offering, at the hint which the angel had given him, and joined to it a meat-offering, as was usual whenever burnt-offerings were made; see Numb. xv. 3, 4. *and offered it upon a rock unto the Lord*; for though Manoah was not a priest, nor was this a proper place for sacrifice; high places were now forbidden, and only at the tabernacle in Shiloh were offerings to be brought; yet all this was dispensed with, and Manoah was justified in what he did by the warrant of the angel, ver. 16. The rock was probably near the place where this meeting of Manoah and his wife with the angel was, and where the discourse between them passed; and which served instead of an altar, and on which Manoah sacrificed, not to idols, but to the true Jehovah, as the angel directed: *and* the angel *did wonderously*; agreeably to his name, which was *Wonderful*, ver. 18. or *he, Jehovah, did wondrously*; for this angel was no other than Jehovah the Son. The instance in which he did wondrously was, as Kimchi observes, by bringing fire out of the rock, which consumed the flesh of the kid, and the meat-offering; and so Josephus [q] says, that he touched the flesh with a rod he had, and fire sparkled out, and consumed it with the bread, or meat-offering; just in the same manner as the angel did with the kid and cakes that Gideon brought, ch. vi. 21. *and Manoah and his wife looked on*: to see either fire come down from heaven, or spring up out of the rock, which consumed the sacrifice, and shewed the Lord's acceptance of it, and also the angel's ascending in it, as follows.

Ver. 20. *For it came to pass, when the flame went up towards heaven from off the altar*, &c.] That is, from the rock, which served instead of an altar, and from whence perhaps the fire sprung which consumed both the burnt-offering and the meat-offering, the flame of which went up to heaven; this rock or altar having no covering, but was *sub dio*, open to the heavens: *that the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar*; making use of the smoke, as Josephus [r] says, as a vehicle in which he openly went up to heaven: *and Manoah and his wife looked on it*; on the flame and smoke, and the angel in it as he ascended; just as the disciples of Christ looked steadfastly on him as he went up to heaven, when a cloud received him out of

[r] ואם si autem, V. L. quod si, Tigurine version; sin autem, Junius & Tremellius; si vero, Piscator.

[s] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 3.

[p] פלאי θαυμαστος, Sept. mirabile, V. L. Montanus; mirificus, Junius & Tremellius.

[q] Ut supra.

[r] Ibid.

their sight, Acts i. 9, 10. *and fell on their faces to the ground:* with astonishment and surprise at what they saw, through fear and reverence of the divine Being, of whose presence they were now sensible, and as worshipping of him, and praying to him.

Ver. 21. *But the angel of the Lord did no more appear to Manoah and to his wife*, &c.] As the flame and smoke ascended, he disappeared therewith, and was seen no more: *then Manoah knew that he was an angel of the Lord:* by the wondrous things he did, causing fire to come down from heaven, or out of the rock, ascending in the midst of the flame, without being hurt by it, and going up to heaven in it.

Ver. 22. *And Manoah said unto his wife*, &c.] Being risen from the ground, where they fell on their faces: *we shall surely die, because we have seen God:* by which it appears that he not only believed him to be an angel, and not a man, but a divine Person; for though angels are sometimes called *Elohim*, the word here used, yet good men were not wont to fear death, or conclude they should die on sight of an angel; but their notion was, that an appearance of God to them was death, and were surprised when it did not follow, Gen. xxxii. 30. Judg. vi. 22, 23. see Exod. xxxiii. 20.

Ver. 23. *But his wife said unto him*, &c.] Who was less fearful, and the strongest believer of the two, seeing her husband so very much intimidated, endeavoured to comfort and strengthen him by the three following arguments: *if the Lord was pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands;* for it was at the direction of this illustrious Person that they offered these offerings, and who testified the divine acceptance of them, by causing fire in an extraordinary manner to consume them, which was always reckoned a token of God's acceptance of them; and besides, the angel went up in the flame, as being well-pleased with them, and, as it were, carrying up the sacrifice to heaven with him, as a sweet-smelling savour to God. Here the angel is called Jehovah by the woman, and shews this was the increated angel: *neither would he have shewed us all these things;* which they saw, as the appearance of a divine Person to them in an human form, the consuming of the sacrifice by fire in so strange a manner, and the ascent of the angel heavenwards in the flame of it: *nor would, as at this time, have told us* such things *as these:* as that they should have a son; how the woman was to manage herself, whilst with-child of him; and how when born he was to be brought up, and what things God would do by him, and begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines. Now all this would not have been told at such a time of distress, as the nation was now in, but to comfort them, or he would never have told them of a son to be born of them, if they were to be destroyed immediately. So an enlightened soul may reason from the sight and sense he has had of his sinful, lost, and undone state by nature; from the revelation of Christ to him, as the only way of salvation; from the views he has had of the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace; and from that communion with God he has sometimes enjoyed; from all this he may reason, that if God had a design to damn him for his sins, he would never have made such discoveries of love, grace, and mercy to him; as well as from the sacrifice of Christ, God has provided and accepted of, on the foot of which justice is engaged to save; and besides, grace and glory are inseparable.

Ver. 24. *And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson*, &c.] After these appearances were over, Manoah and his wife returned to their habitation, and she soon became pregnant, and at the usual course of time brought forth a son, and she gave him the name of Samson; for what reason it is not easy to determine. Josephus says* the word signifies *strong;* perhaps he was born a strong robust child, which is not unlikely, or the woman might have some prophetic hint of his future strength, and so gave him this name; but the word has not the signification of strength in it; it rather signifies the sun, which is indeed a strong body, and is compared to a strong man running his race, and so a strong man may be compared to that; but rather, with respect to the sun, this name might be given him, because of the splendour of his countenance with which he might be born, or in memory of the shining countenance of the angel which brought the tidings of his birth, or because he was to be the instrument of dispelling the darkness of calamity and distress Israel were now in; but the word more properly signifies a minister or servant, from whence the sun has its name; for Samson was to be, and was, a minister and servant of God, and of his people Israel. There is an agreement between the type and the antitype in this name in either sense. Christ is the mighty God, and mighty Saviour, the sun of righteousness, the light of the world, and the deliverer of his people from darkness of calamity and distress; and who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and perform the great service of redemption and salvation: *and the child grew;* in bodily strength and stature, and grew up to man's estate, Luke ii. 40, 52. *and the Lord blessed him;* not only with extraordinary strength of body, but with great endowments of mind, with the spirit and graces of the spirit; with grace, and blessings of it, and with his gracious presence; with this compare Psal. xxi. 3, 6. Eph. i. 3.

Ver. 25. *And the spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan*, &c.] To go out into it, in order to be trained up in and inured to military exercises; or it began to *strike* his mind, inject thoughts into it, and impress it with them concerning doing great things for the people of God in time to come; and for the present put him upon doing strange and wonderful exploits, which were omens of what was to be done by him hereafter; and these were done by him now and then, not always, but as the spirit of God came upon him, under the impulse of which he did them, and by the strength he gave him; so the Targum, " and the spirit of strength from the Lord " began to strengthen him." This camp of Dan was either a camp formed in that tribe, to prevent the incursions of the Philistines; or rather, since it does not

* Ut supra, sect. 4.

seem that Israel had strength enough to resist them, they having got the power over them, this was the name of a place called Mahaneh-dan near Kirjath-jearim, from the Danites encamping in it, when they went to besiege Laish, ch. xviii. 11, 12. for the fact was done before this time, though related afterwards: *between Zorah and Eshtaol;* which were two cities in the tribe of Dan, and upon the borders of the tribe of Judah; of which see Josh. xv. 33. and xix. 41. It may be observed, that as the tribe of Dan lay near to the Philistines, and so liable to their ravages, and might be most oppressed by them, so a deliverer of Israel was raised up in this tribe.

CHAP. XIV.

THIS chapter treats of Samson's courtship, and marriage of a Philistine woman, ver. 1—5. of his meeting with a young lion as he went a-courting, and of his slaying it, and afterwards finding honey in it, ver. 6—9. of a riddle which he framed out of this incident, and put to his companions at his marriage to unriddle, giving them 7 days to do it in, with a promise of a reward, ver. 10—14. and of their unriddling it by means of his wife, who got the secret from him, ver. 15—18. which led him to slay 30 Philistines, to make good his promise of 30 sheets and changes of raiment, and to leave his new-married wife, who was given to his companion, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *And Samson went down to Timnath,* &c.] A city which by lot fell to the tribe of Judah, but was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, and now in the hands of the Philistines, Josh. xv. 57. and xix. 43. Judah is said to go up to it, because the place where he lived lay below it, Gen. xxxviii. 13. but Samson is said to go down to it, because he lived above it. The Jews[t] differ about the reconciliation of these two places; some say there were two of this name, the one is a descent, and the other is an ascent; others say there was but one, so situated, that they that came to it on one side ascended, and they that came to it on the other side descended. Bochart[u] approves of the former. According to Bunting[w], this was 12 miles from Eshtaol, where Samson lived: *and saw a woman in Timnath, of the daughters of the Philistines:* who at this time dwelt there; he saw no doubt many other women besides her, but he took special notice of her, and entertained a particular affection for her; or, in other words, on sight of her fell in love with her.

Ver. 2. *And he came up, and told his father and his mother,* &c.] Of his passion of love, being desirous of having their approbation and consent, in which he acted a dutiful part, and what became him; and may be an example to children to advise with their parents, and have their opinion and consent before they engage in such an enterprise, even before courtship: *and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines;* whom he had a good liking of, and a strong affection for; he is very open and ingenuous in his account, does not go about to hide any thing from his parents, or colour things over, or conceal her descent; but frankly tells them she was a Philistine woman; which he knew would at once furnish out an objection against her: *now therefore get her for me to wife;* for it seems it was the custom then, when a young man had pitched upon a woman he liked, that it was left to his parents to treat with the woman and her friends about the marriage of her to him.

Ver. 3. *Then his father and his mother said unto him,* &c.] What he might expect, and doubtless did expect: is there *never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?* none in their own family, nor in the tribe of Dan, nor among the whole nation of Israel, but must go among the uncircumcised Philistines; for though they were not of the seven nations of the Canaanites, with whom marriage was forbidden, yet they not only dwelt where they did, and where the Israelites should, but were idolaters and impure persons, and therefore affinity should not be contracted with them, as being of a dangerous consequence, which might entice to idolatry. Ben Gersom observes, that their Rabbins say he made her a proselyte first, though he did not acquaint his parents with it, and so Abarbinel; but this seems not likely, for, had this been the case, he would have had an easy and ready reply to this objection of theirs: *and Samson said unto his father, get her for me, for she pleaseth me well; or is right in mine eyes*[x]; not only his eyes were taken with her beauty or external form, but it was right in his sight, in his judgment, to marry her; he having an impulse upon his mind from the spirit of God unto it, though he did not let his parents know of it, but left them to conclude it sprung from a violent affection to her person. Abarbinel observes, that he only addressed his father, and not his mother, she being most vehemently against the match, and expressing more uneasiness at it than his father did; but it is most likely that he addressed his father particularly, because he was the proper person to negotiate this affair for him.

Ver. 4. *And his father and mother knew not that it was of the Lord,* &c.] That he should marry this uncircumcised Philistine; Samson knew it was, and that his desire of having her in marriage did not arise from carnal affection to her merely, being captivated with her beauty and external form, for she was not so very fair, her younger sister was fairer than she, ch. xv. 2. but he perceived it was the mind and will of God that he should take such a person to wife, by the impulse of the spirit of God upon him, pointing it unto him, inclining and urging him to it, suggesting the end and design of it, and the opportunity it would give him of quarrelling with the Philistines, and taking

[t] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.
[u] Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 4. col. 765, 766.
[w] Travels, &c. p. 115.
[x] ישרה בעיני recta in oculis meis, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.

vengeance on them; but this his parents were ignorant of, nor did he let them know that this was of God: *that he sought an occasion against the Philistines*: in this way, by this means; they might know he sought to get an opportunity to be avenged on them for their oppression, and to attempt the deliverance of Israel; but they knew not that it was the will of God that a way should be opened for it by this means. Samson might be directed by the Lord to reason thus in his mind, that if he proposed to the Philistines to marry one of their daughters, and they should reject his proposal, this would give him a handle to fall out with them, and fall upon them; and if they should agree to such a match, he might expect they would be kind to him, and to his people for his sake, being in alliance with them, or he should resent it, and take occasion from hence to come to a rupture with them: *for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel*: had invaded their country, and dwelt in their cities, and made them tributary to them, and used them ill; which Samson observing, was provoked to seek an opportunity of avenging the injuries done them, and of delivering them, and he was directed to it this way.

Ver. 5. *Then went Samson down, and his father and his mother, to Timnath*, &c.] They were prevailed upon to go with him, either because they perceived his affections were so strongly set upon a wife, that they thought it advisable to agree to it, lest it should be of bad consequence to him, or because he let them know that the thing was of God, and what was his design in it: *and came to the vineyards of Timnath*: the land of Canaan was a land of vineyards, and particularly that part of it which was inhabited by the Philistines and Phœnicians; and though we nowhere read of the wine of Timnath, yet frequent mention is made in authors of the wine of Ascalon, Gaza, and Sarepta, inhabited by the above people: these vineyards seem to have lain somewhat out of Samson's way; but hither he turned on some account or another from his parents, perhaps to eat some grapes: *and, behold, a young lion roared against him*: not a whelp, that is expressed by another word, but one more grown, and is afterwards called a lion simply; and, by the Targum, a lion, the son of lions or lionesses; which seeing him in the vineyards, where he was lurking, came out to meet him, and roared at him in a hideous manner, and made up to him to destroy him: these creatures, though now more rare in those parts, were at this time frequent, and in after-times; see 1 Sam. xvii. 34. 1 Kings xiii. 24. and xx. 36. and several writers[y] make mention of lions in Mesopotamia and Syria; and Strabo[z], and Pliny[a] speak of a city in Phœnicia near Sidon, called the city of lions, because perhaps it had been much infested with them: and for a like reason it may be some cities in the tribes of Judah and Simeon were called Lebaoth and Beth-lebaoth, Josh. xv. 32. and xix. 6.

Ver. 6. *And the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him*, &c.] The spirit of might from the Lord, as the Targum, inspiring him with courage and intrepidity of mind, and increasing his bodily strength: *and he rent him as he would rend a kid*: as he came up to him to seize him, he laid hold on him and strangled him, as Josephus[b] says, caught him by the throat, and tore it out; for it does not seem that the carcass was torn to pieces, or limb from limb, by what follows; and this he did with as much ease as if he had had only a kid to deal with: *and he had nothing in his hand*: not a staff to keep it off, nor a spear, sword, or knife to stab it with: in this Samson was a type of Christ, who has destroyed our adversary the devil, compared to a roaring lion, 1 Pet. v. 8. to a lion for his strength, cruelty, and voraciousness; to a roaring lion, making a hideous noise and stir when the Gospel was carried unto the Gentiles, and they were about to be called and espoused to Christ; from among whom he was cast out, and by no other weapon than the ministration of the Gospel, accompanied with the power of Christ, and his spirit: *but he told not his father or his mother what he had done*: when he overtook them, as he quickly did, he said not a word to them of his meeting with a lion and slaying it; which, as it shewed his modesty in not blazing abroad his wonderful and heroic actions, in which also he was a type of Christ, but his great prudence in concealing this, lest his great strength should be known too soon, and the Philistines be upon their guard against him, or seek to dispatch him privately; though no doubt he had pondered this in his own mind, and considered it as an omen and presage of the advantage he should have over the Philistines his enemies, whom he should as easily overcome as he had that lion, and that without any instrument of war.

Ver. 7. *And he went down, and talked with the woman*, &c.] Entered into a conversation with her, that he might the better judge of her other qualifications, besides that of outward form and beauty, whether she would be a suitable yoke-fellow for him; and he talked with her about marriage, and proposed it to her, or talked about her to her father and near relations; and, as the Targum expresses it, asked the woman, not only asked of her her consent, but demanded her of her friends: it may refer, as Abarbinel observes, to his father, that he went down and talked with the woman and with her relations about her, concerning the affair of his son's marriage with her: *and she pleased Samson well*: he liked her conversation as well as her person, and the more he conversed with her, the more agreeable she was to him, and the more desirous he was to marry her. Though some observe from hence, that she did not please the father of Samson as himself; so Abarbinel.

Ver. 8. *And after a time he returned to take her*, &c.] Matters being agreed on, and settled on both sides, and the espousals made, he and his parents returned, and, at the proper usual time for the consummation of the marriage, he went again to Timnath for that purpose. It is in the Hebrew text, *after days*[c], which sometimes signifies a year, see Gen. iv. 3. Exod. xiii. 10. and so Ben Gersom interprets it, that a year after

[y] Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 514. Curtius, l. 8. sect. 1. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16

[z] Geograph. l. 16. p. 520.

[a] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 20.

[b] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 5.

[c] מימים a diebus, Montanus; post dies, Vatablus.

this woman became Samson's wife (*i. e.* betrothed to him) he returned to take her to himself to wife; and it seems, adds he, that twelve months were given her to prepare herself; and some considerable time must have elapsed, as appears from what had happened to the carcass of the lion, next related: *and he turned aside to see the carcass of the lion*: just before he came to Timnath he thought of the lion he had slain some time ago, and he went a little out of the way to see what was become of it, or had happened to it. Josephus says[d], when he slew it he threw it into a woody place, perhaps among some bushes, a little out of the road; for which reason it had not been seen and removed, and was in a more convenient place for what was done in it: *and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcass of the lion*; and though naturalists[e] tell us that bees are averse to flesh, and will not touch any, yet in the course of time that the carcass of this lion had lain, its flesh might have been clean eaten off by the fowls of the air, or was quite dried away and consumed, so that it was nothing but a mere skeleton; a bony carcass, as the Syriac version. Josephus[f] says, the swarm was in the breast of the lion; and it is no more unlikely that a swarm of bees should settle in it, and continue and build combs, and lay up their honey there, than that the like should be done in the skull of Onesilus king of Cyprus, when hung up and dried, as Herodotus[g] relates. Besides, according to Virgil[h], this was a method made use of to produce a new breed of bees, even from the corrupt gore and putrid bowels of slain beasts; and Pythagoras[i] observes, they are produced from thence. This may be an emblem of those sweet blessings of grace, which come to the people of Christ through his having destroyed Satan the roaring lion, and all his works; and particularly which came to the poor Gentiles, when the devil was cast out from them, and his empire there demolished.

Ver. 9. *And he took thereof in his hands, and went on eating, &c.*] Josephus[k] says he took three honeycombs, he means three pieces of the honeycomb, and ate the honey as he went along to Timnath; which he might do without touching the carcass of the lion, and defiling himself thereby, which, as a Nazarite, he was more especially to be careful of: *and came to his father and mother, and he gave them, and they did eat*: who went down with him to the consummation of the marriage, and from whom he had turned a little aside; and now overtook them, and to whom he gave some of his honey to eat, which, having travelled some way, might be grateful to them. The above writer takes no notice of this, but says he gave of it to the young woman whom he betrothed, when he came to her; but of that the text makes no mention: *but he told not them that he had taken the honey out of the carcass of the lion*; either lest they should scruple eating it, being taken out of such a carcass; or that the riddle, which perhaps he meditated as he came along eating the honey, might not be found out, which might more easily have been done, had this fact been known by any.

Ver. 10. *So his father went down unto the woman, &c.*] At Timnath, whom Samson had espoused; the Targum is, "about the business of the woman;" about the consummation of the marriage with her; they all three went, the father, the mother, and the son, as appears from the preceding verse: *for Samson made a feast, for so used the young men to do*: at the time of marriage; this was the nuptial feast common in all nations; but it seems the custom now and here was for the bridegroom to make it; whereas from other instances we learn, that the father of the bridegroom used to make it, Matt. xxii. 2. see the note there; and the Vulgate Latin version here renders it, *and he made a feast for his son Samson*: the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions add, seven days, and so long this feast was kept, ver. 12. Now this marriage of Samson with a daughter of the Philistines was a type of the marriage of Christ with his people, especially with the Gentile church, such as were not of the commonwealth of Israel, but sinners of the Gentiles, very ignorant of divine things, reproached by the Jews, and their calling an offence to them; and may fitly express the love of Christ to his church, though unworthy of it, which is a love of complacency and delight, arising from his own good will and pleasure, and not owing to any superior beauty, excellence, worth, or worthiness in them, they being no better than others, children of wrath, even as others, see ch. xv. 2. as well as there is an agreement in the manner of his obtaining and betrothing her, which was by applying to his father to get her for him, and being got and given, he betrothed her; so Christ asked his people of his father to be his spouse, which request being obtained, he betrothed them to himself in righteousness; and the Gospel feast, or ministry of the word, is kept and continued on account of it, Psal. xxi. 2. Hos. ii. 19. Matt. xxii. 2, 3, 4.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, when they saw him, &c.*] That is, the Philistines, the citizens of Timnath, when they saw that he was come to consummate his marriage: *that they brought 30 companions to be with him*: to be the bridegroom's men, or children of the bride-chamber, as they are called, Matt. ix. 15. or friends of the bridegroom, John iii. 29. to keep him company during the nuptial feast: this they did according to custom, and in honour and respect unto him; though some think, and so Josephus[l], that they were brought to be guards upon him, observing that he was a man of great might, strength, and courage, so that they were afraid of him, lest he should have some design upon them; but it is not certain that there was any thing very visible or terrible in him, more than in another man, that shewed him to be of extraordinary courage and strength, since it was but at times the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and as yet he had done nothing to their knowledge which shewed him to be such; had they indeed known of his

[d] Ut supra.
[e] Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 40. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 21.
[f] Ut supra, sect. 6.
[g] Terpsichore, sive, l. 5. c. 114.
[h] —— quoquo modo caesis, &c. Georgic. l. 4. ver. 281, &c. Liquefacta boum per viscera, &c. Ib. ver. 555.
[i] Apud Ovid. Metamorph. l. 15. fab. 4. ver. 365, 366.
[k] Ut supra.
[l] Ut supra.

rencounter with the lion, they might have had such thoughts of him, but this they knew nothing of.

Ver. 12. *And Samson said unto them*, &c.] His 30 companions, very likely on the first day of the feast: *I will now put forth a riddle to you*; a secret, hidden, abstruse thing, not easy to be understood; a dark saying, wrapped up in figurative terms; and this he proposed as an amusement to them, to exercise their wits, which it seems was usual to entertain guests with, and might be both pleasing and profitable: *if you can certainly declare it unto me within the seven days of the feast*: for so long the nuptial feast was usually kept, see Gen. xxix. 27, 28. If they could *find it out*; and with clearness and certainty explain the riddle to him within that period of time, which was giving them time enough to do it in: *then I will give you 30 sheets, and 30 change of garments*; that is, every man one of each. By *sheets* he means, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, a covering of the body in the night next to the flesh, in which a man lies, and was made of linen; meaning either what we call shirts, or bed-sheets, and by change of raiment, a suit of clothes worn in the day-time.

Ver. 13. *But if ye cannot declare it unto me*, &c.] Explain the riddle in the space of time allowed: *then shall ye give me 30 sheets, and 30 change of garments*; so many shirts and suits of apparel: *and they said unto him, put forth thy riddle that we may hear it*; not thereby to judge whether they would agree to his proposals, but hereby suggesting that they accepted his terms and conditions, either to give or receive the above premium, if they did or did not hit on the explanation of the riddle.

Ver. 14. *And he said unto them, out of the eater came forth meat*, &c.] Out of a devouring eater, such as the lion is, came forth honey, or that was taken out of it, which Samson, and his father and mother, ate of, and which was the common food of some persons, as of John the Baptist: *and out of the strong came forth sweetness*; not only out of that which was strong in body whilst alive, but of a strong and ill scent, as the carcass of a dead lion is, and out of that came forth honey, than which nothing is sweeter. Josephus [m] expresses it, "that which devours all things "furnishes out pleasant food, when that itself is alto-"gether unpleasant:" *and they could not in three days expound the riddle*; so long they laboured to find it out, but then began to despair of it.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass on the 7th day*, &c.] Not on the 7th day of the feast, for some time before that they applied to his wife, and she pressed him hard to disclose it; but on the sabbath-day, as Kimchi, and so Jarchi says, on the 7th day of the week, not on the 7th day of the feast, for it was the 4th day of the feast; this is so clear, that the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, instead of the 7th, read the 4th day: *that they said unto Samson's wife, entice thy husband, that he may declare unto us the riddle*; that is, persuade him to tell the meaning of it to her, that she might declare it to them: *lest we burn thee and thy father's house with fire*; in which she now was, not as yet being taken home to her husband, and her in it; this they said to terrify her, and make her importunate with Samson to explain the riddle to her, if he had any value for her, and her life: *have ye called us to take that we have?* invited them to the wedding-feast, to strip them of their clothes, and even take their very shirts off of their backs, which they must have been obliged to part with, if they could not explain the riddle, or send for other suits and shirts from their own houses: is *it not so?* verily this is the case, nor can it be understood otherwise than a contrived business between thee and thy husband, to get our raiment, woollen and linen, from us.

Ver. 16. *And Samson's wife wept before him*, &c.] When she came to him to get out of him the explanation of the riddle, thinking that her tears would move him to it: *and said, thou dost but hate me, and lovest me not*; another artifice she used, well knowing he could not bear to have his affection called in question, which was now very strong, as is usual with new-married persons: *thou hast put forth a riddle unto the children of my people*; her countrymen, fellow-citizens, and neighbours, and could not but be dear to her, and respected by her; so that what affected and afflicted them must have some influence upon her: *and hast not told me*; that is, the explanation of it, otherwise it is likely she had heard the riddle itself told: *and he said unto her, behold, I have not told it my father nor my mother, and shall I tell it thee?* his parents he was greatly indebted to, for whom he had the highest reverence and esteem, whose fidelity and taciturnity he had sufficient knowledge of, and yet he had not thought fit to impart it to them; how therefore could she expect to be trusted with such a secret, with whom he had not been long acquainted, not long enough to know whether she could keep it or no?

Ver. 17. *And she wept before him the seven days, while the feast lasted*, &c.] Those that remained of the seven days, from the 4th to this time, as Kimchi seems rightly to interpret it; though some think she began to beseech him with tears, on the first day of the feast, to impart the secret to her for her own satisfaction; and then, after the men had urged her on the 4th day to persuade her husband to it, she continued pressing him more earnestly with tears unto the 7th day. Some, as Abarbinel observes, and to whom he seems to incline, think there were 14 days, seven days before the festival began, on the last of which they importuned her to try to get the secret from him, ver. 15. and that she continued pressing all the second seven days; but it seems quite clear that it was at the beginning of the seven days of the feast that the riddle was put, which was to be explained within that time, ver. 12. *and it came to pass on the 7th day, that he told her, because she lay sore upon him*; pressed him most earnestly with her entreaties, cries, and tears: *and she told the riddle to the children of her people*; though she knew it would be to her husband's detriment, and that he must be obliged to give them 30 sheets of linen, and as many suits of apparel, and though it is probable she had promised not to tell them.

Ver. 18. *And the men of the city said unto him, on the 7th day, before the sun went down*, &c.] And so soon

[m] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 6.

enough to free them from the obligation they otherwise would have been under, to have given him the sheets and changes of raiment agreed unto: *what is sweeter than honey?* nothing, at least that was known, sugar not being invented. Julian the emperor[n], in commendation of figs, shews, from various authors, that nothing is sweeter than they, excepting honey: *and what is stronger than a lion?* no creature is, it is the strongest among beasts, Prov. xxx. 30. Homer[o] gives the epithet of strong to a lion: *and he said unto them, if ye had not ploughed with my heifer;* meaning his wife, whom he compares to an heifer, young, wanton, and unaccustomed to the yoke[p]; and by *ploughing* with her, he alludes to such creatures being employed therein, making use of her to get the secret out of him, and then plying her closely to obtain it from her; and this diligent application and search of theirs, by this means to inform themselves, was like ploughing up ground; they got a discovery of that which before lay hid, and without which they could never have had the knowledge of, as he adds: *ye had not found out my riddle;* the explanation of it. Ben Gersom and Abarbinel interpret ploughing of committing adultery with her; in which sense the phrase is used by Greek and Latin writers[q]; but the first sense is best, for it is not said, *ploughed my heifer*, but with her.

Ver. 19. *And the spirit of the Lord came upon him,* &c.] The spirit of might from the Lord, as the Targum; which filled him with zeal and courage, animating him to the following undertaking, and increased his bodily strength to perform it: *and he went down to Ashkelon;* one of the five principal cities of the Philistines; it lay near the Mediterranean sea, and, according to Bunting[r], was 24 miles from Timnath; why he went so far, is not easy to say; some think there was some grand solemnity or festival observed there at this time, which he knew of, when persons put on their best suits of apparel, and such he wanted: *and slew 30 men of them;* in vindication of which, it may be observed, that Samson was now raised up of God to be judge of Israel; and that he acted now as such, and under the direction and impulse of the spirit of God, and the persons he slew were the common enemies of Israel; and if now observing a festival in honour of their gods, they were justly cut off for their idolatry: *and took their spoil;* their clothes off their backs, stripped them of their apparel, and even of their shirts, all which he brought away with him; and here it may be observed, that though Samson was a Nazarite, yet not a common one, and was an extraordinary person, and not in all things bound to the law of the Nazarites; at least that law was dispensed with in various instances relative to him, as taking honey out of the carcass of the lion, and here stripping dead bodies which were defiling, and other things; *and gave change of garments unto them which expounded the riddle;* to the 30 companions, to whom it was proposed, each man a suit of apparel taken from the 30 men he slew at Ashkelon, and sheets or shirts also no doubt, though not expressed. Indeed some have thought, because they did not find out the riddle of themselves, he did not give them the whole premium, and that by their own consent: *and his anger was kindled;* against his wife, for her treachery and unfaithfulness to him, and against his companions for their deceitful usage of him, and against the citizens of the place, who perhaps laughed at him, being thus tricked and deceived: *and he went up to his father's house;* left his wife, and her relations, and his companions, and the men of Timnath, and betook himself to his father's house again, as if he had been never married; his parents very probably had returned before him.

Ver. 20. *But Samson's wife was given to his companion,* &c.] By her father, and with her consent, both being affronted and provoked by Samson leaving her, who judged her not only to be injured, but hereby discharged from him, and free to marry another: *and whom he had used as his friend;* though there were 30 of them that were his companions, yet there was one of them that was the principal of them, and was the most intimate with him, whom he used in the most friendly manner, and admitted to a more free conversation than the rest, the same that is called the friend of the bridegroom, John iii. 29. whilst the others were called the children of the bride-chamber, Matt. ix. 15. It is not unlikely that this person had too much intimacy with Samson's wife before, and so had the secret of the riddle from her, and so very readily married her, as soon as Samson departed; and all this furnished out an occasion and opportunity, which Samson sought for, to be revenged on the Philistines, as in the following chapter.

CHAP. XV.

THIS chapter relates, that Samson being denied his wife, did by a strange stratagem burn the corn-fields, vineyards, and olives of the Philistines, ver. 1—5. and that because of their burning her and her father, he made a great slaughter of them, ver. 6—8. which brought the Philistines against the men of Judah, who took Samson and bound him, to deliver him to the Philistines, when he, loosing himself, slew a thousand of them with the jaw-bone of an ass, ver. 9—17. and being athirst, God in a wonderful manner supplied him with water, ver. 18—20.

Ver. 1. *But it came to pass within a while after,* &c.] Or *after days,* a year after, the same phrase as in ch. xiv. 8. *in the time of wheat-harvest;* which began at Pentecost, as barley-harvest did at the passover; this circumstance is mentioned for the sake of the follow-

[n] Opera, par. 2. epist. 24.
[o] Odyss. 4. ver. 336.
[p] Vid. Horat. Carmin. l. 2. ode 5. Graja Juvenca venit. Ovid. ep. 5. ver. 117.
[q] Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 41. col. 466.
[r] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 116.

ing piece of history: *that Samson visited his wife with a kid*: by this time his passion of anger subsided, and he *remembered* his wife, as the Targum expresses it, and thought proper to return to her, and attempt a reconciliation with her; and for that purpose took a kid with him to eat a meal with her in her own apartment, which in those days was reckoned an elegant entertainment, and was a present to a king, 1 Sam. xvi. 20. Isidore [s] derives the Latin word for a kid, *ab edendo*, from eating, as if it was food by way of eminency, as it is both savoury and wholesome: *and he said, I will go with my wife into the chamber*; where she was, as women had their chambers and apartments by themselves; this he said within himself, or resolved in his own mind, and perhaps expressed it in her father's hearing, or however moved that way, which plainly indicated his design: *but her father would not suffer him to go in*; placed himself perhaps between him and the door, and parleyed with him, and declared he should not go into his daughter's chamber; Samson, through his superior strength, could easily have pushed him away, and broke open the door, but he did not choose to use such violent methods, and patiently heard what he had to say, and submitted.

Ver. 2. *And her father said, I verily thought that thou hadst utterly hated her*, &c.] Not only thought so, but said so, and had said it over and over again; for the words are, *saying I said* [t], affirmed it confidently and constantly, that *in hating thou hast hated her* [u], with an implacable hatred, that there was no hope of any reconciliation: *therefore I gave her to thy companion*: this he said to excuse his daughter, and soften his resentment, that it was not his daughter's doing, but his, and that he had disposed of her not to any body, but to a companion of Samson's; and what follows seems to be said with the same view, for he might be in some fear of Samson, knowing him to be a man of spirit and strength: *is not her younger sister fairer than she? take her, I pray thee, instead of her*; that is, to wife; and two things he observes to recommend her, her youth and beauty, in which she was preferable to her sister. Such incestuous marriages were common with the old Canaanites, and it seems still continued; but were condemned by the law of God, and not allowed an Israelite, which Samson knew full well, and therefore listened not to the proposal; see Lev. xviii. 3, 18.

Ver. 3. *And Samson said concerning them*, &c.] His wife's father, and other relations, and the citizens of Timnath; this, which is what follows, he said either within himself respecting them, or he said it to them openly and publicly before them all: *now shall I be more blameless than the Philistines, though I do them a displeasure*: signifying, that if he did them an ill thing, or what might be reckoned an injury to their persons or properties, and which would be disagreeable and displeasing to them, they could not justly blame him for it, since they had given him such a provocation as to dispose of his wife to another man; though Samson did not mean to act, nor did he act in the following instances as a private person taking private revenge, but as a public person, and judge of Israel; and took occasion, from the private injuries done him, to avenge the public ones of the children of Israel upon the Philistines; and they might thank themselves for giving the opportunity, which they could not justly condemn him for taking.

Ver. 4. *And Samson went and caught* 300 *foxes*, &c.] Nor should this be thought at all incredible, since Canaan and Palestine abounded with foxes; hence several places therein had their names of Shual, which signifies a fox, Josh. xv. 28. and xix. 3, 42. 1 Sam. xiii. 17. A traveller [w] in those parts says that foxes swarm there, and that there are very great numbers of them in the hedges, and ruins of buildings: and these creatures were very pernicious to vines, and so may reasonably be thought to be about Timnath in great numbers, because of the vineyards there, ch. xiv. 5. see Cant. ii. 15. besides, there is no necessity of supposing that Samson took all these himself, he might employ others in catching them for him, nor that he took them at the same time, on one and the same day: he might be many days and weeks about it, and keep them up until he had got his number: to which may be added, there was a creature in those parts very much like a fox, called Thoes, which, as Bellonius [x] says, were about Cæsarea and Palestina, and go 200 in company; and so making use of proper means, which Samson was not unacquainted with, great numbers might be taken together; but, above all, it may be observed, that as this was under the direction of the divine Providence, God could easily cause such a number of creatures to be gathered together, and taken, as he ordered all the living creatures, as by an instinct, to come into the ark to Noah: *and he took fire-brands*; or rather torches, made of oily and resinous matter, which were not easily extinguished: *and turned tail to tail*; took two foxes, and tied their tails together with a cord, giving them room enough to run about, as such creatures do, not forward, but in a crooked, flexuous manner, here and there: *and put a fire-brand in the midst between two tails*: which torch seems to have been fastened to the cord with which the tails were tied; he did not put a fire-brand or torch to the tail of every single fox, which then would have made its way to its own den, but between two, which could not enter into one hole, and would draw different ways, and stop each other, and so do greater execution in fields and vineyards into which they came.

Ver. 5. *And when he had set the brands on fire*, &c.] Disposed as before related; and foxes being naturally fearful of, and frighted with fire, and especially so near them as at their tails, would run into the first place they could for shelter: *he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines*: which being ripe, as it was now wheat-harvest, would soon take fire; and taking fire, this would in course cause the foxes to run still further to other parts of standing corn, and set fire to them also; besides, it is reasonable to suppose that Samson did not let them go all at once on one spot, but disposed of them, some here, and some there, to do the greater and more speedy execution: *and burnt*

[s] Origin. l. 12. c. 1. p. 101.
[t] אמר אמרתי dicendo dixi, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.
[u] שנא שנאתה odiendo odires eam, Pagninus, Montanus; so Piscator.

[w] Morrison's Voyage, l. 2. c. 31. apud Calmet in the word *Fox*.
[x] L. 2. c. 11. apud Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 476.

up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and *olives*; for as it was in the time of harvest, in some places the corn was standing, and in other places it was cut down, and put into shocks or heaps; and to these the foxes would naturally run to shelter themselves, and so set fire to them, as well as they would make their way to the vineyards or oliveyards, either for shelter also, or for the sake of the grapes and olives, to satisfy their hunger, after having been detained long for this purpose; and thus by one means or another they destroyed the corn, the vines, and olives of the Philistines in those parts. Some would have it, in order to shun the difficulties objected by the enemies of revelation, that the word for *foxes* should be rendered *sheaves* or shocks of corn, set end to end [y], which the word for *tail* is said to signify; and fire-brands or torches being set on fire, communicated it to standing corn, shocks of corn, vineyards, and oliveyards; but there is no need to put such a sense upon the words, as already observed; nor is the word translated *foxes* ever used in Scripture in any form for *sheaves* or shocks of corn, but always others; nor in any Jewish writings, nor in the sister dialects, Arabic, Chaldee, or Ethiopic; and in any place of Scripture where it is translated *fox* or *foxes*, should the word *sheaves* or *shocks* be put, the sense would appear most ridiculous; nor is the word for *tail* ever used in Scripture, in a literal sense, but for the tail of a living creature; nor is the wood for *took* or *caught* ever used of taking any thing in common, but either of taking men or cities by force, or of creatures in nets, traps, and snares: and the sense which such a version of the words would give is not only contrary to the Hebrew text, and to the Chaldee paraphrase, but to all the ancient versions, Arabic, Syriac, Septuagint, and Vulgate Latin, and to Josephus. The memory of this great event was kept up, or a custom borrowed from it, as some learned men have observed in the Vulpinaria of the Romans, mentioned by Ovid [z], and others, which bore a great resemblance to this, and which was observed at the same time of the year, about the middle of April, or calends of May; which exactly agrees with the time of wheat-harvest in Palestine; when in the Circus they used to send out foxes with burning torches fixed to their backs. Nor need this affair of Samson's seem more strange or incredible than the great number of creatures brought into the Circus at Rome, to be seen there together. Sylla first introduced 100 lions, after him Pompey the great 300, and Julius Cæsar, when he was dictator, 400, as Pliny [a] relates. Probus [b] sent into the amphitheatre at one time, which he made like a wood full of trees, 1,000 ostriches, a like number of harts, does, boars, and other creatures each; and at another time 100 lions, as many lionesses and leopards each, and 300 bears; Heliogabalus [c] got together 1,000 weasels, 10,000 mice, 10,000 weight of spiders and flies.

Ver. 6. *Then the Philistines said, who hath done this?* &c.] They asked and inquired one of another, who they thought could be the author of such mischief: *and they answered, Samson, the son-in-law of the Timnite*: this they said either by conjecture, which might be the case of some; and others more confidently asserted it, having heard what he said, ver. 3. and they assign a very good reason for it, *because he had already taken away his wife, and given her to his companion*, which had provoked him to do such an action as this; and perhaps the very same persons that were very well pleased before that Samson was so served, yet now were full of wrath and indignation at the Timnite, having suffered so much in their property on his account: *and the Philistines came up, and burnt her and her father with fire*; Josephus [d] says, her and her relations; they set fire to her father's house, where she was, and burnt them both in it, whereby that evil came upon her she thought to avoid by getting the secret of the riddle out of Samson, and telling it to his companion, ch. xiv. 15. and suffered the proper punishment for her adultery; the people that did this were those that lived in the towns adjacent, from whence they came up to Timnath, whose fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, had been destroyed by the foxes with their fire-brands.

Ver. 7. *And Samson said unto them*, &c.] After they had burnt his wife and her father in their dwelling-house, by which they thought to appease him, being afraid of him: *though ye have done this, yet will I be avenged of you*: not for burning his wife and father-in-law; his sense is, that though they had done this, in order to ingratiate themselves with him, yet he should not stop on this account, but be avenged on them, not for private injuries done to him, or any that had been in connexion with him, but for public injuries done to Israel, and their oppression of them: *and after that I will cease*: when he had taken full vengeance on them, and not before.

Ver. 8. *And he smote them hip and thigh with a great slaughter*, &c.] Either smote them on their hips and thighs with his hands (for it does not appear he had any weapon of war), so that they were sadly bruised, and maimed, and lamed, that they could not stir, and of which blows and bruises multitudes died: or he smote them with his legs on their thighs, kicked them about at pleasure, which kicks numbers of them never got over; or the meaning of the proverbial expression is, he laid on them at a great rate, and smote them here and there, and any where, which issued in the death of many of them: the Targum is, "he smote "them horse and foot," their cavalry and infantry, destroyed them both; but it does not appear that they came out in an hostile manner unto him, and much less in the form of a regular army: *and he went down and dwelt in the top of the rock Etam*. Josephus says [e], that Samson having slain many in the fields of the Philistines, went and dwelt at Etam, a strong rock in the tribe of Judah; and which agrees with 2 Chron. xi. 6. where mention is made of the city Etam, along with Beth-lehem and Tekoah, cities in that tribe, which had its name either from this rock, or the rock from that. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions

[y] Observ. Halens. apud Stockium in voc. שׁעל, p. 1126. & Hardtius apud Marck. Dissertat. Philolog. Exercitat. 5. sect. 7. p. 196.
[z] Fasti, l. 4. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 5. c. 26.
[a] Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16.
[b] Vopiscus in Vita Probi.
[c] Ib. in Vita ejus.
[d] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 7.
[e] Ibid. sect. 8.

read, "in a cave of the rock of Etam;" and the Syriac and Arabic versions, in Sahaph, which is on the rock of Etam, as if Sahaph was the name of a city there; hither Samson went, not through fear, or for safety, but to wait for another opportunity of further avenging the injuries of Israel on the Philistines.

Ver. 9. *Then the Philistines went up,* &c.] From Palestine, which lay low on the shore of the Mediterranean sea: *and pitched in Judah*; in the land of Judea, which lay higher, particularly in the tribe of Judah, whither they came with an army, and encamped there: *and spread themselves in Lehi*; their forces were so many, that they extended a considerable way, and particularly reached to Lehi, that is, which was afterwards so called; for it has its name by anticipation from the jaw-bone, which it signifies, with which Samson slew many in this place, as after related.

Ver. 10. *And the men of Judah said,* &c.] To the Philistines, very probably by a deputation, which they sent unto them, to know the reason of this formidable appearance: *why are ye come up against us?* in this hostile manner, with such a number of forces, since they were not conscious to themselves that they had done any thing to disoblige them; they had not attempted to cast off their yoke, they quietly submitted to their government, and had paid their whole tribute, as Josephus[r] represents them saying; they could not imagine what should be the meaning of all this: *and they answered, to bind Samson are we come up*; that is, to oblige them to bind him, and deliver him into their hands: *to do to him as he hath done to us*: to put him to death, as he had slain many of their people in the last rencounter with them.

Ver. 11. *Then 3,000 men of Judah went up to the top of the rock of Etam,* &c.] Or *went down*[s]; that is, into the cave of the rock of Etam, as the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; and so it is taken by David de Pomis[t] for a cave dug in the rock: this was a large number that went to take one man; the reason is, they knew his great strength: *and said to Samson, knowest thou not that the Philistines are rulers over us?* and therefore it must be a very unwise thing to disoblige and provoke them, when it lay in their power to oppress them yet more and more, to increase their tribute, and make their burdens heavier, and even take away their lives: *what is this that thou hast done unto us?* they ask not what he had done to them, but unto us; though they mean that, but express themselves thus, because what he had done to the Philistines was the occasion of their coming up against them, and so eventually it was doing them ill: *and he said unto them, as they did unto me, so have I done to them*: they had done him ill, and therefore he did ill to them; they had burnt his wife and her father with fire, and he had slain many of them; at least this was what he thought fit to say in his own vindication; otherwise what he did was not in a way of private revenge, but on account of the injury done to the people of Israel, he taking what was done to them as done to himself, the chief magistrate and judge of Israel.

Ver. 12. *And they said unto him, we are come down to bind thee,* &c.] That is, they were come down into the cave where he was; otherwise more properly they were come up to the top of the rock: *that we may deliver thee into the hands of the Philistines*; they own what was their intention in binding him, and what put them upon it was not ill will to him, but fear of the Philistines: *and Samson said unto them, swear unto me that ye will not fall upon me yourselves*; which shews he did not fear them, though they were 3,000; and that if they attempted to take away his life, he should defend himself, but he chose not to shed the blood of any of them; and rather than they should come into any distress through the Philistines, consented to be bound by them, and delivered into their hands; in which he was a type of Christ, who was betrayed by the Jews, and delivered by them into the hands of the Romans; and though he could have delivered himself by his great strength, would not, but suffered himself to be taken and bound, and given into the hands of his enemies, that his own people might go free; see John xviii. 4—12.

Ver. 13. *And they spake unto him, saying, no,* &c.] They declared they would not fall upon him themselves and slay him; nor would the Jews put Christ to death themselves, though they were virtually his betrayers and murderers, John xviii. 31. *but we will bind thee fast, and deliver thee into their hands*; as the Jews did Christ, and not only delivered him bound to the high-priest, but also to the Roman governor, Matt. xxvii. 2. *but surely we will not kill thee*: not with their own hands, but then they proposed to deliver him into the hands of the Philistines, from whence nothing but death could be expected; so that had they put him to death, they would have been accessory to it, as the Jews were to the death of Christ, by delivering him to the Gentiles, and are charged with it, Acts ii. 23, 36. *and they bound him with two new cords*: not with one only, lest it should not be sufficient to hold him, knowing his strength, but with two, and these not old worn-out ones, but new ones just made, and very strong; and, as Joseph Kimchi, noted by Ben Melech, were trebled, or made of three cords or thongs, for greater security; and of flax, as the following verse intimates, and such are most firm and strongest to hold any thing; hence nets were made of flax to hold creatures in, fish, fowl, or beasts[u]: *and brought him up from the rock*; the place, as Kimchi says, where the men of Judah dwelt, being higher than the rock; though rather the true sense is, they brought him up out of the cave in the rock.

Ver. 14. *And when he came unto Lehi,* &c.] The place which was afterwards so called, from what happened there at this time, and where the Philistines were spread, ver. 9. this, according to Bunting[x], was six miles from Etam: *the Philistines shouted against him*: for joy that they had got him into their hands, and in the circumstances he was, being bound, so that they had nothing to fear from him: *and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him*; as it at times did, and had done before; the Targum is, "the spirit of "might from the Lord," which gave him courage and

[r] Ut supra.
[s] וירדו & descenderunt, Pagninus, Montanus; descenderunt ergo, V. L. Tigurine version.

[t] Tzemach David, fol. 112. 2.
[u] Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 19. 1.
[x] Travels, p. 116.

resolution of mind, and great strength of body, even more than he had at other times: *and the cords that were upon his arms became as flax that was burnt with fire*: as easily parted as the flax when fire takes it, which is consumed at once: *and his bonds loosed off from his hands*: by which it appears that both arms and hands were bound with the cords; his arms were pinioned close to his body, as well as his hands were tied together; and these, as in the original, *melted away*[l], like wax before the fire, or snow before the sun; so easily were these bands separated from him; this may be an emblem of Christ's loosing himself from the cords of death, Acts ii. 24.

Ver. 15. *And he found a new jaw-bone of an ass*, &c.] That is, the jaw-bone of an ass lately killed, which perhaps had some of the flesh upon it, the blood or purulent matter on it; for Jarchi says, he had read in the books of physicians, that the word here used signifies the sanies or purulent matter of a wound; however, it was moist, and fresh, and so tough and strong, and would bear to strike with, and give hard blows with, when an old jaw-bone would have been dry and brittle; and perhaps the asses of those countries were larger than ours, and so their jaw-bones bigger and stronger: *and put forth his hand and took it*: it lay near him, being so disposed by the providence of God at the time and place where his cords were loosed from him, and he reached and took it up: *and slew 1,000 men therewith*; such was his great strength, that every blow he gave in all probability killed a man; there have been wonderful things done by mighty warriors, but none like this; they have by the use of warlike weapons destroyed many, as with the sword or spear, but not with such an instrument. One of David's worthies slew 300 men at one time with his spear, 1 Chron. xi. 11, and Scanderbeg with his sword slew great numbers of the Turks with his own hand at different times; what comes nearest to this is Shamgar's killing 600 Philistines with an ox-goad, ch. iii. 31. this may be an emblem of the weak and contemptible means of the Gospel, the foolishness of preaching, by which Christ has conquered and subdued multitudes to himself.

Ver. 16. *And Samson said*, &c.] In a kind of triumphant song: *with the jaw-bone of an ass, heaps upon heaps*; that is, with such an instrument he had slain heaps of men, who lay dead in heaps upon one another; in the words for an *ass*, and for an *heap*, is an elegant *paronomasia*, not easy to be expressed in our language: *with the jaw of an ass have I slain 1,000 men*; this he said not in a proud and haughty manner, ascribing it to himself, as Josephus suggests[m], since he takes notice of the mean instrument he used; which shewed that he was sensible it was not done by his own power, but by the power of God, which enabled him by such weak means to do such wonderful things.

Ver. 17. *And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking*, &c.] Of delivering out the above song, which very probably consisted of much more than what is here expressed: *that he cast away the jaw-bone out of his hand*; which he held in his hand while he was speaking, as a token of the wonders God had wrought by him through the means of it, and so served to animate him to praise and thankfulness; but having no further use for it, he threw it away: *and called the place Ramath-lehi*; that is, the casting away the jaw-bone, so Kimchi; but Ben Gersom thinks it was an high place where it was thrown, and so signifies the elevation or lifting up of the *jaw-bone*, as the Septuagint version renders it.

Ver. 18. *And he was sore athirst*, &c.] Which Josephus[n] thinks came upon him as a rebuke unto him, for ascribing the victory he had obtained to his own strength, and not to the Lord, whereby he was shewn his own weakness, and how easily his strength could be reduced; but for this there seems to be no foundation; it is not to wondered at, in a natural way, that he should be athirst after he had been bound with cords, after he had so exerted himself, and slain 1,000 men with his own hand, and after he had celebrated this victory with a triumphant song; and it may also be observed, that it was so ordered in Providence, that he might in this be a type of the Messiah, who on the cross, as he was spoiling principalities and powers, and triumphing over them in it, said, *I thirst*, John xix. 28. *and called on the Lord, and said*; in prayer to him: *thou hast given this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant*; he owns the deliverance to be great, as indeed it was, and that it was of the Lord, and he only his servant and instrument in it: *and now shall I die for thirst*; when my life has been saved in so wonderful a manner, and so great a salvation has been wrought by my hands, as an instrument: *and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?* which would be matter of joy and triumph to them, and mar the glory of the deliverance wrought.

Ver. 19. *And God clave an hollow place that was in the jaw, and there came water thereout*, &c.] A socket in which was fastened one of the teeth, and was in the form of a mortar; so Jarchi and Ben Melech, as the word for an hollow place signifies; one of the grinders was knocked out, and so the place where it had been was left hollow, and out of that sprung a stream or flow of water; which was very wonderful, since out of such a place rather blood, or purulent matter, would naturally have issued; the Targum is, "the Lord "clave the rock which was in the jaw;" which Kimchi interprets thus, the rock was under the jaw, and the rock was made as a hollow place, and therefore they call it *mactes*, a mortar: the sense seems to be this, that the place on which Samson cast the jaw-bone was a rock, and there God clave an hollow place, out of which water sprung, and which perhaps was under the jaw-bone, and sprung under it, and through it; and so Josephus says[o], that God at his prayer brought a sweet and large fountain out of a certain rock; and the words of the text will bear to be rendered, *and God clave an hollow place, which is in Lehi*; that is, in the place called Lehi, ver. 9, 14. and not in the jaw-bone itself: *and when he had drank, his spirit came again, and he revived*; his spirit was sunk and gone, as it were, but upon drinking a draught of this

[l] ימסו diffluxerunt, Tigurine version; liquefacta sunt, Piscator.
[m] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.

[n] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 9.
[o] Ibid.

water he was refreshed and cheered, recovered his spirits, and became brisk and lively: *wherefore he called the name thereof En-hakkore;* that is, "the fountain "of him that was calling;" of Samson that called upon God in prayer, and was heard, in memory of which he gave it this name; so the Targum, "there-"fore its name was called the fountain that was given "through the prayer of Samson:" *which is in Lehi unto this day:* or in the jaw-bone: not that the jaw-bone continued unto the time of the writer of this book, but the name of the place where this miracle was wrought, which was in Lehi, continued to be called En-hakkore unto that time, and it may be the fountain itself continued also; nay, Glycas[p] says, who lived but about 600 years ago, that the fountain continued unto his time, and was to be seen in the suburbs of Eleutheropolis, and was called the fountain of the jaw-bone.

Ver. 20. *And he judged Israel in the days of the Philistines 20 years.*] Whilst they had the power over the Israelites, who were not entirely delivered out of their hands by Samson, he only began to deliver them, but did not completely do it; though he got many advantages over them, and wrought many salvations and deliverances, yet was not the author of perfect salvation, see ch. xiii. 5. however, he was a check upon the Philistines, and protected the Israelites from heavier oppressions, which otherwise they would have come under; and no doubt administered justice and judgment among them, and was an instrument of their reformation, and of preserving them from idolatry; for in such things the work of a judge chiefly lay: some from hence observe, that this shews the years of servitude and bondage are included in the years of the judges.

CHAP. XVI.

IN this chapter we have an account of Samson's too great familiarity with two harlots; by the one he was brought into great danger, and narrowly escaped, ver. 1—3. and by the other he was betrayed into the hands of the Philistines, having got the secret out of him wherein his great strength lay, ver. 4—20. who having him in their hands, put out his eyes, imprisoned him, and in their idol-temple made sport of him, ver. 21—25. where praying for renewed strength from the Lord, he pulled down the temple, and destroyed multitudes with the loss of his own life, ver. 26—31.

Ver. 1. *Then went Samson to Gaza,* &c.] One of the five principalities of the Philistines, which was 10 miles from Ashkelon, as Sandys[q] says; who also describes[r] it as standing upon an hill environed with valleys, and these again well nigh enclosed with hills, most of them planted with all sorts of delicate fruits; and, according to Bunting[s], 42 miles from Ramath-lehi, the place where we last hear of him, see the notes on Amos i. 6. and on Zeph. ii. 4. what he went hither for is not easy to say; it shewed great boldness and courage, after he had made such a slaughter of the Philistines, to venture himself in one of their strongest cities, where he must expect to be exposed to danger; though it is highly probable this was a long time after his last rencounter with them: *and saw there an harlot, and went in unto her;* the Targum renders it an innkeeper, one that kept a victualling-house; so Kimchi, Ben Gersom, and Ben Melech interpret it; into whose house he went for entertainment and lodging, and very probably in the dusk of the evening; and the woman that kept this house might herself be an harlot, or, however, Samson saw one in her house, with whom he was captivated, and went in unto her, or had criminal conversation with her; it seems as if he did not turn in thither with any such wicked design, but on sight of the person was insnared to commit lewdness with her; and, as Lyra says, there were many hostesses in some places, and so here, who too easily prostituted themselves to their guests.

Ver. 2. And it was told *the Gazites,* &c.] The inhabitants of Gaza, the principal ones of it, the magistrates of the city, either by some persons that saw him come in, who knew him, or by the harlot into whose company he fell, to whom he made himself known: *saying, Samson is come hither;* the man so famous for his strength, and such an enemy to the Philistines; his name was well known for his great exploits, and rung throughout Palestine, and was a terror to the whole country: *and they compassed him in;* not that they surrounded the house where he was, which perhaps they might not certainly know, but they secured all the avenues and gates of the city, made them fast, and placed guards there, that he might not escape their hands: *and laid wait for him all night in the gate;* particularly at that gate, where, if he went out for his country, he must pass: *and were quiet all the night;* did not attempt to disturb Samson, or seize on him, if they knew where he was; knowing his great strength, and what a tumult might be raised in the city, they said nothing of it to any body that passed, what they were placed there for, lest it should come to his ears; they made as if they were deaf and dumb, as some interpret it, and heard and knew nothing: *saying, in the morning, when it is day, we shall kill him:* when they should better know him, and make sure their blow at him, and do it suddenly, unawares to him, as he came to the gate, to pass through it.

Ver. 3. *And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight,* &c.] Either not being able to lie any longer through the conviction of his conscience for his lewdness, or being warned by a dream, or having an impulse upon his spirit, which suggested to him that wait was laid for him, and the danger he was in; and

[p] Annal. par. 2. p. 164. apud Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. p. 872.
[q] Travels, l. 3. p. 118.
[r] Travels, l. 3. p. 116.
[s] Ut supra.

coming to the gate of the city, which he found shut and fast barred and bolted, and the watch perhaps asleep, not expecting his coming until day-light: *and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all*; did not stand to break open the doors of the gate, but took the two side-posts up, on which the folding-doors of the gate were hung, out of the ground in which they were fastened, with the bar which went across the doors for the security of them: *and carried them up to the top of an hill that* is *before Hebron*; if this hill was near Hebron, as the words thus read seem to intimate, he must carry the gates 20 miles upon his shoulders, for so far was Hebron from Gaza; so Josephus says it was over Hebron; but according to Adrichomius[t], it was near Gaza, looking towards Hebron; and so Sandys says[u], in the valley, on the east side of the city, are many straggling buildings, beyond which there is a hill more eminent than the rest, on the north side of the way that leads to Babylon, said to be that to which Samson carried the gates of the city. It is very probable, as some think, that it was between Gaza and Hebron, in sight of both cities, which may be meant by the phrase *before*, or *on the face of*; being so high might be seen as far as Hebron, as well as at Gaza. This was an emblem of Christ's resurrection, of whom Samson was a type, who being encompassed in a sepulchre, and sealed and watched by soldiers, broke through the bars of death and the grave, and carried off the doors in triumph; and in a short time ascended to heaven, whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God with power. It was usual for doors and bars of gates to be carried in triumph, and laid up in temples[w]; and the Jews say these doors were not less than 60 cubits, and suppose Samson's shoulders to be as broad[x].

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass afterwards, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek*, &c.] Which, according to Adrichomius[y], was but half a mile from the brook Eshcol, from whence the spies brought a bunch of grapes, as a specimen of the fruit of the land of Canaan; and this valley of Sorek seems to have been famous for the best wine, and hither Samson retired for refreshment and pleasure; but, according to Jerom[z], it was on the north of Eleutheropolis, where, he says, was shewn a village in his time called Caphar-sorech, near the village Zorah, from whence Samson was; and Bunting[a] makes it to be 12 miles from Hebron, and 12 from Jerusalem; where he met with a woman he loved; whether she was an Israelite, or one of the daughters of the Philistines, they now being the rulers of Israel, is not said; most likely the latter, as say Ben Gersom and Abarbinel, since the lords of the Philistines were so intimate with her, and were entertained in her house, and she shewed more respect to them than to Samson. The Jews say she became a proselyte, but if she did, there is very little evidence of her being a sincere one: some have thought, that the courtship to her was a lawful conjugal love; that falling in love with her, he courted and married her; but this is not very likely, since no mention is made of his marriage to her, nor did he take her home, but dwelt in her house: it rather seems to be an impure and unlawful love he had to her, and that she was an harlot, as Josephus[b]; and all her conduct and behaviour confirm the same: *whose name was Delilah*; the Jews say[c] she was so called because she weakened the heart and spirit of Samson, and weakened his strength, and weakened his works; and therefore, if this had not been her name, they say it was one very proper for her.

Ver. 5. *And the lords of the Philistines came up unto her*, &c.] Having heard that Samson kept company with her, she being a noted strumpet, like Lais among the Grecians. These were in number five, as appears from ch. iii. 3. and had under them five principalities, into which Palestine was divided; and these, if not united in their government, which possibly might be the case at this time, yet were united against their common enemy Samson; and being great personages, it is thought by some they came not themselves to this harlot's house, but sent a deputation of five persons in their names, though the text is very express here and after: they are said to come up to her, because their country lay on the shore of the sea, and lower than Judea: *and said unto her, entice him*; persuade him with soothing and flattering words; take an opportunity when in an amorous mood to improve her interest in his affections: *and see wherein his great strength lieth*; for it might not appear by the bigness of his body, or from his natural constitution, and in the common actions of life, but only at certain times, and as it should seem when he pleased; and he might have been heard to say that it was a secret he kept to himself, and no man knew it; or they might suspect something of magic in the case, that he carried something about him, which, if it could be got from him, would deprive him of his strength: *and by what* means *we may prevail against him, that we may bind him to afflict him*: to humble him, bring him low, and reduce him to the common condition of men: they did not propose to kill him, which they might think she would not agree to, and so reject their proposal at once, but at most to distress him, and to chastise him with mockings and scourgings, bonds and imprisonment, for the mischief he had indeed done them, and prevent him from doing more: *and we will give thee, every one of us*, 1,100 pieces *of silver*; or shekels; it may seem strange that they should promise each 1,100: some think their principalities offered each 1,000 shekels, and the princes themselves 100; but Abarbinel supposes that this was, on some account or another, in those times an usual sum or computation, since the same is mentioned in the following chapter; though it may be observed that these 5 several sums put together make a round number, 5,500 pieces of silver; which, taking them to be shekels, according to Waserus[d],

[t] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 133.
[u] Ut supra, p. 117.
[w] ——— sacris in postibus arma:
——— & portarum ingentia claustra. Virgil. Æneid. 7. ver. 185.
[x] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.
[y] Ut supra, p. 24.

[z] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. L.
[a] Travels, p. 116, 117.
[b] Ut supra, sect. 11.
[c] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 9. 2.
[d] De Antiquis Numis, l. 2. c. 5.

they amounted to 1,375 rix-dollars, and of Helvetian money 3,666 pounds, and a little more, and of our money near 700 pounds sterling: a considerable bribe, and very tempting to a person of such a character, and which she readily embraced, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 6. *And Delilah said to Samson,* &c.] At a proper opportunity, when in his cups and caresses, as Josephus relates[t], and introduced it in an artful manner, admiring his strange exploits, and wondering how he could perform them: *tell me, I pray thee, wherein thy great strength lieth*; which she proposed seemingly out of mere curiosity, and as it would be a proof of his affection to her, to impart the secret to her: *and wherewith thou mightest be bound to afflict thee*: not that she suggested to him that she was desirous to have him afflicted, or to try the experiment herself in order to afflict him, but to know by what means, if he was bound, it would be afflicting to him, so that he could not relieve himself; she knew he might be bound, if he would admit of it, as he had been, but she wanted to know how he might be bound, so as to be held, and could not loose himself.

Ver. 7. *And Samson said unto her,* &c.] In answer to her pressing solicitations: *if they bind me with seven green withs that were never dried*: the word is sometimes used for nerves, and cords or ropes; but neither of these can be here meant, since these, if moistened or made wet, are the less fit to bind with, and the drier the better; but rods or branches of trees just cut off, such as faggots are bound up with, or green osiers, which are easily bent and twisted, and may bind with: Josephus[u] calls them vine-branches: *then shall I be weak, and be as another man*: which can't well be excused from a lie; for Samson knew full well that being bound would not weaken his strength; but as he had fallen into one sin, it is no wonder he was drawn into another: unless this can be understood, as it is by some, as jesting with her; however, it shews that he was *compos mentis*, as Josephus[w] observes, and was upon his guard with respect to the secret of his strength.

Ver. 8. *Then the lords of the Philistines brought up to her,* &c.] To the chamber where she was with Samson, she having acquainted them with what he had told her: *seven green withs, which had not been dried*: just such as he had described and directed to: *and she bound him with them*: taking an opportunity, very likely, when he was asleep, and drunk too, according to Josephus[x]: the Philistines did not attempt to bind him, supposing that he would not admit them to do it, if aware of them; and they might fear, if asleep, he might awake before they could do it, and fall upon them and destroy them; but as for Delilah, if she had been found at it, she could have excused it as a piece of curiosity, being willing to try whether he told her truth or no.

Ver. 9. *Now there were men lying in wait,* &c.] Very likely some of the servants of the lords of the Philistines, who were placed privately on purpose, that when an opportunity offered, they might rush out, and fall upon Samson; Josephus[y] calls them soldiers: *abiding with her in the chamber*: in a private part of it, or otherwise they could not be said to lie in wait; *in* it may mean near it; perhaps it was in the next apartment to hers, where they were set: *and she said unto him, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson*: are just ready to fall upon thee, and seize thee; this she said to arouse him, and try whether he could break the withs or no, before she called in the men that lay in wait, and whether he had told her the truth or no: *and he brake the withs as a thread of tow is broken when it toucheth the fire*; or *smells* it[z]; as soon as it comes near it; a thread of tow or linen catches the fire presently, it being so weak that it can't stand before the least force of it; so easily did the withs give way, and were broken, when Samson did but just stir himself, and move his arms: *so his strength was not known*; by Delilah, nor by the Philistines; that is, where it lay, so as that it might be weakened; for otherwise it was known by the easy breaking of the withs.

Ver. 10. *And Delilah said unto Samson,* &c.] Not on the same day, but some time after, as Kimchi observes, when an opportunity offered, and he was in like circumstances as before; for had she immediately attacked him, it might have created some suspicion in him of a design against him: *behold, thou hast mocked me, and told me lies*: deceived her with lies, by telling her the other day that if he was bound with green withs, he should become as weak as other men; which she, out of curiosity as she might pretend, had tried, and had found to be false; and which, she might add, was an argument of want of true love to her, to mock her in such a manner: *now tell me, I pray thee, wherewith thou mightest be bound*, so as to be held.

Ver. 11. *And he said unto her,* &c.] Abarbinel represents Samson replying to her, that he had told her the truth at first, only forgot one circumstance, that the *cords*, for so he takes the word for *withs* to signify, should be *new*, such as were never used, as follows: *if they bind me fast with new ropes, that never were occupied*: the word signifies thick ropes, which, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, were trebled, or made of three cords twisted together, and those such as were just made, and had never been put to any use, and so strong and firm: *then shall I be weak, and be as another man*; see ver. 7.

Ver. 12. *Delilah therefore took new ropes, and bound him therewith,* &c.] Tried this experiment with him, according to his directions, being very desirous of getting the sum of money offered her: *and said unto him, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson*; using the same words, and with the same view as she had done before, ver. 9. *(and there were liers in wait abiding in the chamber)*; as before, ready upon occasion to rush in upon him, as soon as any notice was given them: *and he brake them from off his arms like a thread*; as easily as a thread of linen can be snapped asunder.

Ver. 13. *And Delilah said unto Samson,* &c.] At another time, when she thought it most proper to upbraid him with his deception of her: *hitherto thou hast*

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[t] Ut supra.
[u] Ut supra.
[w] Ibid.

[x] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 11.
[y] Ibid.
[z] בהריחו cum olfecerit, Drusius, so Piscator.

mocked me, and told me lies; both the times that she had solicited him to impart the secret of his strength to her: *tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound;* tell me the real truth, and deceive me no more: *and he said unto her, if thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web;* it seems that Samson's hair was parted into seven locks, which no doubt hung down very long; and now he tells her, that if these were interwoven with the warp which was upon the beam in a loom hard by; perhaps in the same room, where Delilah used to weave, as was the custom of those times, and in various nations [a]: his strength would be weakened; for Braunius [b] is mistaken in supposing this to be the beam about which the web was rolled, as he is also in the pin next mentioned, which he takes to be the *spatha*, or lathe, with which the threads are knocked together.

Ver. 14. *And she fastened it with the pin,* &c.] That is, after she had interwoven the locks of his hair into the warp, she fastened the beam on which it was with the pin, that it might not roll back; or else her machine or loom to the ground, that it might stand more firmly; or the web into which the hair was woven, with the hair itself; which of them is right, it is difficult to say: but if the addition of the Septuagint version can be admitted as genuine, which supplies some things which seem to be wanting, and which best agrees with what follows, the whole will be plain and easy, and which after the preceding verse runs thus; "and fastenest *them* with a pin to the wall, then shall "I be weak as another man; and it came to pass when "he slept, and Delilah took seven locks of his head, "and wove *them* in the web, and fastened them with a "pin to the wall;" and then it follows as here: *and said unto him, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson:* as she had twice before: *and he awaked out of his sleep;* in which he was during her weaving his locks into the web; and this makes it probable that he was in the same circumstances when she bound him both with withs and ropes, though it is not expressed: *and went away with the pin of the beam, and with the web:* carried off not the pin of the beam only, but the beam itself, and the warp on it, and the whole web into which his hair was woven. The Septuagint version is, he took the pin of the web out of the wall; and the Vulgate Latin, the pin with the hairs and web.

Ver. 15. *And she said unto him, how canst thou say, I love thee, when thine heart is not with me?* &c.] She took an opportunity, when he was caressing her, to upbraid him with dissembled love, and a false heart: *thou hast mocked me these three times;* she had urged him to tell her where his strength lay, and by what it might be weakened, first pretending it might be done by binding him with green withs, and then with new ropes, and a third time by weaving his locks into the web: *and hast not told me wherein thy great strength lieth;* the thing so frequently and so importunately requested.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him,* &c.] Lay at him day after day to communicate the secret to him, gave him no rest, but was incessant in her applications to him: so *that his soul was vexed unto death;* could hardly bear to live, but wished to die, being in the utmost perplexity what to do between two different passions, love and fear: on the one hand chained by his lust to this harlot, that was continually teasing him, and whom he had not an heart to leave, or otherwise that would have cleared him of his difficulties; and on the other hand, should he disclose the secret, he feared, and was in danger of losing his strength, in which his glory lay: or *his soul was shortened unto death* [c]; it was the means of shortening his days, and hastening his death. Abarbinel thinks that Samson was sensible of this, that his days were short, and the time of his death at hand; which made him the more willing to impart the secret. This may put in mind of the story of Milo, a man famous for his great strength, said to carry an ox upon his shoulders a furlong without breathing; of whom it is reported, that none of his adversaries could deliver themselves out of his hands, but his whore could, often contending with him; hence it is observed of him, that he was strong in body, but not of a manly soul [d]; and there are many other things said [e] of him concerning his great strength, which seem to be taken from this history of Samson.

Ver. 17. *That he told her all his heart,* &c.] All that was in his heart concerning this affair, all that he knew relating to it; he had told her something before, or at least what came nearer to the truth of the matter, when he directed her to the weaving of his locks into the web; but now he told her all, which is as follows: *and said unto her, there hath not come a razor upon mine head;* his head had never been shaved since he was born; which was the order of the angel that foretold his birth, and it had been carefully observed to that time: *for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb:* one condition of which, or what was enjoined a Nazarite, was, that he should not be shaved, and which had been religiously observed in Samson; and whereas abstinence from wine and strong drink was another part of the law of Nazariteship, or what such persons were obliged unto, what Josephus says concerning Samson being drunk in the above cases could not be true; since his Nazariteship would have been made void by it, and so have affected his strength: but it must be owned that there were other things Nazarites were obliged to, which were dispensed with, as has been observed in the case of Samson, a perpetual Nazarite; and therefore it is probable, that the principal thing he was to regard, and upon which his strength was continued, was not shaving his head: *if I be shaven, then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak, and be like any other man;* in which he says more than he ever did before, namely, that his strength should go from him; for though that did not arise from his hair, yet the keeping on of that was the condition of his retaining it.

Ver. 18. *And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart,* &c.] Which she perceived by his countenance, and the serious manner in which he expressed

[a] Argute conjux, &c. Virgil. Georgic. l. 1. v. 294. So Penelope in Homer, Minerva & Arachne in Ovid. Metamorph. l. 6. fab. 1. v. 55, &c. Vid. Pignorium de servis, p. 418. Braunium de Vest. Sacerd. Hebr. l. 1. c. 17. sect. 22.

[b] De Vest. Sacerd. Hebr. l. 1. c. 18. sect. 8.

[c] תקצר abbreviata est, Montanus, Drusius. So Munster.

[d] Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 24.

[e] Vid. Pausan. Eliac. 2. sive l. 6. p. 369.

himself; and Abarbinel conjectures that he might swear to her that what he said was truth; and who observes from their Rabbins, as does also Kimchi, that she concluded he had told her the truth, by his making mention of the name of God, saying he was a Nazarite unto God, whose name she knew he would not take in vain; and with the account he gave agreed the long hair he wore: *she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying, come up this once*; for it seems as if they were returned home, finding that she could do nothing with him, and was not able to get the secret out of him; but now, believing she had it, sends to them, and entreats them to come once more, being very desirous of having the money they had offered her: *for he hath shewed me all his heart*; there is a double reading of this clause; the Keri or marginal reading, which our version follows, is, *hath shewed me*, as being the words of Delilah to the lords of the Philistines; but the Cetib or textual reading is, *he hath shewed her*, as being the words of the messengers to them: *then the lords of the Philistines came up unto her*; that is, from their own country; for it can hardly be understood of their coming up into her room, or chamber; and especially since it follows, *and brought money in their hand*: 1,100 shekels of silver apiece, the sum they first proposed to give her; and now being pretty well assured of success, brought it along with them to pay her for the service done.

Ver. 19. *And she made him sleep upon her knees*, &c.] Giving him, as some think, a sleepy potion; or however encouraged him to take a nap upon her knees, and by her fondness lulled him to sleep: *and she called for a man*; a barber; in former times to shave was the work of a servant [f], and sometimes of a woman; she gave orders for one to be sent for; for Jarchi calls him a messenger of the lords of the Philistines: *and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head*; this shews that they were not wove into one another, and made but one lock, as some interpret what she was before directed to do: *and she began to afflict him*; as his hair was shaving off; though he was asleep, yet he discovered some uneasiness, the effects of it began to appear: though the word *began* here may be redundant, as in Numb. xxv. 1. Judg. xx. 40. and then the meaning is, that she afflicted him, or again afflicted him; for she had afflicted him, or at least attempted it, three times before, and therefore did not begin now; this Hebraism is used in Mark iv. 1. and frequently in Jewish writings [g]: *and his strength went from him*: sensibly and gradually; though some understand it of her shaking him in a violent manner to awake him, and shrieking and crying out terribly to affright him, with her old cry of the Philistines being on him, and of her binding him, though not expressed; whereby she perceived his strength was gone, and he could not loose himself.

Ver. 20. *And she said, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson*, &c.] In like manner as she had before, that she might have full proof that the case was really such, that his strength was gone from him: *and he awoke out of his sleep*; upon the cry she made: *and said*; within himself, purposing and determining in his own mind: *I will go out as at other times before*; as he had done at the three former times, and did not meet with any Philistines to fall upon him, and so concluded it would be the case now, and he, if he did, should be able to defend himself against them: *and shake myself*; that he might be thoroughly awake, and be on his guard and defence: *and he wist not that the Lord was departed from him*; might have forgot what he had told Delilah of, and knew not what had been done to him, that his hair was shaved off; or if he did, was not sensible that the Lord had removed from him; but might hope that he would renew his strength, when he should stand in need of it; but he soon found his mistake; he was quickly taken by the Philistines, and ill used, and in a little time lost his life. And from hence it is thought sprung the story of Nisus, king of the Megarenses, who is supposed to reign about this time; of whom it is reported [h], that the hair of his head was of a purple colour, and was told by the oracle, that so long as that was kept on he should be safe, but if it was shaved off he should die; and so it was, that when the Cretians besieged him, his daughter falling in love with Minos, the king of the Cretians, cut off her father's hair, and so both he and his country were delivered into the hands of the enemy.

Ver. 21. *But the Philistines took him*, &c.] Being assured by Delilah that his strength was gone from him, of which perhaps she had made trial by binding him, and found he could not free himself from the bonds till she loosed them; or otherwise they would have been afraid to have ventured to lay hold upon him: *and put out his eyes*; that should his strength return to him, he might not be able to see where and whom to strike, and so be incapable of doing much mischief any more; the word signifies, they *dug* or *bored them* [i] out; they plucked or cut out his eye-balls, so that it was impossible his sight should ever be recovered: according to the Arabic version, they blinded him by putting fire to his eyes; the Jews observe, that this was done in just retaliation, measure for measure; Samson, they say [k], went after his eyes; that is, by taking one harlot after another; therefore the Philistines put out his eyes: *and brought him down to Gaza*; which lay on the sea-coast, and therefore they are said to bring him down to it; here he had been before of his own will, now against it; here in one instance he had acted to his own shame, by going in to an harlot; and in another, to the shame and disgrace of the city, and the inhabitants of it, by carrying off their city-gates; through which they now brought him in triumph, in order to repair the dishonour done them: though, perhaps, the true reason of carrying him thither was, that he might be at the greater distance from the Israelites, should they think of rescuing him out of their hands; and especially because it was a very strong fortified city, it had its name from strength; hence Mela [l] calls it *Munita admodum Gaza*, and says, that when Cambyses made war in Egypt, he carried

[f] Vid. Pignorium de servis, p. 89, 90, 91. & Popma de servis, p. 47, 58.
[g] See Lightfoot. Hor. Heb. in Mark iv. 1. Vid. Sterringæ Animadv. Philolog. Sacr. p. 248.
[h] Pausaniæ Attica, sive, l. 1. p. 33. Ovid Metamorph. l. 8. Fab. 1.
[i] ויקרו effoderunt, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[k] Misn. Sotah. c. 1. sect. 8.
[l] De Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 11.

his wealth and money to this place: *and bound him with fetters of brass*; the Targum calls them chains of brass, and the word being of the dual number, it is probable there were two of them, with which he was bound for the greater security: *and he did grind in the prison-house*: the motion of mills by water or wind was as yet not invented, but it was usual, as it is still in the eastern countries, to grind with hand-mills, at which one or more worked; or with mills moved around by beasts or slaves, and was a work prisoners were employed in, Exod. xi. 5. and xii. 29. see Isa. xlvii. 1, 2. and Samson being a strong man, they might expect much service from him this way. The Talmudists[m] understand this in a criminal sense, as they do Job xxxi. 10. but this is justly rejected by Kimchi.

Ver. 22. *Howbeit, the hair of his head began to grow again after he was shaven.*] It began to grow immediately no doubt, as it naturally would do; but it is highly probable it grew in an extraordinary manner, and in a short time became *as when it was shaved*[n], as it may be rendered, and upon which his strength was renewed; not that his strength naturally lay in his hair, and so naturally increased as that grew; but he being made sensible of his sin, and repenting of it, renewed his Nazariteship, of which letting his hair grow was a token; and it pleased God, who accepted of his repentance as genuine, of his own good will and pleasure to renew his strength; particularly upon his prayer to him, after related.

Ver. 23. *Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together*, &c.] The five lords, with their friends, not directly upon Samson's being taken and committed to prison, but some time after; perhaps some months: *for to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon their god*: in aftertimes their god was called Marnas[o], which signifies the lord of men, but now Dagon; who also had a temple at Ashdod, another of the five principalities of the Philistines, 1 Sam. v. 2. and seems to have been at this time their common and chief deity: according to Jarchi in the place referred to, it was in the form of a fish, for *dag* in Hebrew signifies a fish; and Kimchi on the same place says, that from its navel upwards it was in the form of a man, and from thence downwards in the form of a fish[p]; and Diodorus Siculus[q] relates that Derceto, a goddess of Ascalon, another of the five principalities of Palestine, its face was human, and the other part of its body resembled a fish; and the same Lucian says of the Syrian goddess; and Cicero[r] testifies, that the Syrians worshipped a fish, and Porphyry[s] says they will not eat any; and Gaza being a maritime city, a sea-port, this might be their sea-god in this form: but Ben Gersom in the above place says, it was in the form of a man; and Sanchoniatho[t] making mention of Dagan, a brother of Saturn, Philo Byblius, who translated his history into Greek, interprets it by Siton, which signifies corn, deriving it from Dagan, which so signifies; as if this deity presided over corn, as Ceres in other nations, and Jupiter Frumentarius, or Aratrius; yea, he says he invented corn and the plough; however this be, the Philistine princes met together to sacrifice to him, not a common offering, but a great sacrifice. It is very probable that this was a public festival of the Philistines, as Josephus[u] says, an anniversary one; and perhaps was held in a more grand manner on the present occasion, since it is added, *and to rejoice; for they said, our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hands*; for though Samson's harlot had done it, and they had paid her for it, yet they attribute it to their god, such was their blindness and stupidity; and yet this may shame us believers in the true God, who are so backward to ascribe to him the great things he does for us, when such Heathens were so forward to give glory to their false deities, without any foundation for it.

Ver. 24. *And when the people saw him*, &c.] In the condition he was, blinded and fettered, of whom and of his great exploits they had heard so much: *they praised their god*; as Belshazzar did his, Dan. v. 4. in hymns and songs composed for them, the substance of which was as follows: *for they said, our god hath delivered into our hands our enemy, and the destroyer of our country*; as he had been, by tying fire-brands to the tails of 300 foxes, and letting them go into their corn-fields, vineyards, and oliveyards: *which slew many of us*; 30 men at Ashkelon, more at Timnath, and 1,000 with the jaw-bone of an ass at Lehi.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass when their hearts were merry*, &c.] With wine, for which Gaza is famous in many writers[w]; with eating and drinking, dancing, and music; for it was usual for the Heathens to feast in their temples, and especially no doubt they would on such an occasion as this: *and they said, call for Samson, that he may make us sport*; by which it seems that what is before said, *when the people saw him*, ver. 24. is said by anticipation; for as yet he was not in the temple, but in the prison; and therefore a motion was made by some of the great personages, that he might be fetched from thence, and they might have some diversion with him: *and they called for Samson out of the prison-house*; sent some messengers to fetch him from thence: *and he made them sport*; not actively, but passively; it cannot well be thought, that a man of so great a spirit as Samson was, and in such circumstances as he now was, would ever, either by words or gestures, do any thing on purpose to divert his enemies, and make them laugh; but he was the object of their sport and scorn, and he bore it patiently, their cruel mockings, buffetings, and spittings; in which he was a type of Christ. It was a diversion to them to see him in his rattling chains, groping, and blundering along from post to pillar, one perhaps giving him a box of the ear, or a slap of the face, another plucking him by his nose or beard, and another spitting in his face, and others taunting at him, and reproaching him: *and they set him*

[m] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.
[n] כאשר גלח ut rasus fuerat, Tigurine version, Vatablus; ut quum abraderetur, Junius & Tremellius.
[o] Hieron. in Isa. xvii. fol. 39. K.
[p] So David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 18. 3. & Milton in his Paradise Lost, l. 1. v. 462, 463.

Dagon his name; sea-monster! upward man,
And downward fish.

[q] Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 92. & Ovid Metamorph. l. 4. Fab. 1. v. 44, &c.
[r] De Natura Deorum, l. 3.
[s] De Abstinentia, l. 2. sect. 6.
[t] Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 1. p. 36, 37.
[u] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 8. sect. 12.
[w] Vid. Rivinum de Majumis, &c. c. 6. sect. 13.

between the pillars; that he might be the better seen, and in which there was the direction of Providence to bring about what follows.

Ver. 26. *And Samson said to the lad that held him by the hand, &c.*] And led him about; as nothing is more common now than for a blind man to be led by a boy: *suffer me that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth*; he might by information know in what manner the house was built, that it was supported by pillars, if he had never been in it before when he had his sight; and he might understand, by some means or another, that he was near these pillars, and placed between them, though being blind, did not know which way to direct his hands towards them to feel them, as he proposed to do, and therefore desired the lad that led him to guide his hands towards them: *that I may lean upon them;* being, as he might at least pretend to be, weary, as Josephus says[x]; either by grinding at the mill, or through being led to and fro in this house, that all might see him, and cast their flouts and jeers at him.

Ver. 27. *Now the house was full of men and women, &c.*] Within it, who were gathered together from all parts of the city, and perhaps from other places on this occasion: *and all the lords of the Philistines* were *there:* their five lords, the lords of Gaza, Ashdod, Ascalon, Gath, and Ekron: *and* there were *upon the roof* 3,000 *men and women;* it being a flat roof, as the houses in Canaan and Phœnicia, and the places adjacent, were; see Deut. xxii. 8. and there might be some openings or windows in several parts of it, through which the people might see who were below them, and were within the house, and what was doing there, and particularly could have a sight of Samson through them as follows: *that beheld whilst Samson made sport;* or was made a sport of; whilst he was buffeted and used in a ludicrous manner.

Ver. 28. *And Samson called unto the Lord, &c.*] In an ejaculatory manner, by mental prayer; though he might possibly express it aloud, without being heard and observed by the people, amidst their noise and mirth; and if it was heard, it might only furnish out more ridicule and contempt; and be it as it may, the prayer must have been preserved by the Lord himself, and given by inspiration to the writer of this book; since there were none that heard it that lived to relate it to others, no, not Samson himself: *and said, O Lord God, remember me, I pray thee;* the office that I bear as judge of Israel, the reproaches cast upon me, and which fall upon thy people, cause, and interest; remember thy loving-kindness, formerly expressed to me, the gracious promises made unto me, and the help and assistance I have had from thee: *and strengthen me, I pray thee, only this once, O God;* and it was a prayer of faith, as appears by its being heard, accepted, and answered; and shews that his strength did not come with his hair, but was owing to the immediate communication of it from the Lord: *that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes;* once for all, and no more; take his last and final vengeance on them; or one vengeance for his two eyes, or vengeance for one of his two eyes; either senses will bear. This was said not from a private spirit of revenge for personal injuries; but as a civil magistrate, a judge of Israel, whose office it was to be a revenger, to execute wrath; and though he mentions only his own eyes, yet he suffered the loss of them, and every other indignity and injury, as a public person, the common enemy of the Philistines, and destroyer of their country, and protector of Israel; and in this character he now acted.

Ver. 29. *And Samson took hold of the two middle pillars, upon which the house stood, and on which it was borne up, &c.*] Some have objected, that a building so large and so capacious as this was could not be supported by two pillars, and those placed in the middle, and so near to each other that Samson could lay hold on them; on which it has been observed, that the architecture of the ancients is little known to us, and they might have curious and ingenious arts of building, now lost; and several authors have taken notice of two Roman theatres built by Curio, that held abundantly more people than this house did, which were supported only by a single pin or hinge, as Pliny[y] relates; and our Westminster-hall, which was built by William Rufus, and is 270 feet long, and 74 broad[z], and has a roof the largest in all Europe, is supported without any pillars at all; add to all which, that mention being made of the two middle pillars of this house, supposes that there were others in other parts of it, though these were the main and principal ones, on which the weight of the building chiefly lay. Kimchi observes, that the word signifies to incline or bend, as if Samson made the pillars to bend or bow; but it is a better sense that he laid hold of them: *of the one with his right hand, and the other with his left;* and thus he stood with his arms stretched out, as Jesus on the cross, of whom he was a type, as often observed.

Ver. 30. *And Samson said, let me die with the Philistines, &c.*] He sought their death, and was content to lose his own life to be avenged on them; in neither of which did he act a criminal part as a judge of Israel; and from a public spirit he might desire the death of their enemies, and seek to effect it by all means possible; and was the more justifiable at this time, as they were not only insulting him, the representative of his nation, but were affronting the most high God with their idolatries, being now in the temple of their idol, and sacrificing to him. As for his own death, he did not simply desire that, only as he could not be avenged on his enemies without it, he was willing to submit to it; nor did he lay hands on himself, and can't be charged with being guilty of suicide, and did no other than what a man of valour and public spirit will do; who for the good of his country will not only expose his life to danger in common, but for the sake of that will engage in a desperate enterprise, when he knows most certainly that he must perish in it. Besides, Samson said this, and did what he did under the direction and influence of the spirit of God; and herein was a type of Christ, who freely laid down

[x] Ut supra.
[y] Nat. Hist. l. 36. c. 15.
[z] Rapin's History of England, vol. 1. p. 185.

his life for his people, that he might destroy his and their enemies: *and he bowed himself with all his might*; having fresh strength, and a large measure of it given him at this instant, which he had faith in, and therefore made the attempt, and for which he is reckoned among the heroes for faith in Heb. xi. 32. *and the house fell upon the lords, and upon all the people that were therein*; who were all killed, and Samson himself; an emblem this of the destruction of Satan, and his principalities and powers, by the death of Christ: *so the dead which he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life*: for besides the lords, and they that were in the house, there were 3,000 men and women on the roof, which fell in, and lost their lives also, so that it is very likely there were at least 6 or 7,000 slain; Philo Byblius says 40,000, which is not probable; whereas in his life we only read of 1,000 slain by him with the jaw-bone, besides 30 men at Ascalon, and the slaughter made when he smote hip and thigh, the number of which is not known. As this house pulled down by Samson is generally thought to be the temple of Dagon, a traveller [a] in those parts tells us, that there is now extant the temple of Dagon in Gaza, half demolished, and the pillars of it are yet to be seen; but he doubtless mistakes an edifice of a later construction for it: and another traveller [b] of our own country says, on the north-east corner and summit of the hill (on which the city is built) are the ruins of huge arches sunk low in the earth, and other foundations of a stately building;—the Jews, adds he, do fable this place to have been the theatre of Samson pulled down on the heads of the Philistines; but he takes it to be the ruins of a later building; see the note on 1 Sam. v. 2.

Ver. 31. *Then his brethren, and all the house of his father, came down*, &c.] To Gaza, having heard of what had befallen him there. This must be understood of his kindred and near relations, those of his father's family; though it is not unlikely that he had brethren in a proper sense, since though his mother was barren before his birth, yet afterwards might have many children, as Hannah had, whose case was similar to her's: *and took him and brought him up*; took his body out of the ruins of the house, and brought him up on a bier, or some proper carriage, to his own country; and perhaps in great funeral pomp, as a judge of Israel; nor need it be wondered at that the Philistines should admit of it, it being usual in all ages, and among all people, to allow even an enemy to bury their dead; besides Samson's friends had done them no injury, only Samson himself, and the Israelites in general were quiet and peaceable under their government; add to this, they were now in distress themselves for their own dead, and might be in some fear of the Israelites falling upon them, and attempting to deliver themselves out of their hands, since their five lords were dead, and no doubt many more of their principal men with them; so that they might judge this was not a proper time to refuse such a favour, lest it should occasion a quarrel, which they were not in a condition to engage in; and had Israel taken this opportunity, in all likelihood they might have freed themselves from them: *and buried him between Zorah and Eshtaol, in the burying-place of Manoah his father*; the former of these seems to have been his native place, and the other was near it; and between these the spirit of the Lord first began to move him, and here his father's sepulchre was, in which he was laid; see ch. xiii. 2, 25. *and he judged Israel 20 years*: by distressing and weakening their enemies; and though he did not complete their deliverance out of their hands, yet no doubt their oppressions were fewer, and their burdens easier, on his account; the time of his judging Israel is observed before, ch. xv. 20. and here repeated for the confirmation of it, and the rather because they were now ended by his death. Ben Gersom observes, that this is said to shew that the time that Samson dwelt in the land of the Philistines is included in these twenty years; some would infer from hence that he judged Israel 40 years, 20 in the days of the Philistines, as it is expressed in the above place; that is, when they had the dominion over Israel, and 20 more afterwards; but it does not appear that their dominion over Israel ceased in his time. In the Jerusalem Talmud [c] it is also said that he judged Israel 40 years, but for it there is no foundation; nor is the reason given of any force, that the Philistines feared him 20 years after his death; the other Talmud [d] says he judged Israel twenty-two years; but the word *two* is put into a parenthesis.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter relates the first rise of idolatry in Israel after the death of Joshua, which began in Mount Ephraim, occasioned by a sum of money stolen by a man from his mother, which being restored, part was converted to an idolatrous use; two images were made of it, ver. 1—5. and there being no king in Israel to take cognizance of it, the idolatry took place and continued, and afterwards spread, ver. 6. and this idolater not only made one of his sons a priest, but took a Levite for another, whom he hired by the year to serve him, ver. 7—13.

Ver. 1. *And there was a man of Mount Ephraim*, &c.] This and the four following chapters contain an history of facts, which were done not after the death of Samson, as some have thought, and as they may seem at first sight, by the order in which they are laid; but long before his time, and indeed before any of the judges in Israel, when there was no king, judge, or supreme governor among them, as appears from ver. 6. and xix. 1. and xxi. 25. even between the death of Joshua and the elders, and the first judge of Israel, Othniel; and so Josephus [e] places them in his history,

[a] Baumgarten. Peregrinatio, l. 2. c. 3. p. 87. Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum Terræ S. p. 134.
[b] Sandys's Travels, l. 3. p. 116.
[c] T. Hieros. Sotah, fol. 17. 2.
[d] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 1.
[e] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8, &c.

and the connexion of them is with ch. ii. 10. and so accounts for the rise of idolatry in Israel, how it got into the tribe of Dan, and spread itself over all the tribes of Israel, ch. ii. 11. which brought on their servitude to Cushan Rishathaim, in which time the Jewish chronology [f] places those events; but they were certainly before that, for the idolatry they fell into was the cause of it; yet could not be so early as the times of Joshua, and before his death; because in his days, and the days of the elders, Israel served the Lord; the reasons why they are postponed to the end of this book, and the account of them given here, are, according to Dr. Lightfoot [g], that the reader observing how their state-policy failed in the death of Samson, who was a Danite, might presently be shewed God's justice in it, because their religion had first failed among the Danites; that when he observes that 1,100 pieces of silver were given by every Philistine prince for the ruin of Samson, ch. xvi. 5. he might presently observe the 1,100 pieces of silver that were given by Micah's mother for the making of an idol, which ruined religion in Samson's tribe; that the story of Micah, of the hill-country of Ephraim, the first destroyer of religion, and the story of Samuel, of the hill-country of Ephraim, the first reformer of religion, might be laid together somewhat near. That the facts after related were so early done as has been observed, appears from the following things; the priest of the idol Micah made was a grandson of Moses, ch. xviii. 30. the Danites' seeking to enlarge their possessions, related in the same chapter, was most probably as soon as they were driven into the mountains by the Amorites, ch. i. 34. Mahanah Dan, from whence they marched, and had its name from their expedition, ch. xviii. 12. is mentioned before in the history of Samson, ch. xv. 25. and therefore the expedition must be before his time. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, was alive at the battle of Gibeah, ch. xx. 28. and Deborah speaks of the 40,000 Israelites slain by Benjamin at it, ch. v. 8. This man with whom the idolatry began was of the tribe of Ephraim, and dwelt in the mountainous part of it: *whose name was Micah*; in the original it is Micajehu, with part of the name Jehovah affixed to it, as Dr. Lightfoot [h] remarks, till he set up his image, and thenceforward was called Micah; but, according to Abarbinel, the former was his name whilst he was a child, and in his youth, and with his mother, being a diminutive term, and when he became a man he was called Micah, ver. 5.

Ver. 2. *And he said unto his mother*, &c.] Who seems to have been a widow, and an ancient woman, since Micah had sons, and one of them at an age to become a priest: *the* 1,100 shekels *of silver that were taken from thee*; which were taken away by stealth from her, though it may be rendered *taken to thee* [i]; which she had taken to herself out of the rest of her substance, and had separated and devoted it to religious uses; but Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it as we do, and which seems to be the best sense; of the value of this sum, see the note on ch. xvi. 5. and because the like sum is there offered, and was given to Delilah, hence some have thought, as Jarchi relates, that this woman was Delilah; but, as he observes, it is a mistake; for this woman lived long before the times of Samson and Delilah: *about which thou cursedst*: which when she perceived was stolen from her, she fell into a passion, and cursed and swore, cursed the thief that took it, whether of her own family or another; or adjured her son, that if he knew any thing of it, that he would declare it, suspecting him of the robbery; some think this refers to the oath she had made, that she would devote the silver to a religious use: *and spakest of also in mine ears*; of the sum how much it was, and of the use she had designed it for; or rather the curse was delivered in his hearing, and cut him to the heart, and wrought that conviction in him, that he could not retain the money any longer, not being able to bear his mother's curse; though Abarbinel connects this with the following clause, *behold, the silver is with me*; as if the sense was, that she spake in his ears, and charged him with the theft to his face; saying, verily the silver is with thee, thou hast certainly taken it; upon which he confessed it, *I took it*: but the former sense seems best, that not being willing to lie under his mother's curse, he owned that the money was in his hands, and he had taken it from her: *and his mother said, blessed be thou of the Lord, my son*: she reversed the curse, and pronounced a blessing on him, or wished one to him, and that without reproving him for his sin, rejoicing to hear of her money again.

Ver. 3. *And when he had restored the* 1,100 shekels *of silver to his mother*, &c.] The whole sum, having embezzled none of it: *his mother said, I had wholly dedicated the silver unto the Lord from my hand, for my son to make a graven image and a molten image*: this she had done either before it was stolen, and it troubled her the more, and caused her the rather to curse the man that had taken it; or after it was stolen, that if it should be recovered again she would appropriate it to such an use; so Abarbinel; and by the Lord, or Jehovah, she doubtless meant the true God; for she had no intention to forsake him, but to worship him in and by these images, and which she designed for the use of her son and his family, that they might not go so far as Shiloh to worship at the tabernacle there: *therefore I will restore it unto thee*; for that use, and so gave him the money again, to be laid out in images, or to make images of it.

Ver. 4. *Yet he restored the money unto his mother*, &c.] Gave it to her a second time, not as disapproving her idolatrous intention, as the sequel shews, but being desirous to be entirely quit of it, and not have his mind disturbed with it as it had been, and that she might do with it as she thought fit: *and his mother took* 200 *shekels of silver, and gave them to the founder, who made thereof a graven image, and a molten image*: the other 900 pieces she kept to herself, repenting of her vow, and being unwilling to part with so much money for such an use; or else they were laid out in an ephod, and teraphim, and what else were thought necessary for the idolatrous worship they were about to set up; though Kimchi is of opinion, that the 200 shekels were what

[f] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 33.
[g] Works, vol. 1. p. 46.
[h] Works, vol. 1. p. 45.
[i] לקח לך captum est tibi, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.

she gave the founder for making the images, and of the 900 the images were made; and indeed the images must be very small ones, if made out of 200 shekels of silver only; some have thought there was but one image, called both molten and graven; because after the silver was melted, and cast into a mould, it was fashioned with a graving tool, as the golden calf was by Aaron: but they are manifestly distinguished and represented as two, ch. xviii. 17, 18. *and they were in the house of Micah*: in an apartment in his house, peculiar for them, as appears by the next verse; here they were put and continued.

Ver. 5. *And the man Micah had an house of gods*, &c.] Having two images in it, besides teraphim, which were a sort of idols; and the Targum is, an house of images, or idols; though it may be rendered *an house of God*: a temple, a place for religious worship: *and made an ephod*: a priestly garment, a linen one very probably, not so rich an one with a breastplate to it as the high-priest had, which was very costly. Ben Melech interprets it a girdle, and there was a curious girdle of the ephod, with which it was girt; this may be here put for the rest of the priestly garments which Micah provided: *and teraphim*: which were a sort of household gods, like the Lares and Penates of the Romans, and by which consultations were made; see the notes on Hos. iii. 3, 4. and Zech. x. 2. Micah proposed to have an oracle in his house, whereby he might consult the Lord about future things, and not be at the trouble of going to the tabernacle, and consult there by Urim and Thummim; and the same some take the teraphim to be: *and consecrated one of his sons, who became his priest*: or, *filled the hand*[k] of one of them; that is, with offerings, as Ben Melech interprets it; in which way priests were initiated, and consecrated to their office; see Exod. xxviii. 41. and xxix. 9, 24. or, as Kimchi expresses it, he offered his offerings by the hand of one of his sons, and appointed him to be a priest, very probably his eldest son.

Ver. 6. *In those days* there was *no king in Israel*, &c.] That is, no supreme magistrate, judge, or ruler, Joshua being dead and Caleb also, and the elders cotemporary with them; for what the Samaritan Chronicle says[l] is without foundation, that Joshua a little before his death cast a lot in the presence of the congregation, to know who should govern after him, and the lot came to one Abel, of the tribe of Judah: but *every man did that which was right in his own eyes*: which accounts for the idolatry of Micah, there being no supreme magistrate to take cognizance of his sin, and restrain him from it, or punish him for it according to the law of God.

Ver. 7. *And there was a young man out of Beth-lehem-judah*, &c.] As there were two Beth-lehems, one in the tribe of Zebulun, Josh. xix. 15. and another in the tribe of Judah, the place here designed, Judah is added to it, to distinguish it from the other: *of the family of Judah*: which refers either to the young man, who was by his father's side a Levite, and by his mother's side, as Jarchi thinks, of the tribe of Judah, which seems very probable, though the genealogies of families were not reckoned from the mother; wherefore he might be so called because he had lived chiefly in the tribe of Judah, and particularly at Beth-lehem; but Kimchi, and several other Jewish commentators, refer this to the city of Beth-lehem, that was of the tribe of Judah, family being put for the tribe; or belonged to the children of Judah; though one would think there was no need to have added this, since it was fully expressed before by calling it Beth-lehem-judah; the former sense therefore seems best: *who was a Levite*; his father being, as before observed, of that tribe, though his mother might be of the tribe of Judah: *and he sojourned there*; that is, at Beth-lehem; he was not a native, nor an inhabitant there, but a sojourner, it not being a Levitical city.

Ver. 8. *And the man departed out of the city from Beth-lehem-judah, to sojourn where he could find a place*, &c.] Either being a man that had a rambling head, and of an unsettled mind, and could not easily fix any where; or else there being no supreme magistrate, to take care that the Levites had their due maintenance, for which there was a sufficient provision made by law; and the people being negligent of paying their tithes, there being none to oblige them to it, and they indifferent to the true worship of God, and prone to idolatry; this man was obliged to go abroad, and seek for a livelihood where he could get it, and sojourn in a place the most convenient for him: *and he came to Mount Ephraim, to the house of Micah, as he journeyed*: not with a design to stay there, but called by the way, having heard perhaps that Micah was both a wealthy and an hospitable man, and he also might have heard of the new form of worship he had set up in his house.

Ver. 9. *And Micah said unto him, whence comest thou?* &c.] For as he might ask for a meal, or for a night's lodging, it was but natural to put such a question to him, as from whence he came, and what was his business in these parts? or whither he was going? *and he said unto him, I am a Levite of Beth-lehem-judah*; the tribe he was of was Levi, and so a Levite by tribe and office, and the place he came last from, and where he had sojourned awhile, was Beth-lehem, a city in the tribe of Judah: *and I go to sojourn where I may find a place*; the most convenient to abide in, where he could get a livelihood.

Ver. 10. *And Micah said unto him, dwell with me*, &c.] Hearing that he was a Levite, he thought him a fit man for his purpose, and would give some credit to, and put a better face upon his new form of worship, and therefore, without further inquiry after him and his character, invites him to make his abode with him: *and be unto me a father and a priest*: a father to instruct him in the knowledge of divine things; so prophets were called fathers, and their disciples their sons; and a priest to offer sacrifices for him, and to consult before him by his teraphim upon occasion: *and I will give thee ten shekels of silver by the year*: or yearly, which was but a small sum, a poor salary for a priest, at most amounting but to 25 shillings, and scarce so much: *and a suit of apparel*: or an *order of apparel*[m]; such as was fit for one of his rank and order as a priest to wear, so Jarchi and Abarbinel; or a couple of

[k] ויםלא את יד & implevit manum, Montanus, V. L.

[l] Apud Hottinger. Smegma Orient. p. 522.

[m] ערך בגדים ordinem vestimentorum, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus; demensum vestimentorum, Tigurine version.

garments, as the Targum and Septuagint, a double suit of apparel, according to the order of the season, one for summer and another for winter, as Kimchi and Ben Melech: *and thy victuals;* his meat and drink: *so the Levite went in:* into his house, and it looks as if the parley was made, and the bargain struck at the door, Micah being at it as the Levite passed by, or came to it upon his knocking at it; he went after his counsel and advice, as Jarchi, or to do his business, as Kimchi.

Ver. 11. *And the Levite was content to dwell with the man,* &c.] To continue with him; after he had made trial for some time, he liked his service, and his wages, and way of living; it was all agreeable to him: *and the young man was unto him as one of his sons;* as dearly beloved by him, and used as kindly and tenderly, as if he had been one of his own children; so strong were the affections of Micah to him, and so well pleased was he with his service.

Ver. 12. *And Micah consecrated the Levite,* &c.] Installed him into, and invested him with the priestly office; in like manner he had consecrated his son before, by filling his hand with sacrifices; see ver. 5. *and the young man became his priest;* and did the work and office of one; this was a very daring piece of presumption in them both; in Micah, to take upon him to consecrate a priest, who was himself of the tribe of Ephraim; and in the young man, to suffer himself to be put into such an office, which did not belong to him; for though every priest was a Levite, or of the tribe of Levi, yet every Levite had not a right to be a priest, only those who were of the family of Aaron: *and was in the house of Micah;* and continued there.

Ver. 13. *Then said Micah,* &c.] Within himself, pleased with what he had done, and with what he engaged in: *now know I that the Lord will do me good;* that I shall enjoy his favour, be a happy man, and prosper; and by this it appears, that notwithstanding the idolatry he had fallen into, he had not utterly forsaken the Lord, but worshipped him in and by his images; there was a mixture of the worsip of God, and of the worship of images: *seeing I have a Levite to my priest;* who was of the same tribe the priests were, and so the nearest to them of any, and which he thought would be acceptable to God, and an omen of good to himself.

CHAP. XVIII.

THIS chapter relates how the Danites, being straitened in their inheritance, sent out spies to search the land, and see if they could find any proper place to add unto it, and enlarge it, ver. 1—6. who returned and reported Laish as such, and encouraged the Danites to go and possess it; for which purpose they sent 600 men up to it, ver. 7—12. and as they went, called at the house of Micah, and took away his priests and his gods, ver. 13—27. and having taken Laish, set up Micah's graven image there, ver. 28—31.

Ver. 1. *In those days* there was *no king in Israel,* &c.] No supreme magistrate, no judge, for it was before the time of the judges, after the death of Joshua, and before Othniel the first judge; this is observed before, ch. xvii. 6. and here repeated to account for the evil things done by the Danites, their consulting Micah's oracle, taking away his priest and his gods, and setting up his graven image in Dan, by which means idolatry was spread in Israel, and brought on their servitude to Cushan-rishathaim, from which Othniel the first judge was their deliverer: *and in those days the tribe of the Danites sought them an inheritance to dwell in;* that is, a family of them, as in the next verse, not the whole tribe; for as a family is sometimes put for a tribe, Josh. vii. 17. so a tribe for a family, ch. xx. 12. *for unto that day* all their *inheritance had not fallen to them among the tribes of Israel;* we rightly supply the words *all their;* for otherwise an inheritance had fallen to them by lot, as the other tribes, Josh. xix. 40. but that was not only too little for them, ver. 47. but all that was allotted to them did not come into their possession, but a part remained unsubdued; and some they had possession of they could not keep, either through the superior strength of the Amorites, or their own sloth and cowardice, or for want of the help of their brethren; see ch. i. 34, 35.

Ver. 2. *And the children of Dan sent of their family five men,* &c.] According to Abarbinel one out of a family, as Moses sent one out of a tribe to spy the land; and so there must be five families concerned in this affair: *from their coasts, men of valour from Zorah, and from Eshtaol, to spy out the land, and to search it:* these men were sent from the borders of the tribe, the extreme parts of it, as the word may signify, where perhaps they were the most pressed and straitened: Zorah and Eshtaol are particularly mentioned, and were the first cities in their lot, and were the coast of their inheritance, Josh. xix. 41. see the note there: some take the phrase rendered *from their coasts* to signify persons of extreme meanness, men of the lowest class among them; but the above-mentioned writers interpret it to a quite contrary sense, by *Katzinim,* princes, such as Moses sent to spy the land; and this better agrees with the next clause, *men of valour;* and the word used signifies not only magnanimity and fortitude of mind, but wealth and riches; and these were sent not to spy the land of Canaan, but such places as fell to this tribe, but were possessed by the Canaanites; and their errand was to observe in what condition they were, and whether fit for their purpose, and easy to obtain, and how they might get the possession of any of them: *and they said unto them, go search the land;* and see if some convenient place can't be found out to enlarge their inheritance, and give them more room and liberty for their families, now pent up, and a pasturage for their flocks and herds: *who when they came to Mount Ephraim;* which lay upon the borders of them: *to the house of Micah, they lodged there;* that is, when they were come near to the house of Micah, as Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it, they took up their lodging in the neighbourhood of it, perhaps at a public house or inn; for the sense is not, that

they lodged in Micah's house, for after this we read of their turning into it, as in the next verse. According to Bunting[r], this place was 24 miles from Zorah and Eshtaol, from whence these men came.

Ver. 3. *When they were by the house of Micah*, &c.] At their inn, which might be next to it, or as they were passing by it: *they knew the voice of the young man the Levite*: who had been in their country, and they had been in his company and conversation, and they knew the tone of his voice when they heard it; a particular brogue he might have. Abarbinel conjectures, that he was singing to Micah's idol, or multiplying his prayers before him: *and they turned in thither*: into Micah's house, and into the apartment where the young man was; *and said unto him, who brought thee hither?* they knew he was of Beth-lehem-judah; they inquire therefore how he came there, who sent for him, and by what means he was brought to that place: *and what makest thou in this place?* they knew he was a Levite, and that such an one had no business to minister but at the tabernacle, and therefore they inquire what was his employment here: *and what hast thou here?* to support himself with, what he had for his maintenance, or how he lived.

Ver. 4. *And he said unto them, thus and thus dealeth Micah with me*, &c.] Told them the whole story, how he came to the door of Micah's house, how he inquired of him who he was, and from whence he came, and whither he was going, and then invited him into his house to stay with him: *and hath hired me*; by the year, for ten shekels of silver, a suit of clothes, and meat and drink, and by this means he got a livelihood, and was supported: *and I am his priest*; and that was his business to offer sacrifice for his family, and to consult his oracle for him, and for whomsoever should apply.

Ver. 5. *And they said unto him, ask counsel, we pray thee, of God*, &c.] They did not reprove him for assuming the priestly office, when they knew he was a Levite, such was the corruption of those times, and the great depravity and declensions they were fallen into; nor even for the idolatry he was guilty of, but encourage him in it, and thought they had got a fine opportunity, which they readily laid hold on, to have counsel asked for them of God, about the success of the errand they were sent about; to this they were led at sight of the ephod, which was like that in the tabernacle, and of the teraphim, images which, according to a notion that prevailed, when consulted, foretold future things; whether by God they meant the true God, who they thought would give an answer by these, or Micah's gods, is not certain; according to the Targum of Jonathan, they meant the true God, which paraphrases it, "ask of the Word of the Lord:" *that we may know whether our way which we go shall be prosperous or no*: whether they should find out a proper place to dwell in, and be able to get possession of it.

Ver. 6. *And the priest said to them, go in peace*, &c.] After he had consulted the oracle, or had asked counsel by the ephod and teraphim; either of his own head, or by a voice he had heard, which Satan might be permitted of God to deliver, he very roundly told them, that they might proceed on in their journey with their minds quite easy, and with full assurance of success: *before the Lord is your way wherein ye go*: it is seen, observed, and taken notice of by him, and he approves of it; it is according to his will, and under his direction and protection, and success from him may be depended upon; though some observe that this answer is delivered in ambiguous terms, as generally the oracles of demons were, and might be taken in a good or bad sense, as the event should be; as that their way was before the Lord, and was seen by him either with pleasure or displeasure, with approbation or disapprobation, for their good, or for their hurt: so that let it fall out as it might, the credit of the oracle was saved.

Ver. 7. *And the five men departed*, &c.] From Mount Ephraim, and Micah's house there: *and came to Laish*; which, according to Bunting[s], was 104 miles from Mount Ephraim, and so many he makes it to be from Jerusalem; it lay at the furthest northern border of the land of Canaan, at the foot of Mount Lebanon, near the fountain of Jordan; it was four miles from Paneas, as Jerom says[t], as you go to Tyre; it is the Cæsarea Philippi of the New Testament, and the same that is called Leshem, Josh. xix. 47. see the note there: *and saw the people that were therein*; went into the city, and made their observations on the inhabitants of it, their number, strength, and manner of living: *how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure*; the inhabitants of Zidon, whose customs they might imitate, whose laws they might use, and might be under their government, since they are said to have no magistrate within themselves; and their carelessness and confidence might arise from their strong fortresses; or rather because they thought their city, and the land adjacent to it, did not belong to the land of Israel, and did not know that the Israelites made any pretensions to it, and therefore were quite easy, and in no fear of them; had no watchmen to guard their city, and did not take care to furnish themselves with weapons of war for their defence, even as the Zidonians; who, besides their city being a strong and fortified one, were in no fear of the Israelites, because their city was not in the land of Canaan, only the border of it reached to it: *and there was no magistrate in the land that might put* them *to shame in any thing*; to restrain them from vice, and punish them for it, or even to reprove and correct them, and so put them to shame; or put any mark of infamy and disgrace upon them in a public manner, that might shame them; hence they lived in a disorderly and dissolute manner, whereby they became the more easy prey to others: or the sense is, there was no king, nor an heir of the kingdom, as Kimchi interprets it, so that there were none to contest his right to the government of the place, or to accuse another, and put him to shame for taking it away from him. Jarchi takes the sense to be, that none needed to turn back his neighbour empty, when he asked any thing of him for

[r] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 112.
[s] Ut supra.

[t] De loc. Heb. fol. 90. H.

his relief, since there was no want of any thing in the land, as after observed; but the first sense seems best: *and they were far from the Zidonians;* who were the only people that could help them, being in friendship with them; and it may be they were under their government, as before observed; they are said [u] to be about 11 miles from them; Josephus [w] says, a day's journey: *and had no business with any man;* no trade or commerce, but lived independent of others, and within themselves, their land affording them every thing sufficient for them. Some understand it of their not being in any league or alliance with any other people, and so had none to call in to their assistance in case of any attack upon them.

Ver. 8. *And they came unto their brethren to Zorah and Eshtaol,* &c.] After they had well viewed the city, and made their remarks on the inhabitants of it, the condition and circumstances in which they were, and took notice of the goodness of the land about it, they returned to their brethren that sent them, particularly those that dwelt at the two places mentioned: *and their brethren said unto them, what* say ye? what tidings do you bring? what account of the place and country where you have been?

Ver. 9. *And they said, arise, that we may go up against them,* &c.] That is, prepare for war, and go up in an hostile manner against the present possessors of the land, not doubting of being masters of it easily: *for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good.* Adrichomius [x] says it was very good pasture land, and fertile, abounding with fruits of all kinds; and the same is attested by Josephus [y]: *and are ye still?* can ye sit still, and be easy, and not bestir yourselves to go up and possess so good a country, of which an easy conquest may be made? or, affirmatively, *ye are still or silent* [z]; ye make no answer to what we say, and seem careless and indifferent about the matter; or by way of exhortation, *be silent,* either that the people may remain in their quiet, easy, careless state, and lest, on hearing designs against them, should prepare for their defence; or, as Abarbinel, lest any of the other tribes of Israel should hear of it, and go and take it before them: *be not slothful to go,* and *to enter to possess the land;* they suggest that there was scarce any thing more to be done than to go and take possession, and that it would be altogether owing to their sloth and indolence if they did not.

Ver. 10. *When ye go, ye shall come to a people secure, and to a large land,* &c.] For though it was but one city, the territories of it were large, and the villages belonging to it might be many; which, with the security of the people, might easily be surprised and taken, not being upon their guard, are the arguments used by the spies to encourage their countrymen to go up and take it, to which they add others: *for God hath given it into your hands;* which they concluded from the state and condition they found the people in, thoughtless and defenceless; or it may be on account of the oracle in Micah's house they had consulted, and to which they gave credit; though some think their faith was grounded upon this place being given by lot to the tribe of Dan, but this does not appear: *a place where* there is *no want of any thing that* is *in the earth;* in the land of Canaan; meaning, that there was nothing in the whole land but might be found there, as wheat and barley, vines, fig-trees, pomegranates, olives, and honey, with all other necessaries and conveniences of life.

Ver. 11. *And there went from thence of the family of the Danites,* &c.] Or families, the singular being put for the plural; for it can hardly be thought that such a number of men, as after mentioned, went out of one family: *out of Zorah, and out of Eshtaol;* the two places the spies were sent from, and now had returned unto: and upon their report, and at their instigation, and by the encouragement they gave, there were 600 *men appointed with weapons of war;* that set out armed from the above places, on the expedition to take Laish.

Ver. 12. *And they went up and pitched in Kirjath-jearim in Judah,* &c.] Of which place see Josh. xv. 9, 60. According to Bunting [a] it was 16 miles from Zorah and Eshtaol, and this was their first day's march: *wherefore they called the name of that place Mahaneh-dan unto this day;* which signifies the camp of Dan, or of the Danites; so it was called in the times of Samson, ch. xiii. 25. and is a proof that this expedition was before his time; and it was so called, it seems, in the time of Samuel, the writer of this book: *behold, it is behind Kirjath-jearim;* to the west of it; for though they are said to pitch *in* that place, the meaning is, that they pitched near it, in the fields adjacent to it, which were the most proper and convenient for a camp.

Ver. 13. *And they passed thence unto Mount Ephraim,* &c.] Steering their coast still northward; this, according to Bunting [b], was eight miles from Kirjath-jearim, or Mahaneh-dan, in which Micah's house was, for as yet they were not come to it, see ver. 15.

Ver. 14. *Then they answered the five men that went to spy out the country of Laish,* &c.] That were sent by their brethren, ver. 5. and, as it seems from hence, were sent particularly to Laish; they had some notion of that place as proper for them, and therefore sent those men to reconnoitre it; and now as they had passed this way before, when they came within sight of Micah's house, it put them in mind of what they had seen there; wherefore one in the name of the rest, and with their approbation, acquainted the company with it: *and said unto their brethren, do ye know that there is in those houses:* in one of them, pointing to the houses of a village or town in sight: *an ephod and teraphim, and a graven image, and a molten image?* of which see ch. xvii. 4, 5. and no doubt but they acquainted them, not only that they had seen them, and so were certain of it, but had consulted them, and that with success: *now therefore consider,* say they, *what ye have to do:* whether it may not be proper to consult them again, or rather to take them with us, to consult as occasion may require, and as tokens and pledges of God being with us, and so may the rather hope that every thing will succeed to our wishes.

[u] Adrichom. Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 105.
[w] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 3. sect. 1.
[x] Ut supra.
[y] Ut supra.

[z] מחשים אתם vos autem desidetis, Tigurine version; & vos quiescitis, Munster.
[a] Ut supra.
[b] Ibid.

Ver. 15. *And they turned thitherward,* &c.] It seems as if the house lay a little out of their way, and therefore they turned on one hand to go unto it: *and came to the house of the young man the Levite,* even *unto the house of Micah;* for the young man's house was only an apartment of Micah's, and lay very probably next to that in which the images and oracle were; and they made up to the young man's apartment, rather than to Micah's, because the above things were under his care: *and saluted him;* asked him of his welfare in a kind and obliging manner, the rather to ingratiate themselves unto him.

Ver. 16. *And the 600 men appointed with their weapons of war,* &c.] Who were armed men, and marched with their armour about them: *which* were *of the children of Dan;* for no other were concerned in this expedition: *stood by the entering of the gate;* not of Micah's house, but of the city in which his house was; here they stood whilst the five men went up to the house.

Ver. 17. *And the five men that went out to spy the land went up and came thither,* &c.] They first came to Micah's house, and saluted the young man, and after that salutation told him there was such a number of their brethren at the gate of the city, very probably, who would be glad to see him; and the young man being desirous also of seeing them, and paying his respects to them, went with them thither, and after they had introduced him, left him discoursing with them, and then returned to his apartment: *and took the graven image, and the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image;* and brought them away with them; and from hence it appears plainly that there were two images, the one graven, and the other molten, since they are so manifestly distinguished, and the ephod and teraphim are spoken of between them: *and the priest stood in the entering of the gate, with the 600 men that were appointed with the weapons of war;* who kept him in talk, whilst the five men went and stole the above things.

Ver. 18. *And these went into Micah's house,* &c.] Into that part of it where his gods were; not the 600 men last mentioned, but the five men who knew the house, and the chapel where the things were: *and fetched the carved image, the ephod, and the teraphim, and the molten image;* and brought them away in their hands to their brethren at the gate, where the priest also was: and when he saw them, *then said the priest to them, what do ye?* what do you mean by this? is this your kindness to me, to take away what are my care and charge, and on which my livelihood depends? and do you consider the wickedness, the sin of sacrilege you are guilty of, to take away these sacred things, these objects of religious devotion?

Ver. 19. *And they said unto him, hold thy peace,* &c.] Be silent, make no disturbance, be quiet and easy: *lay thy hand upon thy mouth;* as a token of silence; so the Egyptians used to paint Harpocrates, the god of silence, with his fingers pressing his lips: *and go with us;* for they wanted him as well as his gods, not knowing well how to make use of them without him: *and be to us a father and a priest;* to direct them, instruct them, perform acts of devotion for them, and ask counsel on their account; it seems as if it was common in those days to call a priest a father, see ch. xvii. 10. *is it better for thee to be a priest unto the house of one man, or that thou be a priest unto a tribe and a family in Israel?* suggesting, that it must be much more honourable for him, and more to his advantage, to officiate as a priest to a body of people, that might be called a tribe, or to a family consisting of various houses, than in the house of a private person; this they left him to consider and judge of.

Ver. 20. *And the priest's heart was glad,* &c.] He rejoiced that such an opportunity offered; it suited well with his covetous, ambitious, rambling, and unsettled disposition of mind: *and he took the ephod, and the teraphim, and the graven image;* and no doubt the molten image also, out of the hands of the five men into his own, agreeing to go with them, and officiate for them: *and went in the midst of the people;* the 600 armed men, either for the security of himself, if Micah should raise his servants, and his neighbours, to pursue after him, and fetch him back, with his images; or, as others think, in imitation of the priests bearing the ark, who in journeying marched in the middle of the camp.

Ver. 21. *So they turned and departed,* &c.] Turned from the gate of the city where Micah dwelt, and marched forward to Laish: *and put the little ones, and the cattle, and the carriage, before them;* partly for safety from Micah, and his friends and neighbours, and partly that they might not be overdriven: their wives, who doubtless were with them, though not mentioned, and their children, and also their flocks and herds, they brought with them from Zorah and Eshtaol, as never intending to return again thither, and being fully assured they should take Laish, and the country about, and settle there; and also all their wealth and substance, as the Targum renders the word for *carriage,* whatever they were possessed of that was movable; their vessels, silver and gold, and other movables, as Kimchi interprets it, whatever was weighty, valuable and glorious, as the word signifies, or that was of any importance and worth.

Ver. 22. And *when they were a good way from the house of Micah,* &c.] For it might be some time before Micah knew that his gods were stolen, and his priest was decoyed from him; and it must take up more time still to get his servants and neighbours together to pursue after those that injured him: *the men that* were *in the houses near to Micah's house were gathered together;* no doubt at the request of Micah, who informed them of what had happened to him: and they being not only his neighbours, but deeply involved in the same superstition and idolatry, and closely addicted to it, and to whom it might in some respects be advantageous, as it brought people from various parts to worship, or to consult the oracle: these being got together in a body, pursued *and overtook the children of Dan;* who were obliged to move but slowly, because of their wives, little ones, and heavy substance they carried with them.

Ver. 23. *And they cried unto the children of Dan,* &c.] When they had got pretty near them, and in their hearing, they called to them aloud, and desired they would stop, having something to say to them: *and they turned their faces;* that is, the Danites turned and looked at them, and stopped to hear what they had to say to them; these were they who were in the rear in marching: *and said unto Micah;* who was at the head of

them: *what aileth thee that thou comest with such a company?* as if he intended to attack them in an hostile way, and therefore asks what should be the occasion of it? what affront had been given him, what injury had been done him, that had provoked him to come out and follow them in such a manner?

Ver. 24. *And he said, ye have taken away my gods that I made,* &c.] Meaning his graven and molten images, which he had made, or caused to be made, out of the silver his mother gave him, or however had paid for the making of; and though this might be an argument proving his right unto them, it was a very poor one in favour of their deity; and it is astonishing he should call them gods he knew the making of, and who could not save themselves from being stolen and carried off: *and the priest and ye are gone away:* they had not only took away his gods, but the priest that sacrificed for him unto them, and assisted him in acts of devotion to them, or to God by them, and were gone off with both: *and what have I more?* signifying, that all he had in the world, wife, children, and substance, were all nothing in comparison of these; there was nothing he so much valued as he did these, nor could he take any pleasure or comfort in any thing, being deprived of them, so much was his heart set on them: *and what is this that ye say unto me, what aileth thee?* what a question is this you ask, as if the injury done me was none at all, and that I had no reason to complain; that it was a trifling insignificant thing, worthy of no regard, when it was a matter of the greatest moment and importance to him in life.

Ver. 25. *And the children of Dan said unto him, let not thy voice be heard among us,* &c.] Complaining of us as having done an unjust thing, charging and reproaching us with theft and sacrilege, insisting upon a restoration of the things taken, and abusing with odious names and characters: *lest angry fellows run upon thee:* lest men of bitter and passionate spirits, provoked by ill language given them, should draw their swords and fall upon thee: *and thou lose thy life, and the life of thy household:* the life of himself, his family, servants, tenants, and neighbours with him, which ought to have been more precious and valuable than his gods; of which there was great danger in demanding his gods, which by this they let him know they would not part with.

Ver. 26. *And the children of Dan went their way,* &c.] Went on their way, would not stay to have any further talk with him, as being an impertinent man, and unworthy of their regard, bidding him defiance, and do his worst, having nothing to fear from him: *and when Micah saw they were too strong for him;* that he could not prevail upon them by words and arguments; to take up arms, and use them, he perceived it was to no purpose, since they were more numerous and more mighty than he and his neighbours: *he turned and went unto his own house;* and if he returned from his idolatry to the true God, and the right worship of him, having lost his gods, it was well for him they were taken away.

Ver. 27. *And they took* the things *which Micah had made,* &c.] The ephod, teraphim, and the two images the Danites took them, or having taken them kept them, and went on with them: *and the priest which he had:* him also they took, and who was willing enough to go with them: *and came unto Laish, unto a people* that were *quiet and secure;* having no sentinels placed at any distance to give them warning of an enemy, nor any watchmen on their walls to descry one; and perhaps their gates not shut, nor any guard at any of their passes and avenues, having no apprehension at all of being visited by an enemy, especially from Israel, not being apprized that they had any pretensions to their city, and the land about it: *and they smote them with the edge of the sword;* entered their city, and fell on them suddenly, and cut them to pieces: *and burnt the city with fire;* to strike terror to all about; or it may be only they set fire to some part of it, as they entered, only to frighten the inhabitants, and throw them into the greater confusion, that they might become a more easy prey to them; for their intention was to inhabit it, and it seems to be the same city still, though they rebuilt it, and called it by another name.

Ver. 28. *And there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon,* &c.] Under whose government and protection they seem to have been; and that city being at a distance from them, and the Danites coming upon them suddenly, there was no time to send to them for help, or any to come in to their assistance, and save them from their enemies, see ver. 7. *and they had no business with any man;* that could have given them notice of the design of the children of Dan against them, nor to the Zidonians to come soon enough for their protection and defence; none there were in alliance with them except them: *and it was in the valley that* lieth *by Beth-rehob;* which lay in the northern border of the land of Canaan, as you go to Hamath of Syria, Numb. xiii. 21. see the note there: *and they built a city to dwell there;* not a new one altogether, but they rebuilt and enlarged Laish, and made it convenient for them to dwell in.

Ver. 29. *And they called the name of the city Dan,* &c.] The name of their tribe, and to shew that though they were at the furthest part of the land northward, and at such a distance from their tribe, which lay to the south-west, yet they belonged to it: *after the name of Dan their father, who was born unto Israel;* one of the twelve sons of Jacob or Israel: *however, the name of the city was Laish at first;* which signifies a *lion,* and might be so called from its being infested with lions, which might come from the mountain of Lebanon, near to which it was, and whither Dan, as a lion's whelp, leaped, Deut. xxxiii. 21. and now the prophecy had its accomplishment. This place was also called Leshem, Josh. xix. 47. and it is remarkable that Leshem is the name of the precious stone in the high-priest's breastplate, on which the name of Dan was engraved, which was done many years before this city fell into the hands of the Danites, though that might portend it.

Ver. 30. *And the children of Dan set up the graven image,* &c.] In their new city Dan, and very probably had a house built for it, peculiar to it, in the same place where Jeroboam, in after-times, set up one of his golden calves. The Danites having succeeded, according to the oracle in Micah's house, they had a very great veneration for the images they brought away

with them from thence, and set them up for religious worship in a proper place; for though only mention is made of the graven image, yet no doubt the molten image, and the teraphim, with the ephod, were all placed together for devotion and consultation: *and Jonathan the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh, he and his sons were priests to the tribe of Dan:* not to the whole tribe, but to that part of it which resided in this city, called Dan; and this Jonathan seems to be no other than the Levite Micah took into his house, and made a priest of; and whom the Danites took with them to Laish, to be their priest, who is said to be the son of Gershom, the son of Manasseh; now Gershom was the son of Moses, and this man is thought by some to be a grandson of his; and with this agrees the time in which he lived, for as Phinehas the grandson of Aaron was now living, ch. xx. 28. so might a grandson of Moses; and though he is called a young man, he might be a younger son of Gershom's; nor is his being a Levite any objection, since it is a clear case that Moses made no provision for his family, so disinterested was he, which may be observed against the deists: and it is remarkable that the *nun*, or נ in Manasseh, is suspended over the other letters in our printed copies of the Hebrew Bible, and so without it may be read, Moses; and the Jews [c] have a notion, that this was done for the honour of Moses, and to observe that he was more like a son of Manasseh than of Moses; though rather this being the first letter of נשה, to forget, may suggest, as Alting [d] observes, that he had forgot the virtues of his grandfather; and the Vulgate Latin version reads, the son of Moses; and some [e] are of opinion that this is the true reading of the text; though it may be that another Gershom than the son of Moses, and another Manasseh we know nothing of, are here intended, so Marcus Marinus [f]: however, this man, and his sons in succession after him, were priests in Dan, *until the day of the captivity of the land*; not till the captivity of Sennacherib or Salmaneser, when Dan, with the rest of the ten tribes, were carried captives, as Jarchi; for this idolatry, and these idolatrous priests, can hardly be thought to be continued here through the times of Samuel, David, and Solomon: nor is it to be understood of the captivity of Israel by Jabin king of Canaan, as Ben Gersom; for as the other is too long a time, this is too short, since it is clear, by the next verse, that this idolatry continued all the time the house of God was at Shiloh; and which directs us to the captivity here spoken of, when the ark was carried captive by the Philistines, and the house of Shiloh was forsaken; which is the sense of Kimchi, R. Isaiah, and Abarbinel, and may be illustrated and confirmed by some passages in Psal. lxxviii. 58, 59, 60, 61.

Ver. 31. *And they set them up Micah's graven image, which he made,* &c.] Which is repeated for the sake of the time of its continuance next expressed: *all the time the house of God was in Shiloh:* which, according to some Jewish writers [g], was 360 years; that is, so long as the tabernacle was there, which was afterwards removed to Nob.

CHAP. XIX.

THIS chapter gives an account of a sad affair of a Levite and his concubine, and of the bad consequence of it, how that she played the whore, and went away from him to her father's house, whither he followed her, and where he was kindly entertained by her father several days, ver. 1—9. and then set out on his journey to his own country; and passing by Jebus or Jerusalem, he came to Gibeah, and could get no lodging, ver. 10—15. but at length was taken in by an old man, an Ephraimite, ver. 16—21. when the house where he was was beset by some wicked men in Gibeah, with the same intent as the men of Sodom beset the house of Lot, ver. 22—24. and after some expostulation of the old man with them, the concubine was brought out to them and abused by them even unto death, ver. 25—28. upon which the Levite her husband cut her into 12 pieces, and sent them into all the coasts of Israel, which was shocking and surprising, ver. 29, 30. the consequence of which is related in the next chapter.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass in those days, when there was no king in Israel,* &c.] The same is observed in ch. xvii. 6. and xviii. 1. and refers to the same times, the times before the judges, between them and the death of Joshua, during which time there was no supreme magistrate or ruler in Israel, which is meant; and this is observed, as before, to account for wickedness being committed with impunity, such as adultery, sodomy, murder, &c. afterwards related: *that there was a certain Levite sojourning on the side of Mount Ephraim;* in a city that was on one side of that mountain; it seems not to have been a Levitical city, because he was only a sojourner in it; perhaps he chose to reside there, as being near to the tabernacle of Shiloh, which was in that tribe; *who took to him a concubine out of Beth-lehem-judah;* the same place from whence the wicked Levite came, spoken of in the preceding chapters, and who was the means of spreading idolatry in Israel; and here a wicked concubine of a Levite comes from the same, and was the cause of great effusion of blood in Israel; which two instances may seem to reflect dishonour and disgrace on Beth-lehem, which were wiped off by the birth of some eminent persons in it, as Boaz, Jesse, David, and especially the Messiah. The woman the Levite took from hence is in the Hebrew called *a wife, a concubine* [h]; for a concubine was a secondary wife, taken without espousals and a dowry: some

[c] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 109. 2.
[d] Shiloh, l. 4. c. 28. p. 334.
[e] See Dr. Kennicott's Dissertation 2. p. 51, &c.
[f] Apud Glassium in Philolog. Sacr. l. 1. tract. 1. sect. 2.

[g] Maimon. in Misn. Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 6. & Bartenora in ib. sect. 7.
[h] So Pagninus, Tigurine version, Drusius.

think they were espoused, though there was no dowry, and were reckoned truly wives, though they had not all the honour and privilege as others: and that this woman was accounted the wife of the Levite, appears from his being called her husband frequently; and her father is said to be his father-in-law, and he his son-in-law; nor could she have been chargeable with adultery otherwise.

Ver. 2. *And his concubine played the whore against him*, &c.] Was unfaithful to him and his bed, and broke the covenant and agreement between them: or *with him*[i], whilst she was with him in the house; or *before him*[k], of which he had knowledge and full proof; though some think this is not to be understood of whoredom or adultery, but of her ill usage of him, and departure from him. The Targum is, she despised him; so Kimchi and Ben Gersom interpret it of her declining and turning aside from him, and returning to her father's house, as follows: and indeed, had she been guilty of such a crime, one would think he would never have sought after her to reconcile her, and take her again, since she not only deserved to be put away, but to be put to death according to the law of God: *and went away from him to her father's house to Beth-lehem-judah*; where she was received, as she knew she should, having a parent perhaps too indulgent, and which was an encouragement to her to leave her husband: *and was there some whole months*: or a year and four whole months, according to Ben Gersom; so Kimchi and Ben Melech observe the copulative *and* is wanting, which is expressed in 1 Sam. xxvii. 7. and *yamim*, *days*, is sometimes used for a year, see ch. xiv. 8. and xv. 1. and xxi. 19.

Ver. 3. *And her husband arose*, &c.] From the place where he lived: *and went after her*; to Beth-lehem-judah, where her father lived: *to speak comfortably to her*; or *to her heart*[l]; having heard perhaps that she repented of her sin, or if it was only upon a quarrel between them, his anger might cool and subside, and therefore sought for a reconciliation; and which was the more commendable in him, as he did not put her away, but she departed from him: and *to bring her again*; to his own city, and to his own house and bed, as before: *having his servant with him, and a couple of asses*; one of them for her to ride upon, and the other to carry provisions on: *and she brought him into her father's house*; it seems she met with him before he came thither, in the fields, or in the street; and by this it appears that she was glad to see him, and received him in a loving manner, and introduced him into her father's house, so that things looked well, and promised success: *and when the father of the damsel saw him, he rejoiced to meet him*: having a good opinion of him, and perhaps understood, even by his daughter's story, that she was most in fault, and therefore was well pleased to see him come after her; though he ought before this time to have sent her home, or sought for a reconciliation of her to her husband.

Ver. 4. *And his father-in-law, the damsel's father, retained him*, &c.] Prevailed upon him to stay some time with him: *and he abode with him three days*: it seems as if he agreed to stay with him so long, and that time he stayed contentedly: *so they did eat and drink, and lodged there*: the Levite and his servant were very handsomely entertained, and had every thing provided for them convenient for meat, drink, and lodging.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass on the fourth day*, &c.] The time the Levite had agreed to stay being up: *when they arose early in the morning*; the Levite, his concubine and servant, in order to set out on their journey: *that he arose to depart*; the Levite rose up from his seat to take his leave of his father-in-law, and depart from his house, and proceed on his way homeward; for rising out of his bed is before expressed: *and the damsel's father said to his son-in-law, comfort thy heart with a morsel of bread*; take a breakfast first, that he might be fitter for his journey, for bread comforts or strengthens men's hearts, Psal. civ. 15. though here it may be put for any and all sorts of provisions, whatever might be proper to take early in a morning, and before setting out on a journey: *and afterwards go your way*; he seemed as if he was willing he should set forward, after he had refreshed him with a meal.

Ver. 6. *And they sat down*, &c.] Not only sat down upon their seats again, the Levite having rose up in order to go away, but sat down at table: *and did eat and drink both of them together*; both the Levite and his father-in-law; and it appears by this, and what follows, that the Levite did not take only a short repast, or breakfast with him, but stayed and dined with him, when they ate a plentiful meal, and drank freely after dinner: *for the damsel's father had said to the man, be content, I pray thee, and tarry all night, and let thine heart be merry*: let us spend a pleasant evening together, in drinking freely, though not to excess, in cheerful conversation, and innocent mirth. This he proposed to him, and hoped he would agree to it.

Ver. 7. *And when the man rose up to depart*, &c.] Rose up from table, having ate and drank sufficiently, in order to depart the house, and proceed on his journey: *his father-in-law urged him*; with much entreaty, and earnest solicitations, that he would stay all night with him: *therefore he lodged there again*; another night, being prevailed upon through his father's importunity.

Ver. 8. *And he rose early in the morning on the fifth day to depart*, &c.] With a full intention to take his leave of his father, and be gone: *and the damsel's father said, comfort thine heart, I pray thee*; with a meal's meat, with a breakfast, before he set out on his journey, that he might be heartier and stronger for it: *and they tarried until afternoon*; or *until the decline of the day*[m], when the sun had passed the meridian, and was declining, as it immediately does when noon is past: *and they did eat both of them*: the man stayed and took a dinner with his father-in-law; and though no mention is made of the concubine, neither in this, nor in the other instances, no doubt she ate with them.

Ver. 9. *And when the man rose up to depart, he and his concubine, and his servant*, &c.] Rose up from table,

[i] עליו apud eum, Pagninus, Piscator; cum eo, Junius & Tremellius.
[k] Conspectu ejus, Vatablus; coram eo, Drusius.
[l] על לבה ad cor, Pagninus.

[m] עד נטות היום usque ad declinare diem, Montanus; to the same purpose Pagninus, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

having comfortably refreshed themselves: *his father-in-law, the damsel's father, said unto him, behold, now the day draweth towards evening*; or is *remiss*, or *weak*[n]; that is, the heat, light, and strength of the sun abated, and became weaker and more remiss, as it does the more it declines, and is nearer setting: *I pray you tarry all night*; suggesting, it was a very improper time to set out in on a journey: *behold, the day groweth to an end*: or *behold*, it is *the encampment of the day*[o], when the day or sun seems to be pitching its tent, and going to rest; or it being the time when an army on the march stops and pitches their tents, in order to continue all night; or when men go to their tents and habitations, and lie down and take their rest: *lodge here, that thine heart may be merry*; and let us have another pleasant evening together, which can't be had in an inn upon the road; you can't be comfortable there, as here, and therefore be persuaded to stay, since it is not possible to get home tonight: *and to-morrow get you early on your way, that thou mayest go home*; to thy city, as the Targum; signifying, that he should not insist upon their staying any longer, and then they might set out on their journey as soon as they pleased.

Ver. 10. *But the man would not tarry that night*, &c.] He was determined upon his journey; he perceived there was no end of the solicitations of his father-in-law, and did not know how long he intended to detain him, and therefore was resolved not to hearken to him any longer: *but he rose up and departed*; rose up from his seat, took his leave of his father-in-law, and proceeded on his journey: *and came over-against Jebus, which is Jerusalem*: which was then called Jebus, because inhabited by the Jebusites, as appears from the following verse; this was about six miles from Beth-lehem[p]; so far they were come on in their journey homewards: *and there were with him two asses saddled*: which he brought with him when he came to Beth-lehem, ver. 3. now said to be *saddled*, either for him and his concubine to ride on: or they were bound or girt, as the word signifies, being loaded with bread, and wine, and provender; or it may be one of them was for him and his concubine to ride on by turns, and the other to carry the provisions: *and his concubine also was with him*: matters being now made up between them, she had agreed to go with him, and did, which was the end of his coming to her father's house; and therefore this is observed on that account, as well as for what follows in the tragical part of this history.

Ver. 11. And *when they* were *by Jebus the day was far spent*, &c.] Or *was gone down very much*[q], the sun was going down apace, and near setting: *and the servant said unto his master, come, I pray thee*: he proposed it to him in a submissive manner, and might use some entreaty for his master's good and safety: *and let us turn in unto this city of the Jebusites, and lodge in it*: for though that part of the city which belonged to the tribe of Judah was taken by them after the death of Joshua, yet that which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, part of it was still possessed by the Jebusites, whom the Benjamites could not expel, ch. viii. 21. and Ben Gersom thinks, that this affair of this Levite, and his concubine, was before the men of Judah fought against it, and took it; which is not unlikely, seeing it is called here a city of the Jebusites, and because the Levite objected going into it on that account; whereas there would not have been much in his objection, if one part of it was in the possession of the men of Judah, and the other in the hands of the tribe of Benjamin, though they had some Jebusites dwelling among them.

Ver. 12. *And his master said unto him, we will not turn aside hither into the city of a stranger*, &c.] A city of the children of the Gentiles, as the Targum, as the Jebusites were, being one of the seven nations of the land of Canaan, who were to be dispossessed and destroyed; and which, one would think, he would not have so called, had it been inhabited, though but in part, by the children of Judah and Benjamin: by this it appears, that this Levite was a good man, and conscientious, and shunned all appearance of evil, and the company of wicked men, as became his character and profession: and it is added, that is *not of the children of Israel*: which further confirms the above conjecture, that this city was not as yet at all in the hands of the Israelites; or if it had been, was retaken, and now in the hands of the Jebusites: *we will pass over to Gibeah*; which was in the tribe of Benjamin, and inhabited by men of that tribe, and so more agreeable to this Levite, though it proved fatal to him; this was, as Josephus says[r], 30 furlongs, or near four miles from Jebus or Jerusalem; and though it was near sun-setting, he chose rather to proceed on to this place, than to lodge at Jebus, and the rather it may be, as it was a Levitical city, Josh. xxi. 17.

Ver. 13. *And he said to his servant, come, and let us draw near*, &c.] And get on as fast as we can: *to one of these places to lodge all night, in Gibeah, or in Ramah*; which were both in the tribe of Benjamin, and he left it to his servant to go to either, to that which was most convenient, because of the time of the day, it being near sun-setting; now, as before observed, Gibeah was not quite four miles from Jerusalem; whereas, according to Jerom[s], Ramah was six miles, and therefore we find they took up at Gibeah, as being nearest of these two places; see the notes on Josh. xviii. 24, 25. and in Hos. v. 8.

Ver. 14. *And they passed on, and went their way*, &c.] Proceeded on in their journey from Jebus or Jerusalem, near to which they were: *and the sun went down upon them* when they were *by Gibeah, which belongeth to Benjamin*; which is added, to distinguish it from another Gibeah in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 57. when they were come pretty near to this place, on the side of it, as it seems, the sun was just setting, which determined them to take up their lodging here, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And they turned aside thither to go in* and *lodge in Gibeah*, &c.] Instead of going right forward,

[n] רפה debilitata est, Pagninus, Vatablus; remissus est, Junius & Tremellius.

[o] חנות היום castrametatio diei, Drusius.

[p] Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 89. E.

[q] ירד מאד descenderat valde, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

[r] De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 1.

[s] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.

and passing by Gibeah, over-against which they were, they turned out of their road, and went into the city to seek a lodging in it: *and when he went in, he sat him down in a street of the city:* to see whether any person would invite him into any of their houses, as was usual in those hospitable times and countries, and where there were few inns for the entertainment of travellers and strangers, or none at all, and especially in cities; if any where, they were upon the public road: *for there was no man that took them into his house to lodging:* the spirit of hospitality being greatly declined, and even gone from among them; or as some think, those that had such a spirit, and were willing to receive strangers, were afraid, because of their wicked neighbours, who would beset their houses to abuse strangers, as the sequel of this history shews.

Ver. 16. *And, behold, there came an old man from his work out of the field at even, &c.*] Which is the time that men come from their labour, and take their rest; and this man, though a man in years, and of some substance, as appears by what follows, yet attended the business of his calling, which was very commendable in him: *which was also of Mount Ephraim;* as the Levite was, which when the old man understood, he was the more ready no doubt to receive him into his house: *and he sojourned in Gibeah;* he was not a native of the place, and yet more kind to strangers than such as were; nor does he appear to be a Levite, though it was a Levitical city; on what account he sojourned here is not manifest: *but the men of the place were Benjamites:* for as yet the number of Levites were not large, others dwelt in the cities besides them, even such as were of the tribe to which they belonged.

Ver. 17. *And when he had lifted up his eyes, &c.*] For it may be, as he came out of the field, he was musing and meditating with his eyes downwards directed, but coming into the city looked up: *he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city;* whom he supposed to be a traveller and a stranger by his dress, and other circumstances, having never seen him before, and knowing pretty well the inhabitants of the place: *and the old man said, whither goest thou? and whence comest thou?* the meaning of the questions is, what place he was travelling to, and from whence he came last.

Ver. 18. *And he said unto him, we are passing from Beth-lehem-judah, &c.*] He answers to his last question first, for this was the place from whence they came: *towards the side of Mount Ephraim;* thither they were going, which is an answer to the first question: and then adds, which is more than what was requested, *from thence am I;* that is, he was an inhabitant of a city on one side of Mount Ephraim, but what that city was, he says not, nor is it elsewhere said: *and I went to Beth-lehem-judah;* on what account he does not declare, but the above narrative clearly shews for what reason he went thither: *but I am now going to the house of the Lord;* that is, the tabernacle in Shiloh, there he proposed to go first to offer sacrifice for the success of his journey, and for the reconciliation of his wife to him, and to pray to God for happiness in his family yet to come, and where some think his habitation was; but rather it was at some distance, not far from Mount Ephraim, and on the side of it, whither he should return when he had performed those acts of religion and devotion, which he judged were his duty: *and there is no man that receiveth me to house;* that had invited him to him to his house to take a lodging there, as was common to do to travellers, as the instances of Abraham, Lot, Job, and others, shew. It was a law with the Lucani (a people in Italy), that if a stranger came at sun-setting, and was desirous of coming under the roof of any one, if such an one did not receive him, he was to be mulcted, and suffer the punishment of inhospitality [t].

Ver. 19. *Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses, &c.*] Straw to litter them with, and provender to feed them with, which he had brought with him on them: *and there is bread and wine also for me, and for thine handmaid;* meaning himself and his concubine; there were enough for them both, which were packed up, and carried by the asses: *and for the young man which is with thy servants;* the supplement, which is, seems quite needless, and even impertinent; for as yet the young man, by whom he means his servant, was not as yet in company with the servants of the old man; but the sense is, that there was not only provisions with him for himself, and his wife, and also for his servant, but even enough for the servants of the old man, whether maid or man servants; *there is no want of any thing;* and therefore none needed to be shy of taking them in, since they should not be burdensome to any upon any account; all they wanted was a lodging.

Ver. 20. *And the old man said, peace be with you, &c.*] All happiness attend thee, particularly ease and tranquillity of mind, let nothing disturb or distress thee: *howsoever, let all thy wants lie upon me;* signifying, that if he had neither bread nor wine for himself, his wife, and his servant, nor any litter nor provender for his asses, he was welcome to all from him; and whatever his wants were, he would supply them, which was nobly and generously said: *only lodge not in the street;* that I can't bear to think of, as if he should say; for a stranger, an Israelite, one of my own country, a good man, a Levite going to the house of God, to take up a lodging in the streets, let it not be said.

Ver. 21. *So he brought him into his house, &c.*] Shewed him the way to it, and in a kind and friendly manner introduced him, and bid him welcome: *and gave provender unto the asses:* this is mentioned first, it being then perhaps, as now, the first thing that a careful man is concerned for, to see that his cattle is taken care of, and then himself; and such a method this ancient good man took with his guest: and *they washed their feet;* which was commonly done to strangers in those hot countries, and was very refreshing, see Gen. xviii. 4. and xix. 2. *and did eat and drink;* sat down at table and supped with him.

Ver. 22. Now *as they were making their hearts merry, &c.*] With a glass of wine after supper, and conversing together in a cheerful manner about their

[t] Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 4. c. 1.

country and friends: *behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial*; very wicked, lawless, ungovernable, worthless, and unprofitable creatures, men under the influence of Satan, and their own lusts: *beset the house round about*; that none might escape out of it, especially the Levite, his wife and servant: *and beat at the door*; to get entrance, either by those within opening to them, or by breaking it open: *and spake to the master of the house, the old man*; who, upon this noise and clamour made, came to the door, to inquire what was the meaning of all this: to whom they replied, *saying, bring forth the man that came into thy house, that we may know him*; not what manner of person he was, of what country and profession, whither he was going, and what business he had here; but that they might have carnal knowledge of him in an unnatural way, or commit that sin with him which is commonly called sodomy; and the men of Sodom expressed their lust by the same word, Gen. xix. 5.

Ver. 23. *And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them*, &c.] Opened the door, and went out to converse with them, and bespoke them after this manner: *and said unto them, nay, my brethren*, nay, *I pray you, do not* so *wickedly*; it is plain he understood them in such sense, that they meant not bare knowledge of the man, as who he was, *&c.* but to commit wickedness the most abominable; so great, that it cannot be well said how great it is; and to dissuade from it, he uses the most tender language, and the most earnest entreaties: *seeing this man is come into my house, do not this folly*; he argues from the law of hospitality, which ought not to be infringed; a man being obliged to protect a stranger under his roof; and from the nature of the crime, which was folly, stupidity, and what was abominable to the last degree.

Ver. 24. *Behold*, here is *my daughter, a maiden, and his concubine*, &c.] His own daughter, a virgin, and the concubine of the Levite his guest: *them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you*; those he proposed to bring out, and deliver to them, to lie with, to do with as they pleased to gratify their raging lust, which to do was more than he ought, or had power to do: he had no right to prostitute his own daughter, and much less the concubine or wife of another man, though perhaps it might be with the consent of the Levite; but all this he said in a hurry and surprise, in a fright and terror, and of two evils choosing the least, and perhaps in imitation of Lot, whose case might come to remembrance: *but unto this man do not so vile a thing*; as he apprehended that to be which they were desirous of, whether to kill him, as he himself says, ch. xx. 5. or to commit the unnatural sin, and which, rather than comply with, he should have chosen to have been slain.

Ver. 25. *But the men would not hearken to him*, &c.] Especially with respect to his daughter, whom they knew very well, and had no affection for, perhaps was not handsome enough for them: *so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them*; that is, not the old man, but the Levite took his own wife or concubine, and put her forth to them, very probably with her consent, to try if that would pacify them, she being a fair and beautiful woman, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel suggest; and Josephus[u] intimates, that some young men of the city had seen her in the street, and were captivated with her beauty, and came on purpose for her, and would not be satisfied unless she was delivered to them; and upon which her husband, perceiving this, laid hold on her by main strength, as the word signifies, and brought her out whether she would or no, as Kimchi notes: *and they knew her, and abused her all night until the morning*; had carnal knowledge of her, and used her in a most shocking manner one after another, all the night long, until the morning appeared: *and when the day began to spring*; at break of day, when the light dawned: *they let her go*; their works being works of darkness, and would not bear the light.

Ver. 26. *Then came the woman in the dawning of the day*, &c.] When those wicked wretches who had abused her had left her, having had her from place to place, at some distance from the house out of which she was put, and to which she got again, as well as she could: *and fell down at the door of the man's house where her lord was*; her husband, so called, not because she had been his servant, but because she was his wife; and at the door of the old man's house, where he was, which she knew, and had found out by one means or another; she fell down, either purposely for her ease, and to lie and wait there, until the time of opening the door in the morning; or rather through weakness, not being able to stand, nor so much as to knock at the door to get admittance: and there she lay *till it was light*; broad day-light.

Ver. 27. *And her lord rose up in the morning*, &c.] Very early no doubt, and it is scarcely reasonable to think he should sleep quietly after such a riot, and his concubine or wife delivered up to the lust of such brutish creatures: *and opened the doors of the house, and went out to go his way*; either in search of her, or rather to make the best of his way on his journey, to preserve his own life, having given her up for lost: *and, behold the woman his concubine was fallen down at the door of the house, and her hands* were *upon the threshold*; in a posture that persons are when they fall, stretching out their hands to save themselves what they can; or of such who lay themselves down to sleep with their hands under their heads, and which her husband thought was her case, by what follows.

Ver. 28. *And he said unto her, up, and let us be going*, &c.] He spoke to her as supposing her asleep, in order to awake her, and prepare for their journey with all the haste they could, lest greater mischief should befall them: *but none answered*; for she was dead; and her death was occasioned, as Josephus[w] says, partly through grief at what she had suffered, and partly through shame, not daring to come into the sight of her husband; but chiefly through the injuries done her by the number of persons that had

[u] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 8.

[w] Ut supra.

lain with her: so it is reported[x] of the Thessalonians, when they took Phocis, many women were destroyed through the abundance of rapes committed upon them. To these Abarbinel adds, the cold of the night, being without her clothes, or any thing to cover her: *then the man took her up upon an ass;* and carried off her dead body, without making any remonstrance to the inhabitants, from whom he could not expect that any justice would be done him: *and the man rose up, and got him unto his place;* to his city on one side Mount Ephraim, to which he made as much haste as he could, instead of going to the house of God at Shiloh, as he proposed; for now the circumstances of things were changed with him, and instead of sacrificing and giving praise to God in his house, his business was to seek for justice from the tribes of Israel.

Ver. 29. *And when he was come into his house, &c.*] Having taken the dead body of his wife from off the ass, and brought it in thither, and laid it in a proper place and order: *he took a knife;* a carving-knife, such as food is cut with, as the word signifies; the Targum is, a sword: *and laid hold on his concubine, and divided her,* together *with her bones, into* 12 *pieces;* cut off her limbs at the joints of her bones, and made 12 pieces of them, according to the number of the tribes of Israel: *and sent her into all the coasts of Israel;* that is, to every tribe, as Josephus says[y]: there was now no supreme magistrate to apply unto for justice, nor the court of 70 elders, and therefore he took this strange and unheard-of method to acquaint the several tribes with the fact committed; this he did not out of disrespect to his wife, but to express the vehement passion he was in on account of her death, in the way it was, and to raise their indignation at the perpetrators of it. Ben Gersom thinks he did not send to the tribe of Benjamin, where the evil was done; but Abarbinel is of another mind, and as Levi was not a tribe that lay together in one part of the land, but was scattered in it, pieces might be sent to the two half-tribes of Manasseh, as the one lay on the one side Jordan, and the other on the other, and so there were 12 for the 12 pieces to be sent unto. So Ptolemy king of Egypt killed his eldest son, and divided his members, and put them in a box, and sent them to his mother on his birth-day[z]. Chytræus[a] writes, that about A. C. 140, a citizen of Vicentia, his daughter being ravished by the governor Carrarius, and cut to pieces, who had refused to send her to him, being sent back again, he put up the carcass in a vessel, and sent it to the senate of Venice, and invited them to punish the governor, and seize upon the city.

Ver. 30. *And it was so, that all that saw it, &c.*] The dismembered pieces of the dead body, and were made acquainted with the cause of it; for so Josephus[b] says, he gave the messengers a command to declare what was the cause of her death: *said, there was no such deed done nor seen, from the day that the children of Israel came out of Egypt, unto this day;* meaning not so much the cutting in pieces the dead body, and sending it to different parts; though that was awful and shocking, as the complicated wickedness committed at Gibeah, which was the cause of it, to which reference is had, Hos. ix. 9. this is an observation of the writer of this book, Samuel; but what follows are the words either of those the Levite sent, who were bid to deliver them to those to whom the pieces were sent, or else of the persons present at the time of the delivery of the pieces to them, or whom they got together to disclose the matter to: *consider of it, take advice, and speak* your minds; well weigh and think of the matter within yourselves, consult with one another what is proper to be done, and give your opinion freely without any reserve.

CHAP. XX.

THIS chapter relates, how that there was an assembly of the children of Israel at Mizpeh, upon what had happened to the concubine of the Levite, where he appeared and related the whole affair to them, ver. 1—7. upon which they unanimously agreed to chastise the inhabitants of Gibeah for what they had done, ver. 8—11. and in order to it sent to the tribe of Benjamin to deliver up the guilty, but instead of that they took to their arms, and prepared for battle in defence of them, ver. 12—17. and two battles ensued on this, in which the Israelites, who were on the right side of the question, were worsted, ver. 18—25. but upon their seeking the Lord again, and their humiliation before him, they engaged a third time in battle, and got an entire victory over the Benjaminites, and destroyed them all excepting 600 men, ver. 26—48.

Ver. 1. *Then all the children of Israel went out, &c.*] Of their tribes, cities, habitations, not every individual of them, but some of the chief of them, with a select company with them: *and the congregation was gathered together as one man;* with as much unanimity and ease met together in one place, at the same time, as if only one man had been pitched upon and deputed for that purpose: *from Dan even to Beer-sheba,* from the city Dan, lately built, which was in the most northern parts of the land of Canaan, to Beer-sheba, a city in the most southern part, which included all the tribes in the land of Canaan, who all, excepting Benjamin, assembled: *with the land of Gilead;* which lay on the other side Jordan, inhabited by the two tribes of Reuben and Dan, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who also came on this occasion: *unto the Lord in Mizpeh;* a city which lay upon the borders of Judah and Benjamin, and is therefore assigned to them both, Josh. xv. 38. and xviii. 26. for this was not Mizpeh in the land of Gilead, but a city near to Shiloh; and, according

[x] Herodot. Urania, sive, l. 8. c. 33.
[y] Ut supra.
[z] Justin. e Trogo, l. 38. c. 8.
[a] Apud Quistorp. in loc.
[b] Ut supra.

to Fuller [b], eight miles from Gibeah, and so was a convenient place to meet at: it is not to be thought the tribes met here, by a secret impulse upon their minds, but by a summons of some principal persons in one of the tribes, very probably in the tribe of Ephraim, where the Levite dwelt, and in which was the tabernacle of the Lord, and of which the last supreme magistrate was, namely, Joshua; and all having notice of the occasion of it, met very readily; and because they assembled in the name and fear of God, and it was in the cause of God, and as a solemn assembly, a judicial one, in which God was usually present, they are said to be gathered unto him, and the rather, as they sought for direction and counsel from him in the affair before them.

Ver. 2. *And the chief of all the people,* &c.] The princes of the tribes and heads of families, rulers of thousands, and hundreds, and fifties, and tens; or the *corners* [c], who were like the corner-stones in a building, which are not only the most valuable and ornamental, but the strength of the building, which cement it, and support it, and hold it together; though Abarbinel thinks this intends the division and separation of each tribe, which encamped in a separate corner and side by itself: but the former sense seems best, and the meaning is, that the principal men of them, even *of all the tribes of Israel;* excepting the tribe of Benjamin: *presented themselves in the assembly of the people of God;* now gathered together: which assembly consisted, besides the heads of them, of 400,000 *footmen that drew sword;* or were armed men; there were 600,000 or more in Israel able to bear arms; but as now the wars in Canaan were pretty much at an end, the militia of the nation was not so regularly kept up, and many were employed in tilling the ground, and dressing the vines, and the like; and besides, as there were none of the tribe of Benjamin present, it need not be wondered at there should be no more, but rather that so many should be gathered together on such an occasion.

Ver. 3. *Now the children of Benjamin heard that the children of Israel were gone up to Mizpeh,* &c.] Having no doubt the same notice the rest of the tribes had; but the thing complained of being done in their tribe, and by some of it, they might be willing to screen the delinquents, or were careless about and indifferent to the case, and secure and easy, as imagining their brethren would never go to war with them about it; or were proud and haughty, and would pay no regard to the summons given them: *then said the children of Israel, tell us, how was this wickedness?* proclamation was made in the assembly, that if any person there knew any thing of this shocking affair, and horrid iniquity, which was the occasion of their meeting together, that they would rise up and declare what was the cause of it, how it came about, and by whom it was done; or they addressed themselves particularly to the Levite, and his host, and his servant, who might all be upon the spot to bear witness in this case, as it is certain the former of them was, who upon this stood up, and spoke as follows.

Ver. 4. *And the Levite, the husband of the woman that was slain, answered, and said,* &c.] He rose up, and, in answer to their request, declared the whole affair as follows: and none so proper as he, who was upon the spot when it was done, and so near a relation of the deceased, and had a right to demand justice to be done; for from hence it appears that she was his lawful wife, though called a concubine: *I came into Gibeah, that* belongeth *to Benjamin;* which he so particularly describes, to distinguish it from another of the same name in the tribe of Judah, lest any mistake should be made, and an innocent people should suffer in their reputation, or otherwise; and which also would account for the tribe of Benjamin not being present at this convention: *I and my concubine, to lodge;* thither they came, not with an intention to stay, to sojourn there, and much less to do them any injury, or to infringe any of their rights and privileges; nor in the least to be burdensome to them, having brought all necessary provisions with them for themselves, servants, and cattle, only to get a night's lodging with them.

Ver. 5. *And the men of Gibeah rose against me,* &c.] Not all of them, but some that dwelt in that city; he forbears giving them the character they justly deserved, sons of Belial. These came in a tumultuous and violent manner, *and beset the house round about upon me by night;* that he might not make his escape, resolving if possible to get him into their hands, and do with him according to their will: *and thought to have slain me;* their first intention was to commit the unnatural sin on him, and, if he resisted, to slay him; but this he modestly conceals, as being a sin not to be named in an assembly of saints; and besides he might say this, because he himself chose rather to be slain than to submit to their lust, which he knew must be the case upon his refusal and resistance; and even if he had yielded, being overpowered, this would have been the consequence, that he should have been abused even unto death, as his wife was: and *my concubine have they forced, that she is dead;* or *afflicted*, or *humbled* [d] her; which is a modest expression for carnal knowledge of her, and which they had to such excess that she died through it.

Ver. 6. *And I took my concubine, and cut her in pieces,* &c.] Lest it should be thought that these barbarous creatures, after they had used her in such a manner that occasioned her death, that they had committed this fact also; the Levite takes it to himself, and owns that he did that: *and sent her throughout all the country of the inheritance of Israel;* to alarm them, and excite their attention to what had passed, and to raise their indignation against it: *for they have committed lewdness and folly in Israel;* being guilty of adultery and murder, and would have committed the unnatural crime, if they could have had an opportunity of doing it.

Ver. 7. *Behold, ye are all children of Israel,* &c.] The descendants of one man that feared the Lord; were of one nation, and of one religion, men professing godliness, and therefore ought to bear testimony against sin and wickedness of every sort, and

[b] Pisgah-Sight, B. 2. c. 12. p. 259.
[c] פנות anguli, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus, Drusius, Tigurine version.
[d] ענו afflixerunt, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

especially such crying abominations as these: *give here your advice and counsel*: in this place, being assembled together on this occasion; consult what is best to be done, and let every man speak his mind freely what step he thinks should be taken for the glory of God, and honour of religion, and to bring such persons to justice who had committed so foul a fact.

Ver. 8. *And all the people arose as one man*, &c.] Either the heads of the people assembled in council, all agreed unanimously in one vote or resolution, or all the 400,000 men were of the same mind, when the case was reported to them: *saying, we will not any of us go to his tent, neither will we any of us turn into his house*: that is, they would not return home, to take one night's rest in their houses, or attend to the business of their callings, or to any affair of life, however urgent, till satisfaction was made for the evil committed.

Ver. 9. *But now this* shall be *the thing which we will do to Gibeah*, &c.] Where the fact was done; what follows was proposed by some, and unanimously agreed to by all: we will go up *by lot against it*: cast lots who shall go up to it, and demand satisfaction for the offence committed; and if denied, to act in an hostile manner against it.

Ver. 10. *And we will take ten men of an hundred, throughout all the tribes of Israel*, &c.] Excepting that of Benjamin, which was not with them, not any of them: *and a hundred out of a thousand, and a thousand out of ten thousand*; in all 40,000, out of the 400,000: *to fetch victual for the people*: ten men were to provide food for 90, and 100 men for 900, and 1,000 men for 9,000, in all 40,000, for 360,000; these were either to go to their own tribes and habitations, or to the towns and cities adjacent, to procure food for this large army; for they came from their homes without any provision, not knowing that the affair would retard them long; but perceiving that it would require time before it could be determined, they judged it the wisest method for some to be appointed to take care of provision for the army, that it might not be scattered about on that account, but pursue the war with vigour till satisfaction was obtained: *that they might do, when they came to Gibeah of Benjamin, according to all the folly that they have wrought in Israel*; punish with death the delinquents, and chastise the inhabitants, and especially the magistrates, for their connivance at such wicked persons among them, and negligence of doing their duty.

Ver. 11. *So all the men of Israel were gathered against the city*, &c.] Of Gibeah, even 360,000 men: *knit together as one man*; went heart and hand together, united in their sentiments and resolutions, determining to have justice done, or lose their lives in this cause: according to the Jews[e], this was on the 23d of Shebet, which answers to part of January and part of February, on which day a fast was kept on this account.

Ver. 12. *And the tribes of Israel sent men through all the tribes of Benjamin*, &c.] Meaning the families of Benjamin; for as sometimes a tribe is called a family, Josh. vii. 17. so a family is called a tribe; and there were ten families in the tribe of Benjamin, according to the number of his sons, the fathers of these families, see Gen. xlvi. 21. which being numerous and powerful, and consisting of men of courage, and expert in war, thought themselves a match for the ten tribes of Israel now assembled, who sent one out of each tribe, very probably ten in all, upon this errand; for they judged it most advisable, before they went to war with them, to try to get the offenders delivered up to justice, and so prevent the shedding of blood of either side; and the rather, as there were none of the tribe of Benjamin at this assembly, and which indeed might give them reason to suspect they meant not to join with them in an amicable manner in this affair; however, they were willing to try peaceable methods first: *saying, what wickedness is this that is done among you?* not that they were sent to inquire what the crime was that was committed, that was fully known; but by putting the question in this manner, their design was to aggravate it, and to put the men of Benjamin on considering how great it was, what an enormous sin it was that was committed, and that among them; and therefore it lay upon them, either to punish the perpetrators of it themselves or deliver them up to them to be punished according to the common law of Israel.

Ver. 13. *Now, therefore, deliver us the men, the children of Belial, which are in Gibeah*, &c.] Those wicked men that were the authors of that abominable wickedness there committed: *that we may put them to death*; as they deserved, since they were guilty both of adultery and murder; their meaning is, that they in conjunction with the tribe of Benjamin might adjudge them to death, and punish them with it, as their crime deserved: *and put away evil from Israel*; prevent both the spread of such a sinful evil in the nation, encouraged by such examples, and the evil of punishment coming upon them from God, should they let such wickedness pass with impunity: *but the children of Benjamin would not hearken to the voice of their brethren the children of Israel*; they refused to give up the men of Gibeah, that had been guilty of such great wickedness; reckoning it a reproach, as Josephus[f] says, to obey the commands of others, for fear of war, and unwilling to yield to any in arms, neither on account of multitude nor courage.

Ver. 14. *But the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together out of the cities unto Gibeah*, &c.] To protect and defend it against the other tribes, being a city of theirs, and where the persons charged with the crime lived; these got together thither out of the several cities of the tribe of Benjamin, as many as could bear arms: *to go out to battle against the children of Israel*; they neither denied the fact, nor attempted to palliate and excuse it, nor sought for peace, but at once betook themselves to arms; which shewed not only want of prudence, but pride, passion, and self-confidence, and that they were sadly depraved in their morals to rise up in defence of such wicked men; and a strange infatuation to expect success against such vastly superior numbers, and in so bad a cause.

Ver. 15. *And the children of Benjamin were numbered at that time out of the cities*, &c.] All that they

[e] Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.

[f] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 9.

could muster up, and gather together out of their several cities, were no more than 26,000 *men that drew the sword*; able-bodied men fit for war, and expert in it: *beside the inhabitants of Gibeah, which were numbered* 700 *chosen men*; young, stout, and strong, and in all but 26,700; and what are these to an army of 400,000 men, or however 300,000 that came up against Gibeah, whilst 40,000 were employed in getting provisons for them? Josephus[g] makes the number of the Benjaminites still less, no more than 25,600, led thereunto by an after-account, that 25,000 Benjaminites were slain in the third and last battle, and only 600 escaped to a rock for safety, not considering that 1,000 men may well be supposed to be lost in the two first battles; for it would be strange indeed that they should lose none in two engagements with so large an army; the same error is committed in the Vulgate Latin version, which makes them no more than 25,000; with which agrees the Alexandrian copy of the Septuagint version: though that, according to the Vatican exemplar, has but 23,000. The numbers in the Hebrew text are no doubt the right.

Ver. 16. *Among all this people there were 700 chosen men left-handed*, &c.] According to Ben Gersom, these were the 700 men of Gibeah; but this does not appear from the text, but, on the contrary, that these were among all the people; or there were so many to be selected out of them all, who were left-handed men; nor is it likely that all the inhabitants of one place should be such. Benjamin signifies a son of the right hand, yet this tribe had a great number of left-handed men in it, see ch. iii. 15. Josephus[h] wrongly reduces the number to 500: *every one could sling stones at an hair's* breadth, *and not miss*; the mark they slung the stone at, so very expert were they at it; and perhaps their having such a number of skilful men in this art made them more confident of success, and emboldened them in this daring undertaking, to point to which this circumstance seems to be mentioned. There were a people that inhabited the islands, now called Majorca and Minorca, anciently Baleares, from their skilfulness in slinging stones, to which they were brought up from their childhood, as it is related by various writers, Strabo[i], Diodorus Siculus[k], Florus[l], and others[m]; that their mothers used to set their breakfast on a beam or post, or some such thing, at a distance, which they were not to have, unless they could strike it off; and the first of these writers says, that they exercised this art from the time that the Phœnicians held these islands; and, according to Pliny[n], the Phœnicians, the old inhabitants of Canaan, were the first inventors of slings, and from these the Benjaminites might learn it. The Indians are said[o] to be very expert in slinging stones to an hair's breadth.

Ver. 17. *And the men of Israel, beside Benjamin*, &c.] Who did not join them in this affair, but opposed them, *were numbered* 400,000 *men that drew sword*: see ver. 2. *all these* were *men of war*; inured to it, skilful and courageous.

Ver. 18. *And the children of Israel arose*, &c.] From Mizpeh, where they were assembled, having heard that the Benjaminites were gathered together to defend the men of Gibeah: *and went up to the house of God*; to the tabernacle which was in Shiloh, ch. xviii. 31. see Josh. xviii. 1. though the Targum takes Beth-el for the name of a place so called; and so do Ben Gersom and Josephus[p], which was near Shiloh, for Shiloh is said to be on the north side of Beth-el, ch. xxi. 19. but as there is no reason to believe the tabernacle was now removed from Shiloh thither, so it is not likely they would go to any other place but where the tabernacle, ark, and high-priest were: *and asked counsel of God*; before Phinehas the high-priest, according to the judgment of Urim and Thummim, ver. 28. *and said, which of us shall go up first to the battle against the children of Benjamin?* there being no supreme magistrate, judge, or general, to lead them; they did not ask whether they should go to war or no with their brethren; they made no doubt of that, taking it for granted they had sufficient reason for so doing, and that it was according to the will of God; nor did they inquire whether they should be victorious or no, they made no doubt of being victorious, both from their superior numbers, and the justness of their cause; they only inquire who should lead them on, having no general; and this they might do, to prevent any contentions among them about precedency: *and the Lord said, Judah* shall go up *first*; which tribe pitched their standard first about the tabernacle, and marched first in their journeys in the wilderness, and was ordered to go up first and fight the Canaanites, being a powerful and warlike tribe.

Ver. 19. *And the children of Israel rose up in the morning*, &c.] After they had had counsel at Shiloh, and which perhaps was by a deputation sent thither: *and encamped against Gibeah*; formed a camp near Gibeah of 360,000 men, enough to have stormed and taken that city at once, one would think.

Ver. 20. *And the men of Israel went out to battle against Benjamin*, &c.] From the place where they were encamped: *and the men of Israel put themselves in array to fight against them at Gibeah*; not only against the inhabitants of Gibeah, but the children of Benjamin, that came to the defence of them; they formed themselves in a line of battle, and prepared for an action.

Ver. 21. *And the children of Benjamin came forth out of Gibeah*, &c.] Which was their place of rendezvous, and which they came to defend; and in and about which they had stationed their whole army of 26,000 men: *and destroyed down to the ground*; killed dead upon the spot: *of the Israelites that day* 22,000 *men*; wanting but 4,000 of their whole number, excepting the men of Gibeah, which was such a rebuff the Israelites did not expect, being engaged in so just a cause, and having such a numerous army. Several Jewish writers[q] think this was on account of their

[g] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 10.
[h] Ibid.
[i] Geograph. l. 3. p. 116.
[k] Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 298.
[l] Roman. Gest. l. 3. c. 8.
[m] Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. in 3 Consul. Honor. ver. 50.

[n] Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56.
[o] Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. l. 2. c. 12.
[p] Ut supra.
[q] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 103. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 28. Jarchi & Kimchi in loc.

idolatry, that though they were very zealous to revenge corporeal adultery in the case of the Levite's concubine, and to remove such iniquity from Israel: yet were not zealous to revenge and put away spiritual adultery or idolatry in the case of the Danites, who had set up the image of Micah, and so had spread idolatry not only in their own tribe, but throughout Israel; and therefore God took this opportunity to avenge his own quarrel, and rebuke them for their sin; and now did Benjamin raven as a wolf, according to Jacob's prophecy, Gen. xlix. 27.

Ver. 22. *And the people, the men of Israel, encouraged themselves*, &c.] That though they had lost a great number of men, yet still their forces were large and greatly superior to those of Benjamin, and above all their cause was good: *and set their battle again in array*: formed a line of battle again facing their enemy, inviting to another battle, and bidding defiance: *and in the place where they put themselves in array the first day*; by which it seems they kept the field of battle; though they lost so many men, they did not flee before the children of Benjamin, but stood their ground; nor were they so superstitious as to fancy the place unlucky; nor was it a bad situation they were in, to which their want of success was owing, for then they would have changed it.

Ver. 23. *And the children of Israel went up and wept before the Lord until even*, &c.] The evening of the day in which the battle was fought; not that the whole army went up to Shiloh to the house of God there, but a deputation of them, who lamented their defeat, and the loss of so many lives, but not their sins and transgressions, and particularly the idolatry they had been guilty of: *and asked counsel of the Lord, saying, shall we go up again to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother?* they seemed to have some doubt, by the loss they sustainsd, whether they were right in going to war with Benjamin, especially as he was their brother; and therefore the question now is, not who should go up first, which was already determined, but whether they should go at all; and still they don't ask any help of God in battle, nor success, but were depending on their numbers, and the justness of their cause, and therefore neither is promised to them, only they have an answer to their question: *and the Lord said, go up against him*: for Benjamin was certainly in the wrong, and therefore the Israelites are directed to go against him, and they also were not sufficiently chastised, nor thoroughly humbled.

Ver. 24. *And the children of Israel came near*, &c.] To the city of Gibeah, drew nigh to battle: *against the children of Benjamin the second day*: for the two battles were fought two days successively.

Ver. 25. *And Benjamin went forth against them out of Gibeah the second day*, &c.] Flushed with the victory they had obtained the day before: *and destroyed down to the ground of the children of Israel again 18,000 men, all these drew the sword*: were armed men; this, with the 22,000 slain the day preceding, made 40,000; the same number singled out from among them by lot to provide food for them, and is thought by some to be the case Deborah refers to, ch. v. 8. and is what is certainly intended in Hos. x. 9.

Ver. 26. *Then all the children of Israel and all the people went up, and came unto the house of God*, &c.] This looks as if the whole body of the army, with other people from parts adjacent, went up to the tabernacle of God in Shiloh: *and wept and sat there before the Lord*: not only wept, but continued weeping, and that not merely for their defeat, but for their sins, since it follows: *and fasted that day until even*: afflicted their bodies with fasting, which was a token of the humiliation of their souls for their sins: *and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord*: to make atonement for their sins, and to implore success on their arms.

Ver. 27. *And the children of Israel inquired of the Lord*, &c.] By the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, and which has the same expression in ver. 18, 23. *for the ark of the covenant of God was there in those days*; in Shiloh, where the tabernacle was.

Ver. 28. *And Phinehas the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron, stood before it in those days*, &c.] Before the ark, ministering before the Lord, which shews that this affair was long before the times of Samson, though placed after them; or otherwise Phinehas must have been more than 300 years of age, which is not probable[*]. Phinehas's standing before the ark was the posture of the priest when he inquired of the Lord for any by Urim and Thummim; the person that inquired stood before him that was inquired of, as Kimchi observes, and he that was inquired of stood before the Shechinah, or the presence of the divine Majesty, of which the ark was a symbol: *saying, shall I yet again go out to battle against the children of Benjamin my brother, or shall I cease?* in which the question is put in somewhat different manner than before, not only desiring to know whether it was the will of God they should renew the battle or not, since Benjamin was their brother, but whether they should have success or not; intimating, that if the Lord would bless and succeed them, they were willing to go up, but if not they chose to desist; for they were fully convinced now they were wrong in depending on their numbers, or the justness of their cause; whereas success depended wholly on the will and pleasure of God, to which they desired to submit: *and the Lord said, go up, for to-morrow I will deliver them into thine hand*: now they are not only directed to go up to the battle, but are promised victory.

Ver. 29. *And Israel set liers in wait round about Gibeah.*] For though they were assured of success and victory, yet they thought proper to make use of means; and though their numbers were very great, they had recourse to art and stratagem, and set an ambush in divers places, much in like manner as Israel did for the men of Ai; the two cases being pretty much similar; this ambush was set in the night, as Josephus says[*].

Ver. 30. *And the children of Israel went up against the children of Benjamin on the third day*, &c.] Not the day following the second battle, since it would take more time to go to Shiloh, and fast and offer sacrifices

[*] Vid. Rainold. de lib. Apocryph. Praelect. 149, 150. p. 245, 253, 254.

[*] Ut supra, sect. 11.

there, but on the third day from the second battle: *and put themselves in array against Gibeah, as at other times*; as they had done on the first and second days of battle.

Ver. 31. *And the children of Benjamin went out against the people*, &c.] Sallied out of Gibeah upon them, where they had put themselves in array against them: and *were drawn away from the city*: the Israelites retreating, and dissembling a flight, which drew the Benjaminites to pursue after them, by which means they were drawn off to a greater distance from the city of Gibeah: *and they began to smite of the people, and kill as at other times*; at the other two battles; *in the highways*; where it seems two ways met: *of which one goeth up to the house of God*: to Beth-el, as the Targum[t]; or rather to Shiloh, where the house or tabernacle of God was, and was two miles from Gibeah, as Bunting[u] says: *and the other to Gibeah in the field*; so called, to distinguish it from the other Gibeah situated on an hill: *about thirty men of Israel*: which were killed in this running fight; and it seems as if one part of the army of Israel took one road, and the other the other road, and so divided the army of the Benjaminites that pursued after them.

Ver. 32. *And the children of Benjamin said, they are smitten down before us, as at first*, &c.] At the first battle, which gave them great spirit, and they concluded they should have victory, as before: *but the children of Israel said, let us flee, and draw them from the city unto the highways*; pretending to be afraid of them, and not able to face them, and therefore made as if they fled through fear and cowardice, which inspired the Benjaminites with fresh ardour to pursue them closely, and so were drawn from the city to the highways, as expressed in the preceding verse.

Ver. 33. *And all the men of Israel rose up out of their place*, &c.] The main body of the army, which fled before Benjamin, when they were come to a proper place, stopped, and rose up out of it, and stood in their own defence: *and put themselves in array at Baal-tamar*; drew up in a line of battle at that place, facing their enemies, in order to engage with them: this place the Targum calls the plains of Jericho, that being the city of palm-trees, which Tamar signifies; and so Jarchi interprets it; but these are too far off, it must be some place near Gibeah. Jerom[w] speaks of a little village in his time in those parts, called Bethamari, and may be thought to be this same place; perhaps in the times of the old Canaanites here was a grove of palm-trees, in which Baal was worshipped, from whence it had its name: *and the liers in wait of Israel came forth out of their places, even out of the meadows of Gibeah*: or plain of Gibeah, as the Targum; for as the city was built on a hill, at the bottom of it were a plain and fine meadows of grass, and here an ambush was placed at some little distance from the city; and when the army of the Benjaminites were drawn off from it, in pursuit of Israel, these came forth and placed themselves between them and the city.

Ver. 34. *And there came against Gibeah 10,000 chosen men out of all Israel*, &c.] Which, according to Ben Gersom, were the liers in wait; and came from the south, as the Targum says: *and the battle was sore*; not between those liers in wait, and the Benjaminites, but between those at Baal-tamar, and them who set themselves in battle array against them, and they fought stoutly on both sides: *but they knew not that evil was near them*; that there was an ambush laid, by which they were in great danger; they knew nothing of the 10,000 men that were now come out against Gibeah, and were between them and that.

Ver. 35. *And the Lord smote Benjamin before Israel*, &c.] Gave Israel the victory over them at Baal-tamar; for notwithstanding all the art and stratagem they used, their numbers and their valour, victory was of the Lord, and to him it is ascribed; for until now Benjamin, though fewer in number, had been always victorious; *and the children of Israel destroyed of the Benjaminites that day* 25,100; which is the total sum of all that were slain of them that day, the particulars of which are afterwards given: *all these drew the sword*; were armed men.

Ver. 36. *So the children of Benjamin saw that they were smitten*, &c.] Their forces broken and worsted, many being killed: *for the men of Israel gave place to the Benjaminites*; at first, and made as if they were afraid of them, and so fled before them, which was only to decoy them to a greater distance from the city of Gibeah: *because they trusted unto the liers in wait, which they had set beside Gibeah*; that these would not only enter the city, and burn it, but meet the Benjaminites fleeing back to it, when they should turn upon them and smite them, and so cut off all that remained of them.

Ver. 37. *And the liers in wait hasted*, &c.] When the time was come agreed upon for them to rise out of their ambush: *and rushed upon Gibeah*; at unawares, with great force and violence entered the city, and took possession of it; or *extended*[x], or spread themselves unto it; before they lay close in a narrow compass, but now they put themselves in a regular order, and marched rank and file, and reached from the meadows in which they were, ver. 33, to the city: *and the liers in wait drew* themselves *along*; along the city, in every part of it, spread themselves all over it, and made themselves masters of every corner of it; or *made a long sound*[y] with a trumpet, protracted that to a great length, which was done to terrify the inhabitants, or to let the Israelites know they were possessed of the city: *and smote all the city with the edge of the sword*: old men, women, and children, who were not able to bear arms.

Ver. 38. *Now there was an appointed sign between the men of Israel and the liers in wait*, &c.] Or an appointed time[z], as the Targum; so Kimchi and Abarbinel. There was a time fixed, at which the men of Israel proposed to be at Baal-tamar, exactly when the Benjaminites would be drawn at a proper distance from the city, and then the liers in wait were to break forth, and rush upon it, and enter it: and *that they*

[t] So the Septuagint, and Noldius, p. 69. No. 245.
[u] Travels, &c. p. 121.
[w] De loc. Heb. fol. 89. I.
[x] ויפשטו extenderunt se, Tigurine version.

[y] וימשך pertraxerunt buccinæ sonitum, Pagninus; so Jarchi and Kimchi.
[z] המועד tempus constitutum, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

should make a great flame with smoke to rise up out of the city: set it on fire, and cause the fire to burn fiercely, that there might be a large ascent of flame and smoke to be seen afar off; which, when the men of Israel saw, they would know the city was taken.

Ver. 39. *And when the men of Israel retired in the battle*, &c.] Which is before expressed by their fleeing, and giving place to the Benjaminites, and was only an artifice of theirs, to draw them off from the city: *Benjamin began to smite and kill of the men of Israel about thirty persons*: which was done in the highways leading to Shiloh and Gibeah in the field, ver. 31. *for they said, surely they are smitten down before us as in the first battle*: when the greater number of the Israelites were slain by them.

Ver. 40. *But when the flame began to arise up out of the city with a pillar of smoke*, &c.] Fire being set to it by the liers in wait, who had entered it, and who made a large fire, which caused a vast pillar of flame and smoke to arise, which might be seen a great way off: *the Benjaminites looked behind them*: perhaps at hearing the blowing of the trumpet, and the long sound of that: *and, behold, the flame of the city ascended up to heaven*: went upwards, and reached to a great height.

Ver. 41. *And when the men of Israel turned again*, &c.] Turned their faces to the Benjaminites, on whom they had turned their backs; and which they did on hearing the sound of the trumpet, or seeing the flame of the city, or both, and that in order to fight the Benjaminites, and smite them, as now was their opportunity: *the men of Benjamin were amazed*: at this strange and sudden change of things, at the sight of the flame of their city behind them, and at the Israelites turning back to fight them, when they thought themselves sure of victory, as at other times: *for they saw that evil was come upon them*: that they were in the utmost danger, between two fires, as we usually say, liers in wait behind them, which had seized their city and burnt it, and the army of Israel turning upon them with great spirit and resolution.

Ver. 42. *Therefore they turned their backs before the men of Israel*, &c.] And fled from them: *unto the way of the wilderness*: what wilderness is not certain, perhaps the wilderness of Judah: they did not turn directly back towards Gibeah, perceiving that was taken, and in the hands of a body of men that would meet them, and therefore they turned on one side towards the wilderness, if happily they could make their escape thither, and shelter themselves: *but the battle overtook them*: that is, they that made war, as the Targum, the Israelites that were engaged in battle with them pursued them, and overtook them: *and them which came out of the cities they destroyed in the midst of them*: either the Israelites that came out of their cities to assist their brethren destroyed the Benjaminites as they fled, or the Benjaminites who came out of other cities to Gibeah, these were destroyed in the midst of it, with the inhabitants, by the liers in wait, when they entered it.

Ver. 43. Thus *they enclosed the Benjaminites round about*, &c.] Surrounded them on all sides, the army of Israel being posted in different places, and people coming out of all the cities to their assistance. Josephus[a] says, they were forced into, and cooped up, in a hollow place in a valley, so that they could not escape: *and chased them*: or *caused to pursue*[b]; calling after them a pursuit, crying to one another as they went along, saying, pursue them, pursue them; so Jarchi and Kimchi; which cry, as it inspired the pursuers with zeal, so the pursued with terror: and *trod them down with ease*; they making no resistance, being quite dispirited; the Targum is, "from the house of "their rest," where they took up their rest, and designed to rest that night, but could not, being so closely pursued, and diligently sought after. Some take *menuchah*, rendered *ease*, to be the name of a place, from or unto which they were pursued and trodden down, see 1 Chron. ii. 52. and so the Septuagint seems to take it for the name of a place, rendering it, *from Noua: over-against Gibeah, towards the sun-rising*; that is, as Jarchi interprets it, to the east of Gibeah, there was this overthrow and slaughter made.

Ver. 44. *And there fell of Benjamin* 18,000 *men*, &c.] Just the number they had slain of Israel in the second battle. This is the number of them that were slain when Israel turned upon them, and by that time they got to the east of Gibeah; afterwards 5,000 more were slain on the highways, and 2,000 near Gidom, as after related: *all these* were *men of valour*; as appears by three times facing and engaging with the army of Israel, so vastly superior to them, and twice beating them.

Ver. 45. *And they turned and fled toward the wilderness, unto the rock of Rimmon*, &c.] Which signifies a pomegranate; perhaps it was in the form of one, and may be the same as in 1 Sam. xiv. 2. where Saul is said to be under a pomegranate-tree, or under Rimmon, the rock Rimmon, for that is said to be near Gibeah, as this was. There was a village in the times of Jerom called Remmon, 15 miles from Jerusalem to the north[c], but could not be near this rock to have its name from thence; hither the rest of the army fled for shelter: *and they gleaned of them in the highways* 5,000 *men*; who were scattered one from another, and as they were found in the highways, and picked up, they were slain one after another, just as ears of corn are gleaned one by one, after the harvest is got in, or as grapes in single berries, after the vintage is over: *and pursued hard after them unto Gidom*: which perhaps had its name from the cutting off of the Benjaminites there: *and slew* 2,000 *men of them*: that is, 2,000 more besides the 5,000 before mentioned.

Ver. 46. *So that all which fell that day of Benjamin were* 25,000 *men*, &c.] It is before said 25,100, ver. 35. here the 100 are omitted, and the round number of thousands given, which is no unusual way of speaking and writing; the whole army of Benjamin consisted of 26,700, of which 18,000 were slain in the field of battle, 5,000 in the highways, and 2,000 at Gidom, in all 25,000; and we may suppose 100 as they were straggling in the road, or found in by-places, or are

[a] Ut supra.
[b] הרדיפהו persequi fecerunt eum, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius; vel eos, Vatablus.

[c] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. B.

not mentioned with either of the thousands for the sake of a round number, and 600 fled to the rock Rimmon; as for the other 1,000, it is highly probable they fell in the two first battles, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel rightly suppose; for it is not credible, that though they got such amazing victories, it was without the loss of men, and these are as few as well can be imagined. Jarchi thinks these thousand fled to the cities of Benjamin, and were slain when the Israelites entered them, as after related, ver. 48. which is much more probable than a tradition they have, that they went into the land of Romania, and dwelt there. Now all those that were slain were men *that drew the sword*; soldiers, not husbandmen, artificers, &c. but armed men: *all these* were *men of valour*; even those that fled, who chose rather to lose their lives than ask for quarter.

Ver. 47. *But 600 men*, &c.] Who were all that were left of 26,700: *turned and fled to the wilderness*; turned out of the highway or common road, and being swift of foot, got to a wilderness; what wilderness is not certain: *unto the rock Rimmon, and abode in the rock Rimmon four months*; very probably in a cave of that rock, which might be large enough to hold such a number; Saul is said to have just the same number under it, and David had also a like number in a cave at En-gedi, 1 Sam. xiv. 2. and xxiii. 13. and xxiv. 3. and from hence these men might send out of their number to fetch in provision for them from parts adjacent, after the heat of the action was over, and the rage and fury of the Israelites subsided.

Ver. 48. *And the men of Israel turned again upon the children of Benjamin*, &c.] After they had destroyed their army, the city of Gibeah, and the inhabitants of it: not content with this, in their wrath and fury, turned and went, *and smote them with the edge of the sword, as well the men of every city*; even men, women, and children, in every city of Benjamin, at least all that lay in their way; and which they might do to be avenged on them, for sending out their militia against them, which had made such a slaughter among them to the loss of 40,000 men, or to fulfil their oath, that such who came not to Mizpeh should be put to death; for which reason also the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, as well as of the cities of Benjamin, were put to death, men, women, and children, dealing in the same severity with them as with the Canaanitish nations, or as with a city given to idolatry: *as the beast, and all that came to hand*; spared no living creature, herds and flocks: *also they set on fire all the cities that they came unto*; which belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, so exceedingly wroth were they with them, for protecting such that had been the authors of such abominable wickedness, and for the loss of the lives of so many valuable men.

CHAP. XXI.

THIS chapter relates how that when the Israelites came to be cool, and seriously to reflect on what had passed, they were sore grieved, and much lamented the case of Benjamin, and were particularly concerned what they should do for wives for those few men that remained, that the tribe might be built up again, ver. 1—7. and for these they provided wives, partly out of Jabesh-gilead, the inhabitants of which came not up to the convention at Mizpeh, and therefore they smote them, men, women, and children, only reserved 400 virgins, whom they gave to the men of Benjamin, ver. 8—15. and partly from among the daughters of Shiloh, taken at a yearly feast there, the taking of whom was connived at, the other number not being sufficient, ver. 16—25.

Ver. 1. *Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpeh*, &c.] Where they were there convened, before the war began; after they had heard the account the Levite gave of the affair, which brought them thither; and after they had sent messengers to Benjamin to deliver up the men of Gibeah, that had committed the wickedness; and after they perceived that Benjamin did not hearken to their demand, but prepared to make war with them; then, as they resolved on the destruction of Gibeah, and of all the cities that sent out men against them, even all the inhabitants of them, men, women, and children, entered into an oath, that they would use those men that remained as Heathens, and not intermarry with them, as follows: *saying, there shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife*; seeing those that used the wife of the Levite in such a base manner, and those that protected and defended them, deserved to have no wives.

Ver. 2. *And the people came to the house of God*, &c.] Not to the city Beth-el, as the Targum, Septuagint, and other versions, but to Shiloh, where were the tabernacle and ark; and this is to be understood of the army after they had utterly destroyed the Benjaminites: hence we read of the camp in Shiloh, ver. 12. here they came not so much to rejoice, and be glad, and to return thanks for the victory they had at last obtained, as to lament the unhappy case of the tribe of Benjamin, and to have counsel and advice, and consider of ways and means to repair their loss: *and abode there till even before God*; fasting and praying, instead of feasting and rejoicing: *and lifted up their voices, and wept sore*; not so much, or at least not only for the 40,000 Israelites that were slain, but for the tribe of Benjamin, in danger of being lost, as follows.

Ver. 3. *And said, O Lord God of Israel*, &c.] Jehovah, the only living and true God, the Being of beings, eternal, immutable, omnipotent and omnipresent, the God of all Israel, of the twelve tribes of Israel, their covenant God and father; who had shewn favour to them in such a peculiar and gracious manner, as he had not to other nations, and therefore hoped he would still have a kind regard unto them, and suffer them to expostulate with him in the following manner: *why is this come to pass in Israel*; expressing, as Abarbinel thinks, a concern for the 40,000 men of Israel which fell in the two first battles; but it manifestly refers to the case in the next words: *that there*

should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel; meaning the tribe of Benjamin, which was all destroyed, excepting six hundred men, and these had no wives to propagate the tribe; and therefore, unless some provision could be made for that, it must in a short time be totally extinct; for which they express great concern, it not being their intention when they made the above oath to extirpate them; but such were now the circumstances of things in Providence, that it must perish unless some way could be found to relieve it, and which their oath seemed to preclude; and this threw them into great perplexity.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass on the morrow, that the people rose early,* &c.] The day after their fasting and prayer, and a sense of their present case and circumstances being deeply impressed upon their minds, they rose early in the morning to acts of devotion, and exercises of religion, hoping that being in the way of their duty, the difficulties with which they were perplexed would be removed: *and built there an altar;* if this place was Beth-el, as Kimchi reasons, there Jacob had built an altar; but that in such a course of years might have been demolished: and if it was Shiloh, there was the tabernacle, and so the altar of the Lord there; wherefore this either signifies the repairing of that, being in ruins, which is not likely, since it was but lately used, ch. xx. 26. or the building of a new one, which to do in the tabernacle was not unlawful, especially when the number of sacrifices required it, which it is highly probable was the case now, as it was at the dedication of the temple, 1 Kings viii. 64. though the above-mentioned writer thinks, that building an altar signifies, as in many places, only seeking the Lord; but the use for which it was built is expressed: *and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings;* both to atone for the sins they had been guilty of in the prosecution of the war, and to return thanks for victory given, and to implore fresh favours to be bestowed upon them.

Ver. 5. *And the children of Israel said,* &c.] One to another, after they had offered their sacrifices, and whilst they were together in Shiloh: *who is there among all the tribes of Israel, that came not up with the congregation unto the Lord?* when they were summoned to come to Mizpeh, to consult together about the affair of the Levite's concubine, as appears by what follows: *for they had made a great oath;* in a very awful and solemn manner, with a curse annexed to it, as that about not giving a wife to Benjamin, ver. 18. *concerning him that came not up to the Lord to Mizpeh;* not about him who did not go out to battle against Benjamin, nor about every individual that did not come to consult about it; but every city that did not send their proper representatives or quota to assist in that affair: *he shall surely be put to death;* this was sent along with the summons, in order to quicken their attention to them.

Ver. 6. *And the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother,* &c.] Not that they went to war with them, as if their cause was not good; but for the severity they had exercised towards them, especially in destroying their women and children, and for the fatal consequences like to follow hereon, particularly the dissolution of the whole tribe: *and said, there is one tribe cut off from Israel this day;* that is, there is a likelihood or great danger of it.

Ver. 7. *How shall we do for wives for them that remain,* &c.] By which it seems, as well as by what is after related, that they knew of the six hundred men hid in the rock Rimmon: *seeing we have sworn by the Lord;* by the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; and such an oath with them was a sacred thing, and to be kept inviolable, even to their own hurt: *that we will not give them of our daughters to wives;* as in ver. 1. and therefore they must either marry among the Heathens, which was forbidden, or they must make void their oath, or the tribe in a little time would be extinct; these were difficulties they knew not how to surmount, and this was the object of their inquiry.

Ver. 8. *And they said, what one* is there *of the tribes of Israel that came not up to Mizpeh to the Lord?* &c.] This is asked not only to bring them to justice, and put them to death, according to their oath, who should be found guilty, ver. 5. but as an expedient to find wives for the surviving Benjaminites; since these, as they came not to Mizpeh, so consequently swore not that they would not give their daughters to Benjaminites; wherefore from among them wives might be given to them, without the violation of an oath: *and, behold, there came none to the camp from Jabesh-gilead to the assembly;* this was observed by some upon the question put, which caused an inquiry to be made as after related. This city was in the land of Gilead, from whence it had its name, on the other side Jordan, and is placed by Adrichomius [a] in the half-tribe of Manasseh; and Jerom [b] says it was a village in his time 6 miles from the city Pella, upon a mountain, as you go to Gerasa.

Ver. 9. *For the people were numbered,* &c.] To know who did come up, and who did not, and particularly to know whether the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead did or not, against whom an information was brought: *and, behold, there were none of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead there;* for as yet none that came had returned home; all came to Shiloh first, to pay their devotion to the Lord; and as none were found among the living, it did not appear they were among the slain; and very probably the muster-roll was taken before they went to battle, and they were not on that.

Ver. 10. *And the congregation sent thither* 12,000 *men of the valiantest,* &c.] That were in their army; in the Vulgate Latin version it is only 10,000; but the Targum, Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and Josephus [c], agree with the Hebrew text. This place, according to Bunting, to which this army was sent, was 52 miles from Shiloh [d]: *and commanded them, saying;* these were the orders they gave them, when they marched out; go *and smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead with the edge of the sword, with the women and the children;* which it seems was according to the oath they had made, ver. 5.

Ver. 11. *And this is the thing that ye shall do,* &c.]

[a] Theatrum Terræ S. p. 90.
[b] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. K. & fol. 93. L.
[c] Ut supra.
[d] Travels, &c. p. 121.

Which they gave them in charge to execute: *ye shall utterly destroy every male*; without any reserve, young or old, married or unmarried: *and every woman that hath lien by man*; whether lawfully or unlawfully, in a married or unmarried state.

Ver. 12. *And they found among the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead* 400 *young virgins*, &c.] Or *damsel-virgins* *; damsels that were virgins: *that had known no man by lying with any male*; which was judged of by their age, and by their unmarried state, and by common report, unless it can be thought they were examined by matrons; but how it was that they were not obliged, or did not think themselves obliged by their oath to put these to death, as well as others, is not easy to say; whether they thought the necessity of the case would excuse it, or they had a dispensation from the Lord for it, on consulting him; however, so it was: *and they brought them unto the camp to Shiloh, which is in the land of Canaan*; this is observed because that Jabesh-gilead was not in the land of Canaan, from whence they were brought, but in the land of Og king of Bashan; only what was on this side Jordan was the land of Canaan, and in that Shiloh was, to which they were brought; and this shews that not the city Beth-el, but Shiloh, was the place whither the people or army of Israel came to offer sacrifice after the war was ended.

Ver. 13. *And the whole congregation sent* some *to speak to the children of Benjamin*, &c.] Sent some messengers to them, to call them, and desire them to come to them: *that were in the rock Rimmon*; the 600 men who had hid themselves in a cave in it, of which the people of Israel were informed: *and to call peaceably unto them*; to proclaim peace to them, and assure them of it, and to let them know that they had no ill design against them, that they might come safely to them, and would be kindly received and protected by them.

Ver. 14. *And Benjamin came again at that time*, &c.] The 600 Benjaminites returned with the messengers at the same time to the people of Israel, putting confidence in the assurances they had given them of peace and safety: *and they gave them wives which they had saved alive of the women of Jabesh-gilead*: in doing which they supposed they had not violated their oath, since though they had sworn that they would not give their own daughters, they had not sworn they would not give the daughters of others; and besides, as the men of Jabesh-gilead were not at Mizpeh when the oaths were made, they had taken none, and so their daughters might be given in marriage to the Benjaminites, notwithstanding that oath: *and yet so they sufficed them not*; there were not wives enough for them all; for they were 600 men, whereas the daughters of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead were but 400, so that there were 200 more wanting. Abarbinel interprets the word we render *so* in a different manner, by *right*, as in Numb. xxvii. 7. and gives the sense thus, that it was not a point of justice and judgment to do this to the daughters of Jabesh-gilead, namely, to save and give them in marriage; but they did this because the people repented for Benjamin, as follows.

Ver. 15. *And the people repented them for Benjamin*, &c.] That they had destroyed all their women, and that they had saved no more of the daughters of Jabesh-gilead, not a sufficient number to be wives to the Benjaminites: *because the Lord had made a breach in the tribes of Israel*; by almost destroying one of them; for though this was done by the Israelites, yet by the permission and according to the will of God, and through his overruling providence.

Ver. 16. *Then the elders of the congregation said* &c.] This being the case, that there were not wives enough for them, they were obliged to consult again, and consider of another expedient to provide for them; and this motion came from the elders of the people, not only in years, but in office: *how shall we do for wives for them that remain*; the other 200, who had none: *seeing the women are destroyed out of Benjamin?* and so no wives to be had there; and as for the Israelites which came to Mizpeh, who were of all the tribes of Israel, they had solemnly sworn that they would not give any of their daughters to them, and therefore it was a very difficult thing to provide wives for them.

Ver. 17. *And they said*, there must be *an inheritance for them that be escaped of Benjamin*, &c.] The escaped are the 600 men in the rock Rimmon; four hundred of them were supplied with wives, the other two wanted; and as there was an inheritance divided by lot to the tribe of Benjamin, to that tribe and to that only it belonged, and they must have it and no other; it now of right devolved on these 600 men, and them only, and therefore provision must be made to increase their number, that they may occupy the inheritance they have a right to, rebuild their cities, till their land, cultivate their vineyards and oliveyards, and enjoy all the advantages of their possessions: *that a tribe be not destroyed out of Israel*; but the full number of the tribes be preserved, and their inheritances belonging to them, according to the predictions of Jacob and Moses, and the assignment of them by lot unto them by Joshua.

Ver. 18. *Howbeit, we may not give them wives of our daughters*, &c.] Though their case was so very necessitous and desperate: *for the children of Israel have sworn, saying, cursed be he that giveth a wife to Benjamin*, ver. 1. and therefore without the violation of their oath could not give any of their daughters in marriage to them: wherefore some other way must be devised to help them.

Ver. 19. *Then they said*, &c.] Some of the elders that sat in council, debating this matter, and considering of ways and means to assist their brethren the Benjaminites, and preserve their tribe from being lost: *behold*, there is *a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly*; where the tabernacle then was, and before which the males of Israel were obliged to appear three times of the year; and this was one of them, as is clear by its being called a feast of the Lord; and therefore cannot design any civil festival, or fair kept for trade and commerce. Some have thought of the feast of the passover, but it is most likely to be the feast of tabernacles, as Abarbinel takes it to be; which in Jewish writings is emphatically called *the feast*: and the time of year when that was kept was a time of great

* נערה בתולה puellam virginem, Montanus; puellas virgines, Pagninus, Tigurine version, Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

rejoicing, on account of the fruits of the earth being gathered in, and the reading of the law, and especially at the time of drawing of water at this feast; insomuch that it is said [e], that he who never saw the rejoicing at drawing of water never saw rejoicing in his life, which was attended with piping, and dancing, and singing. It is pretty strange what Kimchi notes, that this may be either one of the above feasts, or the day of atonement, at which, he says, the daughters of Israel used to go and dance in the vineyards, according to the words of the Rabbins; when though that is reckoned among the feasts, Lev. xxiii. it was properly a fast, as it is called, Acts xxvii. 9. and all tokens of festivity and joy were forbidden on it; and where these words of their Rabbins are to be met with, he says not: in a place *which is on the north side of Beth-el*: we rightly supply *in a place*: for the intention is not to describe the situation of Shiloh, which was well known, but a place not far from it, where at this festival the daughters of Shiloh used to dance: *on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Beth-el to Shechem*: this place lay to the east of a public road, that led from Beth-el to Shechem: *and on the south of Lebonah*; which Mr. Maundrell [f] takes to be a place now called Kane Leban, which stands on the east side of a delicious vale, having a village of the same name standing opposite to it on the other side of the vale; one of these places, either that Kane or the village, is supposed to be the Lebonah mentioned Judg. xxi. 19. to which both the name and situation seem to agree.

Ver. 20. *Therefore they commanded the children of Benjamin, &c.*] The 200 men of the tribe that wanted wives; they ordered them as follows, and which they spake with authority, being the elders of the congregation, ver. 16. *saying, go and lie in wait in the vineyards*; which might belong to Shiloh, or it may be to Lebonah, which perhaps is the same with Beth-laban, famous for its wine with the Misnic writers; who say [g] the second places for wine are Beth-rimah and Beth-laban; and I suspect that Beth-rimah is the same with Beth-rimmon, near which was the rock Rimmon these men were in; now this being the time of year when the vintage was just over, the vines were full of branches and leaves, under which the men might the better hide themselves; and the grapes being gathered, there were no men in the vineyards, and so might lie in wait safely, and under cover.

Ver. 21. *And see, and, behold, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance in dances, &c.*] As they used to do at this festival, not along with men, but by themselves; and so might the more easily be taken and carried off; and though only males were obliged to appear from all parts at this feast, yet females might come if they would: and, no doubt, from neighbouring places, at least many did; however, the daughters of Shiloh, who dwelt where the tabernacle was, these always attended the feast with demonstrations of joy, and among the rest with dancing, and that as expressive of spiritual and religious joy, as in the case of Miriam, and the Israelitish women, Ex. xv. 20. and as in latter times the most religious men used to express their joy at this feast; now the 200 men in the vineyards, which lay near the field where these virgins used to dance at this time, were to watch and observe when they came out of the city thither, and were engaged in such an exercise: *then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin*; they are directed to rush out at once upon them, as they were dancing, secure, as they thought, from molestation and danger; and they were to take every one one, not more, and go off directly with them to their own tribe.

Ver. 22. *And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, &c.*] Of this rape of their daughters or sisters, or to bring an action against them, and desire they might be summoned before them, the elders of the people, and be tried and judged according to law for what they had done; or to put them upon going to war with them again for such treatment of them: *that we will say unto them, be favourable unto them for our sakes*; for the sake of the elders, who advised them to do what they did; or for the sake of us Israelites, your sake and ours, who were too severe upon them, and prosecuted the war with too much vigour, which made what they have done necessary, or otherwise a tribe must have been lost in Israel: *because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war*; either in the war with Benjamin, which they carried on with such wrath and fury as to destroy all the women, so that there were no wives left for the men that remained, which they now repented of; or in the war with Jabesh-gilead, they did not reserve enough of the women taken, only 400 virgins, whereas there were 600 men: but the first seems best: *for ye did not give unto them at this time, that you should be guilty*; the meaning is, that if they had any uneasiness upon their minds about the oath which they had taken, not to give any of their daughters in marriage to Benjamin, they need not be disturbed at that, since they did not *give* them to them, but these *took* them by force; which was the scheme these elders contrived to secure from the violation of the oath. This they proposed to say to quiet them, and make them easy, to which other things might have been added; as that these were their brethren, and not strangers they were married to, and not to mean men, but to men of large estates, having the whole inheritance of the tribe of Benjamin devolved upon them; and their daughters would be the original mothers of the posterity of that tribe in succeeding ages.

Ver. 23. *And the children of Benjamin did so, &c.*] Went and laid wait in the vineyards, and when the daughters of Shiloh came out to dance, they rushed upon them: *and took them wives according to their number*: two hundred of them, each man a wife, and no more; for though polygamy was in use in those times, and if at any time necessary, and could be excused, it might seem now; yet it was not indulged to, neither by the elders, nor by the children of Benjamin: *of them that danced whom they caught*: the rape of the Sabine virgins by Romulus, at the cirque plays and

[e] Misn. Succah, c. 5. sect. 1, 4. Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Lulab, c. 8. sect. 13.

[f] Journey from Aleppo, p. 63.

[g] Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 6.

shews, mentioned by various authors[h], and the carrying off of 15 Spartan virgins from the dances by Aristomenes the Messenian[i], are sometimes observed as parallel cases to this, and justified by it, particularly that of Romulus[k]: *and they went and returned unto their inheritance;* the 600 Benjaminites, with their wives, returned to their own tribe, which was their inheritance by lot; and these, being the only survivors, had a right to the whole: *and repaired the cities, and dwelt in them;* in process of time they rebuilt the cities the Israelites had burnt in the late war, and re-peopled them as their posterity increased. And the Jewish writers say, that in after-times they were allowed to marry with other tribes as before, since the oath only bound those present at Mizpeh; for they observe, that it ran only, *there shall not any of us,* &c. not, not any of our sons; they might give wives to Benjamin, and so in time they became numerous again.

Ver. 24. *And the children of Israel departed thence at that time, every man to his tribe and to his family,* &c.] The war being ended, and things settled as well as circumstances would admit of, for the preservation of the tribe of Benjamin, who were the cause of it, and had suffered so much in it; the Israelites that had met at Mizpeh, and who had not fallen in the war, returned to their respective countries, to their wives and children, and the business of their callings: *and they went out from thence every man to his inheritance;* divided by lot to them, to their estates and possessions, which each had a right unto.

Ver. 25. *In those days there was no king in Israel,* &c.] No supreme magistrate, Joshua being dead, and as yet no judge in Israel had risen up; for all related in the *five* last chapters of this book were done between the death of Joshua and the time of the judges: *every man did that which was right in his own eyes;* there being none to restrain him from it, or punish him for it; and this accounts for the many evil things related, as the idolatry of Micah and the Danites, the base usage of the Levite's concubine, the extreme rigour and severity with which the Israelites treated their brethren the Benjaminites, the slaughter of the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, and the rape of the daughters of Shiloh.

THE BOOK OF RUTH.

THIS book is called Ruth, not because she was the author of it, but because she is the principal subject of it. In the Syriac and Arabic versions, it is called the Book of Ruth the Moabitess, which describes her by the country of which she was. Her name, according to Hillerus[l], signifies beautiful, of a good aspect, the same with Calliope in Greek. As to the author of this book, some attribute it to Eli the priest, who seems to have been too soon to give an account of the birth of David; others to Gad or Nathan; some to Hezekiah, and others to Ezra; but what the Talmudists assert, which is most generally received, and most probable, is, that it was written by Samuel; so they say Samuel[m] wrote his own book, Judges, and Ruth; and it is commonly said that this book is an appendix to that of the Judges, and an introduction to Samuel, and is fitly placed between them both. According to Eusebius[n], with the Hebrews, Judges and Ruth make one book they call Shophetim, or Judges; the principal design of it is to give the genealogy of David, whom Samuel had anointed to be king of Israel, and from whom the Messiah was to come, and who therefore may be said to be the aim and scope of it, as he is of all Scripture; and whereby it appears that he sprung both from Jews and Gentiles, and is the Saviour of both, and there is a good foundation for both to hope in him; and the call and conversion of Ruth the Moabitess may be considered as a shadow, emblem, and pledge of the conversion of the Gentiles. Many things besides may be learnt from this little book, as the different circumstances of good people in this life, and the particular providence of God respecting them. It furnishes out examples of bearing afflictions patiently, of industry, courteousness, kindness to strangers, and young converts; and none can doubt of the divine authority of this book, that considers the use made of it in the genealogies of Christ by the Evangelists Matthew and Luke.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter treats of a family that removed from the land of Canaan to the land of Moab on account of a famine, where the father of it and his two sons died, and each of them left a widow, ver. 1—5. the mother-in-law proposed to return to her own country, and set forward with her two daughters-in-law, whom, when

[h] Liv. Hist. l. 1. p. 7. 8. Flor. Hist. Rom. l. 1. c. 1. Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 2. Valer. Maxim. l. 1. c. 4.
[i] Hieron. adv. Jovinian. l. 1. fol. 17. B, C.
[k] Vid. Albericum Gentil. de armis Roman. l. 2. p. 114.
[l] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 411.
[m] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 12. 2.
[n] Eccl. Hist. l. 6. c. 25.

they had gone a little way with her, she entreated to go back, and expostulated with them about it, ver. 6—13. upon which one of them did, but the other, Ruth, the subject of this book, resolved to go the journey with her, ver. 14—18. and they both came to Beth-lehem, the former residence of her mother-in-law Naomi, who was greatly taken notice of by her old friends and acquaintance, to whom she related her present circumstances, ver. 19—22.

Ver. 1. *Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled*, &c.] So that it appears that this history is of time and things after the affair of Micah, and of the concubine of the Levite, and of the war between Israel and Benjamin; for in those times there was no king nor judge in Israel; but to what time of the judges, and which government of theirs it belongs to, is not agreed on. Josephus[o] places it in the government of Eli, but that is too late for Boaz, the grandfather of Jesse, the father of David, to live. Some Jewish writers, as Jarchi, say it was in the times of Ibzan, who they say[p] is the same with Boaz, but without proof, and which times are too late also for this history. The Jewish chronology[q] comes nearer the truth, which carries it up as high as the times of Eglon, king of Moab, when Ehud was judge; and with which Dr. Lightfoot[r] pretty much agrees, who puts this history between the third and fourth chapters of Judges, and so must belong to the times of Ehud or Shamgar. Junius refers it to the times of Deborah and Barak; and others[s], on account of the famine, think it began in the times the Midianites oppressed Israel, and carried off the fruits of the earth, which caused it, when Gideon was raised up to be their judge; Alting[t] places it in the time of Jephthah; such is the uncertainty about the time referred to: *that there was a famine in the land*; the land of Canaan, that very fruitful country. The Targum says this was the sixth famine that had been in the world, and it was in the days of Boaz, who is called Ibzan the just, and who was of Beth-lehem-judah; but it is more probable that it was in the days of Gideon, as before observed, than in the days of Ibzan: *and a certain man of Beth-lehem-judah*; so called to distinguish it from another Beth-lehem in the tribe of Zebulun, Josh. xix. 15. which had its name from the fruitfulness of the place, and the plenty of bread in it, and yet the famine was here; hence this man with his family removed from it: *and went to sojourn in the country of Moab*; where there was plenty; not to dwell there, but to sojourn for a time, until the famine was over: *he and his wife, and his two sons*; the names of each of them are next given.

Ver. 2. *And the name of the man was Elimelech*, &c.] Which signifies *my God is King*, as he was King over Israel. In the times of the judges, the government was a theocracy; the judges were raised up immediately by the Lord, and ruled under him; the Targum calls him a great man, and so Jarchi; and it is very likely he was, especially if it be true what is said in the Jewish chronology[u], that he was the brother of Salmon, prince of the tribe of Judah; and it is certain that Boaz the son of Salmon was a kinsman of his, ch. ii. 1. *and the name of his wife Naomi*; which signifies *sweet, pleasant*, very likely a comely person, and of a sweet disposition; a name of the same signification with Naamah, the sister of Tubal-cain, Gen. iv. 22. and according to the Talmudists she was Elimelech's brother's daughter; for they say[w], that Elimelech, Salmon, and the kinsman (spoken of in this book), and the father of Naomi, were all of them the sons of Nahshon, prince of the tribe of Judah; the same Jarchi observes on ver. 22. *and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion*; which seem to have their names from weakness and consumption, being perhaps weakly and consumptive persons; and it appears they both died young. It is a tradition of the Jews, mentioned by Aben Ezra, that these are the same with Joash and Saraph, who are said to have dominion in Moab, 1 Chron. iv. 22. which is not likely: *Ephrathites of Beth-lehem-judah*; Jarchi interprets Ephrathites by men of worth and esteem; and the Targum is, *Ephrathites, great men of Beth-lehem-judah*; but no doubt they were called so, because Ephratah was one of the names of Beth-lehem, Gen. xxxv. 19. Mic. v. 2. so called from its fruitfulness; though Aben Ezra thinks it had its name from Ephratah the wife of Caleb; but it was so called in the time of Moses, as in the passage referred to: *and they came into the country of Moab, and continued there*; unto their death; all excepting Naomi, who returned when she heard the famine was over.

Ver. 3. *And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died*, &c.] According to Josephus[x], after he had dwelt in the land ten years, and had married his two sons to Moabitish women; but, as Alshech observes, the text shews that whilst he was living they were not married to them, but after his death; and it is said of them only that they dwelt there about ten years; so that it is most probable that their father died quickly after he came into the land of Moab: *and she was left, and her two sons*; in a strange land, she without a husband, and they without a father.

Ver. 4. *And they took them wives of the women of Moab*, &c.] Not before they were proselyted to the Jewish religion, as Aben Ezra thinks, and which seems plainly to be the case of Ruth; at least she was so afterwards, if not before; and also of Orpah, as the same writer concludes from ver. 15. though others are of a different opinion, and some excuse their marriage, and others condemn it as unlawful, among whom is the Targumist, who paraphrases the words, "and they "transgressed the decree of the Word of the Lord, "and took to them strange wives of the daughters of "Moab;" however it was so permitted by the Lord, and ordered in Providence, that from one of them the Messiah might spring: *and the name of the one was Orpah*; she was married to Chilion; and Alshech gathers from hence that the youngest was married

[o] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 1.
[p] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 8. 2. Jarchi & Abendana in loc.
[q] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 33.
[r] Works, vol. 1. p. 48.

[s] Bambachius in loc. & Majus in ib. so Bishop Patrick. Lampe Hist. Eccl. l. 1. c. 5. p. 22.
[t] Theolog. Hist. loc. 2. p. 84.
[u] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 12. p. 34. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 5. 1.
[w] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1.
[x] Ut supra.

first before his brother: *and the name of the other Ruth* the Targum adds, "the daughter of Eglon, king of "Moab;" and that she was his daughter, or the daughter of his son, is a notion commonly received with the Jews [y], though without any just foundation: she was married to Mahlon, ch. iv. 10. one Philo [z] asserts these two women to be own sisters, for what reason does not appear; and a Jewish writer [a] says they were both daughters of Eglon, king of Moab: *and they dwelt there about ten years;* that is, Mahlon and Chilion, who married these women; which is to be reckoned either from the time they came into the land, or from the time of their marriage; the latter seems to be the case from the connexion of the words.

Ver. 5. *And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them,* &c.] As well as their father, in the land of Moab, after they had lived with their wives in it about ten years; the Targum is, "because they transgressed "the decree of the Word of the Lord, and joined in "affinity with strange people, their days were cut "off;" or shortened: *and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband;* deprived both of her husband and her sons, which was a great affliction, aggravated by her being in a strange country; many are the afflictions of the righteous.

Ver. 6. *Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab,* &c.] After the death of her two sons, and having heard of the ceasing of the famine in Israel, she had a desire to go into her own country, where she would have better opportunities of serving the Lord; and having no heart to stay in Moab, an idolatrous country, where she had lost her husband, and her two sons; and therefore prepared for her journey, and set forward, and her two daughters-in-law with her, to accompany her some part of the way; for it does not appear to be their intention, at least at first setting out, to go with her into the land of Canaan; and therefore it is only said, that they arose *that she might return,* &c. *for she had heard in the country of Moab:* which was near the land of Israel, the borders of it reaching to the salt sea; the Targum says she heard it by the mouth of an angel, but it is highly probable it was by common fame: *that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread;* that he had been kind and gracious to the people of Israel, by granting them plenty of provisions; which might be their happy case after Gideon had vanquished the Midianites, who came yearly, and destroyed and carried off the fruits of the earth, which had caused a famine; see Judg. vi. 3, 4, 5, 6. and viii. 28. It seems as if the famine had continued 10 years, see ver. 4. nor need this be thought incredible, since there was a famine in Lydia, which lasted 18 years [b].

Ver. 7. *Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was,* &c.] What part of Moab she had dwelt in, and now removed from, is not said; it is called the country or field of Moab, she returned from; hence some have thought, that she and her husband, and her sons, did not live in any of the cities of Moab, but in a field; either because the Moabites would not suffer them to dwell in their cities, only allowed them to pitch their tents in their fields; or they chose to dwell there, that they might as much as possible avoid conversation with them, and be preserved from their idolatry, and other corruptions: *and her two daughters-in-law with her;* who, out of respect to her, accompanied her some part of the way, as relations and friends usually did: *and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah;* they went along with her to the border of the land of Judah, in her return thither; for returning can only be said of her with any propriety, because her two daughters had never been there; that was not the country from whence they came, and therefore could not be said to return thither.

Ver. 8. *And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law,* &c.] When they were come, as it is very probable, to the utmost limits of the land of Moab, and to the borders of the land of Israel: *go, return each unto her mother's house;* the mother's house is mentioned, and not the father's, not because they had no father living; for it is certain Ruth had a father as well as a mother, ch. ii. 11. but because mothers are most affectionate to their daughters, and they most conversant together; and because women in those times had apartments to themselves, and who used to take their daughters to them when become widows; though such was the strong love of those young widows to their mother-in-law, that they chose rather to dwell with her, whilst she lived in Moab, than with their own mothers: *the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me;* that is, with their husbands, who were dead; as the Targum is, that they refused to marry men after their death; or rather it respects their affectionate care of their husbands, and behaviour towards them when living, as well as the respect they shewed to their memory, at and since their death; and also their filial duty to her, both before and since; and particularly, as the Targum expresses it, in that they had fed and supported her.

Ver. 9. *The Lord grant you,* &c.] Some make a supplement here, the Targum a perfect reward, Aben Ezra an husband; and so Josephus says [c], she wished them happier marriages than they had with her sons, who were so soon taken from them; but a supplement seems needless, for what follows is connected with the wish, and contains the sum of it: *that you may find rest;* each of you: *in the house of her husband;* that is, that they might each of them be blessed with a good husband, with whom they might live free from brawls and contentions, as well as from the distressing cares of life, having husbands to provide all things necessary for them, and so from all the sorrows and distresses of a widowhood estate: *then she kissed them;* in token of her affection for them, and in order to part with them; it being usual then as now for relations and friends to kiss at parting: *and they lifted up their voice and wept;* to think they must part, and never see one another more; their passions worked vehemently, and broke out in sobs, and sighs, and tears, and loud crying.

[y] T. Bab. Nazir, fol. 23. 2. Sotah, fol. 47. 1. Sanhedrin, fol. 105. 2. Horayot, fol. 10. 2. Zohar in Deut. fol. 109. 2.
[z] Apud Drusium in loc.
[a] Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 1.
[b] Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 94.
[c] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 1.

Ver. 10. *And they said unto her*, &c.] When they had vented themselves in cries and tears, and had recovered their speech: *surely we will return with thee unto thy people;* to be proselyted, as the Targum; not only to dwell with them, but to worship with them.

Ver. 11. *And Naomi said, turn again, my daughters*, &c.] Supposing this resolution of theirs only arose from a natural affection, and not from any love to the God or people of Israel; at least doubting whether it was so or no, and willing to try whether any one, or both of them, were really from a principle of religion inclined to go with her; and desirous that they would thoroughly consider what they did, lest they should repent and apostatize, and bring a reproach upon the true religion: *why will ye go with me?* what reason can you give? this she said in order to get out of them if there was any real inclination in them to the true worship and service of God; though she keeps out that from her own questions put to them as follows, that it might come purely from themselves: are *there yet* any more *sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?* is there any likelihood that I should ever have any sons to be instead of husbands, or really husbands to you? can it be thought that at my age, supposing I had an husband, or an husband's brother to marry me, that there is in me a natural power of conceiving and bearing children? this therefore can surely be no inducement to you to go along with me; for some, as Jarchi, think she refers to the law of a husband's brother marrying his widow, and raising up seed to him, which was known among the Gentiles before it was given to Israel; see Gen. xxxviii. 8. Deut. xxv. 5. to which Aben Ezra rightly objects, that that law respects a brother by the father's side, and not by the mother's only; to which may be added, that this law was not binding on a brother unborn, but on one that was living before the death of his brother; besides if this law had been in her mind, it would rather have furnished out an encouraging reason for them to go with her, since there were kinsmen of her sons, to whom they might be married, as one of them afterwards was.

Ver. 12. *Turn again, my daughters, go* your way, &c.] This she repeated still to try their affections to her, and especially whether there was any real love to the God of Israel, his people, and worship, but still proceeds upon the same topic: *for I am too old to have an husband;* and can never think of marrying again on account of age, nor can you surely ever think I should, at these years I am now arrived to: *if I should say I have hope;* of marrying, and bearing children; suppose that: if *I should have a husband also to-night;* be married to a man directly, suppose that: *and should also bear sons;* conceive and bear, not female but male children, allow that; all which are mere suppositions, and, could they be admitted, would not furnish out any reason why you should be desirous of going with me.

Ver. 13. *Would you tarry for them till they were grown?* &c.] It is not to be thought that they would tarry till she was married and had children, and then till these infants were grown up to men's estate, and be marriageable; for though Tamar tarried for Shelah, yet he was born, and of some years of age, though not a grown man, Gen. xxxviii. 11, 14. *would ye stay for them from having husbands?* they were young widows, and it was fit they should marry again; and it could not be imagined that they would deny themselves having husbands, in expectation of any sons of her's: *nay, my daughters;* I am well satisfied you will never tarry for them, nor deprive yourselves of such a benefit; it is unreasonable to suppose it: *for it grieveth me much for your sakes;* that she could be of no manner of service to them, either to give them husbands, or to support and maintain them, should they go with her; or *I have exceedingly more bitterness than you*[d]; her condition and circumstances were much worse than theirs; for though they had lost their husbands, she had lost both husband and children: or it was more bitter and grievous to her to be separated from them, than it was for them to be separated from her; her affection to them was as strong, or stronger than theirs to her; or they had friends in their own country that would be kind to them, but as for her, she was in deep poverty and distress, and when she came into her own country, knew not that she had any friends left to take any notice of her: *that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me;* in taking away her husband and children, and reducing her to a low estate, penny-less and friendless; so poor, as it appears, that her daughter-in-law, when come to the land of Canaan, was obliged to glean for the livelihood of them both, as in the next chapter.

Ver. 14. *And they lifted up their voice, and wept again*, &c.] Not being able to bear the thought of parting, or that they must be obliged to it: *and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law;* gave her the parting kiss, as the Jews[e] call it; and which was used by other people[f]; but not without affection to her, and took her leave of her, as her kiss testified, since it must be so; and being moved by her reasons, and having a greater inclination to her own country than Ruth had; of the kiss at parting, see Gen. xxxi. 28. 1 Kings xix. 20. *but Ruth clave unto her;* hung about her, would not part from her, but cleaved unto her in body and mind; forsaking her own people, and her father's house; neither the thought of them, nor of her native country, nor of not having an husband, or any likelihood of it, nor of poverty and distress, had any manner of influence upon her, but determined she was to go and abide with her.

Ver. 15. *And she said*, &c.] That is, Naomi to Ruth, after Orpah was gone: *behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods;* meaning Orpah, who was the wife of her husband's brother, as the word used signifies; she was not only on the road turning back to her own country and people, but to the gods thereof, Baal-peor or Priapus, and Chemosh, Numb. xxi. 29. and xxv. 3. from whence Aben Ezra concludes, that she had been a proselyte to the true religion, and had renounced the gods of her nation, and retained the same profession whilst her husband

d מר לי מאד מכם amaritudo mihi (est) valde prae vobis, Montanus, Bambachius; so Pagninus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Drusius.

e Bereshit Rabba, sect. 70. fol. 62. 4. Shemot, sect. 5. fol. 94. 4.

f ——— discedens oscula nulla dedi. Ovid. ep. 3. ver. 14.

lived, and unto this time, and now apostatized, since she is said to go back to her gods; and in this he is followed by some Christian interpreters [g], and not without reason: *return thou after thy sister-in-law:* this she said, not that in good earnest she desired her to return, at least to her former religion, only relates, though not as approving of, the conduct of her sister, rather as upbraiding it; but to try her sincerity and steadfastness, when such an instance and example was before her.

Ver. 16. *And Ruth said, entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee,* &c.] Don't make use of any arguments to persuade me to go back: or *do not meet me,* or *be against me* [h]; don't meet me with objections, or be in my way, or an hinderance to me, in going along with thee; don't be against it, for to be against that was to be against her inclination, desires, and resolutions, and against her interest: *for whither thou goest I will go;* let the country she was going to be what it would, though unknown to her, and though she should never see her own country any more: *and where thou lodgest I will lodge;* though in ever so mean a cottage, or under the open air: *thy people* shall be *my people:* whom I shall choose to dwell among, and converse with; whose religion, laws, and customs she should readily comply with, having heard much of them, their wisdom, goodness, and piety, of which she had a specimen and an example in Naomi, and by whom she judged of the rest: *and thy God my God,* not Chemosh, nor Baal-peor, nor other gods of the Moabites, be they what they will, but Jehovah, the God of Naomi, and of the people of Israel. So a soul that is truly brought to Christ affectionately loves him, and heartily cleaves unto him, resolves in the strength of divine grace to follow him, the Lamb, whithersoever he goes or directs; and is desirous to have communion with none but him, and that he also would not be as a wayfaring man, that tarries but a night; his people are the excellent of the earth, whom to converse with is all his delight and pleasure; and Christ's God is his God, and his father is his father: and, in a word, he determines to have no other Saviour but him, and to walk in all his commands and ordinances.

Ver. 17. *Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried,* &c.] She was determined to abide with her unto death, and not only was desirous to die as she did, but where she should die; in the same country, cottage, and bed, and be laid in the same grave, in hope of rising together at the resurrection of the just; having no regard at all to the sepulchres of her fathers, which people in all ages and countries have been fond of being laid in, as an honour and happiness. So with the Greeks and Romans, not only relations, but intimate friends, and such as had a strong affection for each other, were sometimes buried in the same grave, as Crates and Polemon [i], Paris and Œnome [k], and others [l]; see Gal. ii. 20. Col. ii. 12. and iii. 1. *the Lord do so to me, and more also,* if ought *but death part thee and me;* this is the form of oath she used for confirmation of what she had said, and to put an end to the debate on this subject; what she imprecates upon herself is not expressed, should she otherwise do than what she swears to; leaving Naomi to supply it in her own mind, and as being what was not fit to be named, and the greatest evil that could be thought to befall a perjured person.

Ver. 18. *When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her,* &c.] That she was strong in her resolutions, and steadfast in her determinations not to go back to her own country, but to go forward with her; and nothing could move her from the firm purpose of her mind, which was what Naomi wanted to make trial of: *then she left speaking unto her;* that is, upon that head of returning home; otherwise, no doubt, upon this a close, comfortable, religious conversation ensued, which made their journey the more pleasant and agreeable.

Ver. 19. *So they two went until they came to Beth-lehem,* &c.] Went on their way directly till they came to it, without lingering or staying by the way, at least not unnecessarily, and not for any time; and they kept together, though Ruth was a younger woman, and could have gone faster, yet she kept company with her ancient mother, and was no doubt very much edified and instructed by her pious conversation; and it seems that they were alone, only they two; for as they had no camels nor asses to ride on, but were obliged to travel on foot, so they had no servants to wait upon them, and assist them in their journey, such were their mean circumstances: *and it came to pass, when they were come to Beth-lehem;* had entered the city, and were seen by some that formerly had known Naomi, or at least to whom she made herself known: *that all the city was moved about them:* the news of their arrival was soon spread throughout the place, and the whole city rang of it; so the Septuagint version, *all the city sounded;* it was all the talk every where, it was in every body's mouth, that Naomi, who had been so long out of the land, and thought to be dead, and it was not expected she would ever return more, was now come; and this drew a great concourse of people in a tumultuous manner, as the word signifies, to see her; and as it may denote a corporeal motion of them, so the inward moving and working of their passions about her; some having pity and compassion on her to see such a change in her person and circumstances; others treating her with scorn and contempt, and upbraiding her for leaving her native place, and not content to share the common affliction of her people, intimating that she was rightly treated for going out of the land at such a time into a strange country; and others were glad to see their old neighbour again, who had always behaved well among them; so the Syriac and Arabic versions, *all the city rejoiced:* many no doubt knew her not, and would be asking questions about her, and others answering them, which is commonly the case of a crowd of people on

[g] Clericus & Rambachius.

[h] אל תפגעי בי ne occurras mihi, Vatablus, Rambachius; ne obstes me, Tigurine version; ne adverseris mihi, V. L. Drusius; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[i] Laert. in Vita Cratet.

[k] Strabo. Geograph. l. 13. p. 410.

[l] Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Roman. l. 3. c. 14. p. 433.

such an occasion: *and they said, is this Naomi?* that is, the women of the place said so, for the word is feminine; and perhaps they were chiefly women that gathered about her, and put this question in a way of admiration; is this Naomi that was so beautiful, and used to look so pleasant and comely, and now so wrinkled and sorrowful! who used to dress so well, and now in so mean an habit! that used to be attended with maidens to wait on her, and now alone! for, as Aben Ezra observes, this shews that Elimelech and Naomi were great personages in Beth-lehem formerly, people of rank and figure, or otherwise there would not have been such a concourse of people upon her coming, and such inquiries made and questions put, had she been formerly a poor woman.

Ver. 20. *And she said, call me not Naomi, call me Mara*, &c.] The one signifying *prosperity*, according to Josephus[m], and the other *grief*; but he is not always happy in his interpretation of Hebrew words, or to be depended on; by this indeed her different states are well enough expressed, and he rightly observes, that she might more justly be called the one than the other: but the words signify, the one *sweet* and pleasant, and the other *bitter*, see Exod. xv. 23. and the reason she gives confirms it: *for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me*; had wrote bitter things against her, brought bitter afflictions on her, which were very disagreeable to the flesh, as the loss of her husband, her children, and her substance; see Lam. iii. 15, 19.

Ver. 21. *I went out full*, &c.] Of my husband and children, as the Targum; of children and riches, as Aben Ezra and Jarchi; wherefore some Jewish writers blame her and her husband for going abroad at such a time, and ascribe it to a covetous disposition, and an unwillingness to relieve the poor that came to them in their distress, and therefore got out of the way of them, on account of which they were punished, so Jarchi on ver. 1. see Judg. ii. 15. but this is said without any just cause or reason that appears: *and the Lord hath brought me home again empty*: deprived of her husband, children, and substance; she acknowledges the hand of God in it, and seems not to murmur at it, but to submit to it quietly, and bear it patiently: *why then call ye me Naomi*; when there is nothing pleasant and agreeable in me, nor in my circumstances: *seeing the Almighty hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?* had bore witness that that was not a name suitable for her; or that she had sinned, and had not done what was well-pleasing in his sight, as appeared by his afflicting her; she seemed therefore to be humbled under a sense of sin, and to consider afflictions as coming from the Lord on account of it, and submitted to his sovereign will; the affliction she means was the loss of her husband, children, and substance; see Job x. 17, and xvi. 8.

Ver. 22. *So Naomi returned*, &c.] Aben Ezra thinks this is to be understood of her returning at another time; but it is only an observation of the writer of this history, to excite the attention of the reader to this remarkable event, and particularly to what follows: *and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, which returned out of the country of Moab*; to Beth-lehem, the birth-place of the Messiah, and who was to spring from her a Gentile; and which, that it might be the more carefully remarked, she is called a Moabitess, and said to return out of the country of Moab: *and they came to Beth-lehem in the beginning of barley-harvest*; which began on the second day of the feast of unleavened bread, on the *sixteenth* of Nisan, which answers to our March, and part of April, when they offered the sheaf of the first-fruits to the Lord, and then, and not till then, might they begin their harvest, see Lev. xxiii. 10, 14. and the notes there: hence the Targum here is, "they came to Beth-lehem at the beginning of the day of the passover, and on that day the "children of Israel began to reap the wave-sheaf, which "was of barley." So the Egyptians and Phœnicians, near neighbours of the Jews, went about cutting down their barley as soon as the cuckoo was heard, which was the same time of the year; hence the comedian[n] calls that bird the king of Egypt and Phœnicia. This circumstance is observed for the sake of the following account in the next chapter.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter we have an account of Ruth's gleaning corn in the fields of Boaz, a relation of Naomi, ver. 1—3. and of Boaz coming to his reapers, whom he saluted in a very kind manner; and observing a woman gleaning after them, inquired of them who she was, and they informed him, ver. 4—9. upon which he addressed himself to her, and gave her leave to glean in his field, and desired her to go nowhere else, and bid her eat and drink with his servants, ver. 8—14. and gave directions to his servants to let her glean, and to let fall some of the handfuls on purpose, that she might gather them up, ver. 15—17. and then an account is given of her returning to her mother-in-law with her gleanings, to whom she related where she had gleaned, who was owner of the field, and what he had said to her, upon which Naomi gave her her advice, ver. 18—23.

Ver. 1. *And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's*, &c.] That was her kinsman by her husband's side, who now lived at Beth-lehem; and yet it does not appear that Naomi made any application to him for assistance in her circumstances, though well known to her, as the word used signifies; which might arise from her modesty, and being loth to be troublesome to him, especially as he was a relation, not of her own family, but of her husband's; but, what is more strange,

[m] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 2.

[n] Aristoph. in Avibus, p. 565.

that this kinsman had taken no notice of her, nor sent to her, who yet was a very generous and liberal man, and had knowledge of her coming, for he had heard of the character of Ruth, ver. 11, 12. but perhaps he was not acquainted with their indigent circumstances: *a mighty man of wealth*; a man of great wealth and riches, and of great power and authority, which riches give and raise a man to, and also of great virtue and honour, all which the word *wealth* signifies; to which may be added the paraphrase the Targumist gives, that he was mighty in the law; in the Scriptures, in the word of God, a truly religious man, which completes his character: *of the family of Elimelech*; the husband of Naomi; some say that his father was Elimelech's brother, see the note on ver. 2. *and his name was Boaz*; which signifies, *in him is strength*, strength of riches, power, virtue, and grace; it is the name of one of the pillars in Solomon's temple, so called from its strength. This man is commonly said by the Jews to be the same with Ibzan, a judge of Israel, Judg. xii. 8. see the note on ver. 1. he was the grandson of Nahshon, prince of the tribe of Judah, who first offered at the dedication of the altar, Numb. vii. 12. his father's name was Salmon, and his mother was Rahab, the harlot of Jericho, Matt. i. 5. A particular account is given of this man, because he, with Ruth, makes the principal part of the following history.

Ver. 2. *And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi*, &c.] After they had been some little time at Beth-lehem, and not long; for they came at the beginning of barley-harvest, and as yet it was not over, nor perhaps for some time after this; and knowing and considering the circumstances they were in, and unwilling to live an idle life, and ready to do any thing for the support of her life, and of her ancient mother-in-law; which was very commendable, and shewed her to be an industrious virtuous woman: she addressed her, and said: *let me now go to the field*; she did not choose to go any where, nor do any thing, without her advice and consent; so dutiful and obedient was she to her, and so high an opinion had she of her wisdom and goodness; she desired to go to the field which belonged to Beth-lehem, which seems to have been an open field, not enclosed, where each inhabitant had his part, as Boaz, ver. 3. though Jarchi interprets it of one of the fields of the men of the city; hither she asked leave to go, not with any ill intent, nor was she in any danger of being exposed, since it being harvest-time the field was full of people: her end in going thither is expressed in the next clause, *and glean ears of corn after him, in whose sight I shall find grace*: or *in* or *among the ears of corn*[o]; between the ears of corn bound up into sheaves, and there pick up the loose ears that were dropped and left. This she proposed to do with the leave of the owner of the field, or of the reapers, whom she followed; she might be ignorant that it was allowed by the law of God that widows and strangers might glean in the field, Lev. xix. 9, 10. Deut. xxiv. 19. or if she had been acquainted with it by Naomi, which is not improbable, such was her modesty and humility, that she did not choose to make use of this privilege without leave; lest, as Jarchi says, she should be chid or reproved, and it is certain she did entreat the favour to glean, ver. 7. *and she said unto her, go, my daughter*; which shews the necessitous circumstances Naomi was in; though perhaps she might give this leave and direction under an impulse of the spirit of God, in order to bring about an event of the greatest moment and importance, whereby she became the ancestor of our blessed Lord.

Ver. 3. *And she went, and came*, &c.] That is, she went out of the house where she was, and out of the city, and came into the field; though, according to the Midrash[p], she marked the ways as she went, before she entered into the field, and then came back to the city to observe the marks and signs she made, that she might not mistake the way, and might know how to come back again: *and gleaned in the field after the reapers*; when they had cut down and bound up the corn, what fell and was left she picked up, having first asked leave so to do: *and her hap was to light on a part of the field* belonging *unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech*; the providence of God so ordering and directing it; for though it was hap and chance to her, and what some people call good luck, it was according to the purpose, and by the providence and direction of God that she came to the reapers in that part of the field Boaz, a near kinsman of her father-in-law, was owner of, and asked leave of them to glean and follow them.

Ver. 4. *And, behold, Boaz came to Beth-lehem*, &c.] Into the field, to see how his workmen went on, and performed their service, and to encourage them in it by his presence, and by his courteous language and behaviour, and to see what provisions were wanting, that he might take care and give orders for the sending of them, it being now near noon, as it may be supposed; and though he was a man of great wealth, he did not think it below him to go into his field, and look after his servants, which was highly commendable in him, and which shewed his diligence and industry, as well as his humility. So a king in Homer[q] is represented as among his reapers, with his sceptre in his hand, and cheerful. Pliny[r] relates it, as a saying of the ancients, that the eye of the master is the most fruitful thing in the field; and Aristotle[s] reports, that a Persian being asked what fattened a horse most, replied, the eye of the master; and an African being asked what was the best dung *for land*, answered, the steps of his master: *and said unto the reapers, the Lord be with you*; to give them health, and strength, and industry in their work; the Targum is, "may the Word of the "Lord be your help:" *and they answered him, the Lord bless you*; with a good harvest, and good weather to gather it in; and though these salutations were of a civil kind, yet they breathe the true spirit of sincere and undissembled piety, and shew the sense that both master and servants had of the providence of God attending the civil affairs of life, without

[o] בשבלים ἐν ταῖς σταχύσι, Sept. in spicis, Montanus, Drusius, Piscator; inter spicas, De Dieu, Rambachius.
[p] Midrash Ruth, fol. 31. 4. Vid. Jarchi & Alshech in loc.

[q] Iliad. 18. ver. 556, 557.
[r] Nat. Hist. l. 19. c. 6.
[s] De Administrat. Domestic. l. 1. c. 6.

whose help, assistance, and blessing, nothing succeeds well.

Ver. 5. *Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers*, &c.] To direct them their work, what part each was to do, and to see that they did it well; to take care for provisions for them, and to pay them their wages when their work was done. Josephus[t] calls him ἀγρονόμος, that had the care of the field, and all things relative to it; the Jews[u] say, he was set over two-and-forty persons, whom he had the command of: *whose damsel is this?* to whom does she belong? of what family is she? whose daughter is she? or whose wife? for he thought, as Aben Ezra notes, that she was another man's wife; the Targum is, of what nation is she? perhaps her dress might be somewhat different from that of the Israelitish women.

Ver. 6. *And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said*, &c.] Who had taken a great deal of notice of Ruth, and had conversed with her, and so was capable of giving answers to his master's question: *it is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi, out of the country of Moab*: perhaps he had not got knowledge of her name, and therefore only describes her by the country from whence she came; and by her coming from thence along with Naomi, when she returned from Moab, with whose name Boaz was well acquainted, and of whose return he had been informed; and perhaps had seen her in person, and even Ruth also, though he might have forgot her; the Targum makes the servant to add, that she was become a proselytess.

Ver. 7. *And she said*, &c.] These are the words of the servant continued, who goes on with the account of Ruth, and her conduct, since she had been in the field: *I pray you let me glean, and gather after the reapers among the sheaves*: for though by the law of Israel she had a right, as a poor widow and stranger, to glean, yet as the owner of the field, and his servants, by his appointment, under him, might have power of fixing the time when such might glean, and of judging who were the proper persons to be admitted, Ruth in her great modesty and meekness did not choose to enter on this work without leave: *so she came*; into the field and gleaned, having obtained leave: *and hath continued even from the morning until now*; had been very diligent and industrious in gathering up the loose ears of corn among the sheaves, as she followed the reapers cutting down and binding up the corn in sheaves; she began pretty early in the morning, and had stuck close to it till that time, which may be supposed to be about noon, or pretty near it, for as yet it was not meal-time, ver. 14. The Septuagint version is therefore very wrong, which reads "from the morning until the evening," for that was not yet come, see ver. 17. but *she tarried a little in the house*; not that she went home to the city, and stayed a little in the house of Naomi her mother, and then returned again, for she went not home until the evening, ver. 17, 18. but the meaning of the servant is, that she had been constant and diligent in gleaning all the morning, only a very little time that she was in the house, which was in the field; either a farm-house of Boaz adjoining to the field; or rather a cottage or booth, as Aben Ezra interprets it, which was in the field, whither the reapers betook themselves when they ate their meals; or to shelter themselves under the shade of it, as Abendana, from the heat of the sun at noon-day; and here Ruth set herself down awhile for a little rest, and ease, and refreshment; and some think she was here when Boaz came, and therefore took the more notice of her.

Ver. 8. *Then said Boaz unto Ruth*, &c.] Having heard what the servant said concerning her, he turned himself to her, and addressed her in the following manner: *hearest thou not, my daughter?* meaning not what the servant had said, but hereby exciting her to hearken to what he was about to say to her. Noldius[w] takes the particle to signify beseeching and entreating, and renders the words, *hear, I pray thee, my daughter*. Some from hence conclude that Boaz was a man in years, and Ruth much younger than he, and therefore calls her his daughter: *go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence*; which she might be inclined to, lest she should be thought to be too troublesome to be always in one man's field; but Boaz taking a liking to her, and willing to do her some favour, chose she should not go elsewhere: *but abide here fast by my maidens*; not maidens that gleaned also as she did, poor maidens he permitted to glean; or that gleaned for the poor, and much less that gleaned for him; a person so rich and liberal as he was would never employ such for his advantage, and to the detriment of the poor; nor would it be admitted of, it being contrary to the law as it should seem, and certain it is to the later traditions of the elders; for it is said[x], "a man may not hire a workman on this "condition, that his son should glean after him; he "who does not suffer the poor to glean, or who suffers "one and not another, or who helps any one of them, "robs the poor." But these maidens were such, who either gathered the handfuls, cut and laid down by the reapers, and bound them up in sheaves, or else they also reaped, as it seems from the following verse; and it was very probably customary in those times for women to reap, as it is now with us.

Ver. 9. *Let thine eyes be upon the field that they do reap, and go thou after them*, &c.] And gather up the loose ears of corn dropped and left by them: *have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee?* do her no hurt, or offer any incivility or rudeness to her, or even play any wanton tricks with her, as is too common with young persons in the fields at harvest-time. This charge he now gave in her hearing, or however suggests that he would, and therefore she might depend upon it she should have no molestation nor any affront given her: *and when thou art athirst*; as at such a season of the year, and in the field at such work, and in those hot countries, was frequently the case: *go unto the vessels, and drink of* that *which the young men have drawn*; which they had fetched from wells and fountains in or near the city, and had put into

[t] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 2.
[u] Midrash Ruth, fol. 32. 1.
[w] Ebr. Concord. part. p. 257. No. 1150.
[x] Misnah Peah, c. 5. sect. 6.

bottles, pitchers, *&c.* for the use of the reapers and gatherers; we read of the well of Beth-lehem, 2 Sam. xxiii. 15. now she is ordered to go to these vessels, and drink when she pleased, without asking leave of any; and Boaz no doubt gave it in charge to his young men not to hinder her.

Ver. 10. *Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground,* &c.] In great humility, and under a deep sense of the favour done her, and as shewing the greatest respect, in a civil manner, she was capable of: *and said unto him, why have I found grace in thine eyes:* how is it that one so mean and unworthy should have such favour shewn? *that thou shouldest take knowledge of me;* take such notice of her, shew such affection to her, and bestow such kindness on her: *seeing I am a stranger?* not a citizen of Beth-lehem, nor indeed one of the commonwealth of Israel; but, as the Targum, "of a strange people, of the "daughters of Moab, and of a people who were not "fit and worthy to enter into the congregation of the "Lord."

Ver. 11. *And Boaz answered and said unto her,* &c.] Alshech thinks, that he lift up his voice that all that stood by might hear: *it hath fully been shewed me;* either by Naomi, or rather by some persons of Boaz's acquaintance, that had conversed with Naomi, and related to Boaz what passed between them, by which he was fully informed of the following things mentioned by him; though the above writer supposes, that it was shewed him by the Holy Ghost: *all that thou hast done to thy mother-in-law since the death of thine husband;* how that, instead of going home to her father and mother, she continued with her; how tenderly she used her; what strong expressions of love she had made unto her; what care she had taken of her, and how she had fed and nourished her, as the Targum, and now was gleaning for her support, as well as her own: *and how thou hast left thy father and mother;* in a literal sense, to go along with her mother-in-law, to assist her in her journey, and see her safe to the end of it: and in a figurative sense her idol-gods, as in Jer. ii. 27. so the Midrash[y]: *and the land of thy nativity;* the land of Moab, where she was born, and where her kindred, relations, and friends lived, dear and engaging to her: *and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore;* but by hearsay, and what she learned of them from her husband and mother-in-law, even the people of Israel; to whom she was come to be a proselyte, and dwell among them, as the Targum.

Ver. 12. *The Lord recompence thy work,* &c.] The Targum adds, in this world; meaning the kind offices she had performed, and the good service she had done to her mother-in-law; nor is God unrighteous to forget the work and labour of love, which is shewn by children to their parents; and though such works are not in themselves meritorious of any blessing from God here or hereafter, yet he is pleased of his own grace to recompence them, and return the good into their bosom manifold, it being acceptable in his sight: *and a full reward be given thee of the Lord God of Israel;* the Targum adds, in the world to come; which is called the reward of the inheritance, Col. iii. 24. a reward not of debt, but of grace; and that will be a full one indeed, fulness of joy, peace, and happiness, an abundance of good things not to be conceived of, see 2 John, 8. *under whose wings thou art come to trust;* whom she professed to be her God, and whom she determined to serve and worship; whose grace and favour she expected, and to whose care and protection she committed herself: the allusion is either to fowls, which cover their young with their wings, and thereby keep them warm and comfortable, and shelter and protect them, see Psal. xxxvi. 7. and lvii. 1. or to the wings of the cherubim overshadowing the mercy-seat, Exod. xxv. 20. and the phrase is now adopted by the Jews to express proselytism; and so the Targum here, "thou art come to be proselyted, and to be hid under "the wings of the Shechinah of his glory," or his glorious Shechinah.

Ver. 13. *Then she said, let me find favour in thy sight, my lord,* &c.] Or rather, since she had found favour in his sight already: the words are to be considered, not as a wish for it, but as acknowledging it, and expressing her faith and confidence, that she should for time to come find favour in his sight, and have other instances of it; for so the words may be rendered, *I shall find favour*[z], for which she gives the following reasons: *for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid;* had spoken in her commendation, and wished her all happiness here and hereafter; said kind and comfortable words to her, to her very heart, as in Isa. xl. 2. which were cheering, refreshing, and reviving to her: *though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens;* not worthy to be one of them, or to be ranked with them, being meaner than the meanest of them, a poor widow, and a Moabitish woman; the Septuagint and Syriac versions leave out the negative particle, and read, *I shall be as one of thine handmaids.*

Ver. 14. *And Boaz said, at meal-time come thou hither,* &c.] This looks as if she was now in the field, where the reapers used to retire to eat their food, or rest themselves, or take shelter from the heat of the sun. This meal was very likely dinner, the time of which was not yet come, but would soon, and to which Boaz invited Ruth: *and eat of the bread;* his servants did, that is, partake of the provisions they should have; bread being put for all. So Homer[a] speaks of a large ox slain for such a meal for the reapers, besides the *polenta* afterwards mentioned, which the women prepared, and who uses the same word for it the Septuagint does here: *to dip thy morsel in the vinegar;* which was used because of the heat of the season, as Jarchi and Aben Ezra remark, for cooling and refreshment; and such virtues Pliny[b] ascribes to vinegar, as being refreshing to the spirits, binding and bracing the nerves, and very corroborating and strengthening; and it is at this day used in Italy, it is said, in harvest-time, when it is hot; where they also use wine mixed with vinegar and water, as Lavater says[c]; and who from a learned physician[d] observes, that reapers,

[y] Midrash Ruth, fol. 32. 3.
[z] אמצא חן inveniam gratiam, Pagninus, Montanus.
[a] Iliad, 18. ver. 559, 560.

[b] Nat. Hist. l. 23. c. 1.
[c] In loc.
[d] Christophor. a Vega de arte Medendi, l. 2. apud ib.

instead of wine, use vinegar mixed with a great deal of water, which they call household wine, allayed with water; to which if oil and bread be put, it makes a cooling meal, good for workmen and travellers in the heat of the sun; and the Targum calls it pottage boiled in vinegar. The Romans had an *embamma*, or sauce, made of vinegar, in which they dipped their food[c]; and Theocritus[d] makes mention of vinegar as used by reapers: in the Syriac version it is bread dipped in milk; and in the Arabic version milk poured upon it. The Midrash[e] gives an allegorical sense of these words, and applies them to the Messiah and his kingdom, and interprets the bread of the bread of the kingdom, and the vinegar of the chastisements and afflictions of the Messiah, as it is said, *he was wounded for our transgressions*; &c. Isa. liii. 5. which, by the way, is a concession that the prophecy in that chapter relates to him: *and she sat beside the reapers*; the women-reapers; she did not sit along with them, or in the midst of them, in the row with them, as ranking with them, but on one side of them, which was an instance of her great modesty: *and he reached her parched* corn; either Boaz himself, or he that was set over the reapers. This parched corn seems to be the new barley they were reaping, which they fried in a pan and ate. Galen says[f], the parched corn which is best is made of new barley moderately dried and parched; and that it was the custom of some to drink the same with new sweet wine, or wine mixed with honey, in the summer-time, before they went into the bath, who say they feel themselves by this drink freed from thirst. But this seems to be a kind of food, what is sometimes called *polenta*, which is barley-flour dried at the fire, and fried after it hath been soaking in water one night; so Lavater says, they dry the barley, having been soaked one night in water, the next day they dry it, and then grind it in mills; some dress new barley beaten out of green ears, and make it whilst moist into balls, and being cleansed, grind it; and thus dressed with twenty pound of barley, they put three pound of linseed, half a pound of coriander-seed, and of salt, all being dried before, are mingled in a mill; and if to be kept, are put into new earthen vessels with the meal and bran: but a later writer[g] takes this *kali*, rendered parched corn, not to be any one certain species, but something made of corn and pulse, as lentiles, beans, *&c.* and especially fried or parched vetches, of all which together was this kali or pulse; and he refutes the notion of some, who take it to be *coffee*, since that has only been in use since the beginning of the 16th century, and at first in Arabia; and is not of the kind of pulse, but is the fruit of a certain tree, of which a liquor is made, something to drink; whereas this was food, and was ate, as follows, see 2 Sam. xvii. 28. *and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left*; she had such a plentiful share given her, that she had more than she could eat, and was obliged to leave some, and which it seems she carried home to her mother-in-law, ver. 18.

Ver. 15. *And when she was risen up to glean*, &c.] After she had ate sufficiently, and refreshed herself, she rose up from her seat to go into the field and glean again; which shews her industry: *Boaz commanded his young men*; the reapers, or who gathered the handfuls, and bound them up in sheaves: *saying, let her glean even among the sheaves*; this she had requested of the reapers when she first came into the field, and it was granted her, ver. 7. but this, as it was granted by Boaz himself, so was still a greater favour; and there is some difference in the expression, for it may be rendered here, *among those sheaves*[h], pointing to a particular spot where might be the best ears of corn, and where more of them had fallen: *and reproach her not*; as not with her being a poor woman, a widow, a Moabitish woman, so neither with being a thief, or taking such corn she should not, or gleaning where she ought not.

Ver. 16. *And let fall some of the handfuls on purpose for her*, &c.] That is, when they had reaped an handful, instead of laying it in its proper order, to be taken up by those that gathered after them, or by themselves, in order to be bound up in sheaves, scatter it about, or let it fall where they reaped it: *and leave them, that she may glean* them, *and rebuke her not*; for taking them, as if she did a wrong thing.

Ver. 17. *So she gleaned in the field until even*, &c.] An instance of her great diligence and industry, attending to this mean employment constantly from morning to night: *and beat out that she had gleaned*; she did not bind up her gleanings in a bundle, and carry it home on her head, as gleaners with us do, but she beat it out with a staff in the field, where she gleaned it, and winnowed it, very probably in the threshing-floor of Boaz; by which means what she had gleaned was brought into a lesser compass, and was a lighter burden to carry home: *and it was an ephah of barley*; or three seahs of barley, as the Targum; which, according to Bishop Cumberland[i], was six gallons, and three pints, and three solid inches: an omer is said to be the tenth part of an ephah, and, made into bread, was as much as a man could eat in one day, Exod. xvi. 16, 36. so that Ruth got enough in one day, for herself and her mother-in-law, which would last five days at least. This was a great deal for one woman to pick up, ear by ear, in one day; and must be accounted for, not only by her diligence and industry, but by the favour shewn her by the reapers, under the direction of Boaz, who suffered her to glean among the sheaves, and let fall handfuls for her to pick up.

Ver. 18. *And she took it up*, &c.] The ephah of barley, into her arms, or on her shoulders: *and went into the city*; the city of Beth-lehem; *and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned*; she set it down before her, and she looked at it with admiration, that she should glean so much in one day: *and she brought forth*; not Naomi, as Josephus[k] represents it, who understood it as if she brought forth some food her neighbours had brought her, part of which she kept for Ruth, though he takes it in the other sense also; but the meaning is, that Ruth brought forth out of a scrip, as the Targum adds; besides the ephah of barley she set before her,

[c] Salmuth in Panciral. par. 2. tit. 2. p. 83.
[d] Idyll. 10. ver. 13.
[e] Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. 2.
[f] De Aliment. Facult. l. 1. apud Lavater. in loc.
[g] Neumann. apud Rambachium in loc.
[h] בין העמרים inter ipsos manipulos, Tigurine version, Rambachius.
[i] Of Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 3. p. 64.
[k] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 2.

she brought some victuals out of a bag: *and gave to her, that she had reserved after she was sufficed;* not that she ate of the barley, and her mother-in-law also; and then she gave her the rest to lay up against another time, as some interpret it; but the remainder of the food which Boaz gave her at dinner-time, which she could not eat, ver. 14. she reserved for her mother, and now gave it to her; an instance of that piety commended by the apostle, 1 Tim. v. 4.

Ver. 19. *And her mother-in-law said unto her, where hast thou gleaned to-day?* &c.] In what part of the field of Beth-lehem? or on whose land, that she had gleaned so much? not that she suspected that she had got it in an illicit manner, but supposed she had been directed by the providence of God to a spot of ground where there was good gleaning; or that she had met with some hand, that had dropped ears of corn plentifully in her favour: *and where wroughtest thou?* which is the same question repeated in other words, and shews that gleaning is a work, and a hard work too, closely followed, to be stooping and picking up ears of corn a whole day together: *blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee:* she knew, by the quantity of corn she brought home, that she must have had kindness shewn her by somebody; and especially she knew it by the food she brought home, and therefore pronounced the man blessed, or wished him happiness, before she knew who he was; though perhaps she might guess at him, or conjecture in her mind who it was that had taken notice of her: *and she shewed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought;* that is, with whose reapers, men and maidens, she had wrought, whom she followed in gleaning, they working in one sort of work, and she in another, yet in the same field: *the man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz;* that is, in whose field, and with whose servants, she wrought; for Boaz wrought not himself, unless this can be understood of her eating and drinking with him; but the other sense is best.

Ver. 20. *And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, blessed be he of the Lord,* &c.] Or the Lord bless him with all kind of blessings, temporal and spiritual; and as he has blessed him already, may he be blessed more and more: *who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead;* he had been kind to Elimelech and to his sons, who were now dead, and he continued his kindness to the relicts of them, Naomi and Ruth, who were living, and was kind to them for the sake of the dead; and shewing kindness to them expressed his respect to the memory of the dead: *and Naomi said unto her;* continued her speech to her, and added to what she had said: *the man is near of kin to us;* a near relation of ours, meaning by her husband's side: yea, *one of our next kinsmen;* the nearest we have, there was but one nearer than he: the word for kinsman here is *Goel,* a redeemer; for to such who were in the degree of kindred as Boaz was, and he that was nearer still than he to them, belonged the right of redemption, and therefore were called by the name of *Goel,* a redeemer, as Ben Melech observes; they had a right to avenge the blood of the slain, to redeem their houses and possessions, if sold or mortgaged, and their persons by marrying them, and raising up seed to a deceased brother, or kinsman.

Ver. 21. *And Ruth the Moabitess said, he said unto me also,* &c.] Besides the favours he has shewn me already, he has given me reason to expect more, for he has given me this strict order: *thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest;* both barley-harvest and wheat-harvest; his will was, that she kept following them, and gleaned after them, as long as both harvests lasted. The Septuagint version is, *with my maidens,* and which agrees with ver. 8. where the order of Boaz is expressed, and with the instructions of Naomi in the next verse, who so understood it; but if we understand it of young men here, there is no contradiction; for both young men and maidens wrought together in the same field, either in reaping or binding up; so that if she kept fast by the one, she also would do the same by the other.

Ver. 22. *And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law,* &c.] Observing the charge Boaz had given her, she thought fit to advise her upon it: it is *good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens;* that is, go out in the morning with them, set out from Beth-lehem when they went to work, and so continue with them all the day: *that they meet thee not in any other field;* the meaning is, either that men might not meet her in another field alone, or rush upon her at once and unawares, and reproach her, or beat her, or indeed force her; or else that the servants of Boaz might not meet her, or see her in another field, and report it to their master, who would be offended at her, and take it as a slight of his kindness to her; which latter seems rather to be the sense.

Ver. 23. *So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean,* &c.] Accepting the kindness of Boaz, and attending to the advice of her mother-in-law, as well as using all diligence to get a livelihood for her mother and herself; in which she was a wonderful instance of dutiful affection, humility, and industry: and so she continued *unto the end of barley-harvest, and of wheat-harvest;* which latter began at Pentecost, as the former did at the passover; and, according to the Midrash [1], from the beginning of the one, to the end of the other, were three months; though it may be, they were gathered in sooner: indeed from the passover to Pentecost were seven weeks, which was the difference between the beginning of one harvest, and the beginning of the other: *and dwelt with her mother-in-law;* which is to be understood either of her coming home at night, after she had been gleaning all day, and lodging with her mother-in-law, which was her constant custom during both harvests; or that after the harvests were ended, she continued to dwell with her mother-in-law; which seems to be added for the sake of carrying on the history in the following chapter.

[1] Midrash Ruth, fol. 33. so Alshech in loc.

CHAP. III.

IN this chapter we have a proposal of Naomi to Ruth, with advice and directions to get Boaz for her husband, ver. 1—5. Ruth's obedience to the instructions she gave her, ver. 5—7. the notice Boaz took of her, and the conversation that passed between them, ver. 8—13. the dismission of her in the morning to her mother-in-law with a gift, to whom she returned, and acquainted her with what had passed, ver. 14—18.

Ver. 1. *Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her*, &c.] After the harvests were over, and so gleaning likewise; when Naomi and Ruth were together alone in their apartment, the mother addressed the daughter after this manner: *my daughter, shall I not seek for thee, that it may be well with thee?* that is, in the house of an husband, as in ch. i. 9. her meaning is, to seek out for an husband for her, that she might have an house of her own to rest in, and an husband to provide for her; that so she might be free from such toil and labour she had been lately exercised in, and enjoy much ease and comfort, and all outward happiness and prosperity in a marriage-state with a good husband. This interrogation carries in it the force of a strong affirmation, may suggest that she judged it to be her duty, and that she was determined to seek out such a rest for her; and the Targum makes her way of speaking stronger still, for that is, "by an oath I will not "rest, until the time that I have sought a rest for "thee."

Ver. 2. *And now* is *not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast?* &c.] He was, and her question supposes and concludes it, and which she observes, that Ruth might take notice of it, and encouragement from it; and the rather, since she had been admitted into the company and conversation of his maidens; and which was more, though not mentioned, into the company and conversation of himself, and whom Ruth knew full well; and who being, as Naomi thought, the next near kinsman, and obliged by the law in Deut. xxv. 5. to marry Ruth, with which view his relation is mentioned: *behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor:* which afforded a fit opportunity of meeting with him, being at night, and out of the city, from his own house, and alone, and after a feast for his reapers and threshers of corn, as seems from ver. 7. as it was usual to have threshing-floors in an open place without the city, so to winnow at them, whereby the chaff was more easily separated from the corn, and that in the evening, when in those countries there were the strongest breezes of wind to carry it off; hence the Targum here has it, "behold, "he is winnowing the barley-floor with the wind, "which is in the night." For before the invention and use of fans in winnowing, it was only done by the wind carrying off the chaff, as the oxen trod the corn, for it was done in the threshing-floor, as here: hence Hesiod[m] advises that the threshing-floors should be χώρῳ ἐν εὐαεῖ, in a place exposed to wind; and so Varro[n] observes, the floor should be in the higher part of the field, that the wind might blow through it; to this manner of winnowing Virgil[o] has respect. Nor was it unusual for great personages, owners of farms and fields, to attend and overlook such service. Pliny[p] reports, that Sextus Pomponius, father of the pretor, and prince of the hither Spain, presided over the winnowing of his reapers; so Gideon, another judge of Israel, was found threshing wheat, Judg. vi. 11.

Ver. 3. *Wash thyself, therefore*, &c.] Thy flesh, as Ben Melech, that she might appear clean and neat, and free from all spots, and every thing that might occasion a disagreeable aspect, or an ill scent, and so be acceptable to the man proposed: *and anoint thee;* not with aromatic ointments, as great personages, both men and women, used, as Aben Ezra notes, but with common oil, Ruth being a poor widow, that she might look sleek and smooth: *and put thy raiment upon thee;* that is, her best raiment; for it can't be supposed that she was now without clothes; or else her ornaments, as the Targum; her mother-in-law advises her to put off her widow's weed, the time of mourning for her husband being perhaps at an end, and put on her ornamental dress she used to wear in her own country, and in her husband's life-time. Jarchi interprets it of her sabbath-day clothes: *and get thee down to the floor:* to the threshing-floor where Boaz was winnowing, and which it seems lay lower than the city of Beth-lehem: but *make not thyself known unto the man;* some understand it, that she should not make herself known to any man, not to any of the servants of Boaz; who, though they knew her before, when in the habit of a gleaner, would not know her now in her best and finest clothes, unless she made herself known to them: but rather Boaz is meant, to whom it was not advisable to make herself known; and who also, for the same reason, though he might see her at supper-time, might not know her, because of her different dress: and the rather he is particularly intended, since it follows, *until he shall have done eating and drinking:* when Naomi thought it would be the fittest time to make herself known unto him, in order to gain the point in view, marriage with him.

Ver. 4. *And it shall be, when he lieth down*, &c.] On the threshing-floor, under the open air, in order to get sleep, and take rest: *that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie:* the spot he shall lie on, and the direction in which he shall lie, whether east, west, &c. that when the light shall be taken away, and the darkness of the night come on, she might pretty easily find the place where he lay: *and thou shalt go in and*

[m] Opera & Dies, l. 2. ver. 221.
[n] De re Rustica, l. 1. c. 51.

[o] Cum graviter tunsis, &c. Georgic. l. 3. Vid. Homer. Iliad. 5. ver. 499. & Iliad. 13. ver. 588, &c.
[p] Nat. Hist. l. 22. c. 25.

uncover his feet, and lay thee down; go into the threshing-floor, or to the place where he lay down and gently lay aside the covering upon his feet, whether a blanket, or rug, or his own long clothes, with which his feet were wrapped, and then lay herself down at his feet; this seems to be advised to, in order to give him a hint that there was somebody at his feet. This may seem to us to be strange advice, and not consistent with the character of pious and virtuous women, which they both bore, and with that modesty they otherwise seem to be possessed of; to clear this, let it be observed, that this man was, as Naomi thought, the next kinsman, and so in right of the law in Deut. xxv. 5. was the husband of Ruth, and therefore might take such a freedom with him as she did; and it seems by the same law as if the woman was to make the demand of marriage, which may serve to reconcile the carriage of Ruth to her character: besides, what things in one age, and in one nation, are reckoned immodest, are not so accounted in another age, and in another nation; add to this the age and gravity of Boaz, and the well-known virtue of Ruth to Naomi, she might think herself quite safe in the advice she gave: and yet after all, it must be owned, it is somewhat difficult to account for her simplicity and wisdom in it; since she could not be sure that sin and folly would not be committed, considering the infirmity of human nature; or that such a behaviour in Ruth would not alienate the affection of Boaz from her, and cause him to consider her as a light and loose woman, and unfit to be his wife: *and he will tell thee what thou shalt do:* being a judge of Israel, and expert in the law, he would inform her whether he was the next kinsman, and had the right of redemption or not, and what methods must be taken, and what rites used, in order to her marriage with him, or another person.

Ver. 5. *And she said unto her,* &c.] Having the highest opinion of her piety and prudence, and being confident she would never advise her to what was contrary to true religion and virtue: *all that thou sayest unto me I will do:* observe every instruction and direction she gave her, and attend strictly to every circumstance pointed out to her, as she did; the word for *unto me* is one of those instances, the Masora observes, is not written but read; the letters of the word are not in the text, only the vowel points, the reason of which cannot well be said; what the Midrash [s] gives can never satisfy.

Ver. 6. *And she went down unto the floor,* &c.] From the city of Beth-lehem, from her mother-in-law's house there, to the threshing-floor of Boaz, which was at some distance from it, and lower: *and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her;* both before she went, and after: she washed and anointed herself, and put on her best clothes before she went down, and when she was there took care not to make herself known to any, especially to Boaz, and marked the place where he lay down after he had supped.

Ver. 7. *And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry,* &c.] Having ate and drank freely, though not to excess; and innocent mirth was always allowed in the time of harvest, and of the vintage, and of gathering the fruits of the earth, see Judg. ix. 27. Isa. ix. 3. or *his heart was good;* he was in a good frame and disposition of mind, praising God for his goodness to him, and to his people; so the Targum, "and his heart was good, and he blessed the "name of the Lord who had received his prayer, "and removed the famine from the land of Israel:" *he went to lie down at the heap of corn:* in the threshing-floor, which had either been threshed out, or lay in sheaves to be threshed out: however, it seems probable that he had laid himself down on some of the straw of the corn threshed out, with his clothes on, covering his feet with the lower part of his garment; it being usual in those countries to wear long garments, which served to sleep in by nights, as well as to cover them by day; nor was it thought mean and unworthy of persons of note to sleep in such a place, and in such a manner as this [t]. And it might be chosen for coolness in those hot countries. Jarchi thinks it was to preserve his corn from thieves; though it might be because it was late ere the festival was over, and too late to go home, and besides he was ready for his business the next morning: *and she came softly;* with stillness and quietness, as Jarchi, making as little noise as possible; or secretly, as the Targum, that no one might see her, and have knowledge of what she did: *and uncovered his feet;* turned up the skirt of the garment that was upon his feet, or removed whatever covering was laid on them: *and laid her down;* not on the side of him, which would have seemed immodest, but at his feet, perhaps across them.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass at midnight,* &c.] So long Boaz slept without knowledge of any person being at his feet, and so long Ruth had lain there; but awaking, and perceiving something at his feet, which pressed them, it made him look about and feel, and so affected him, *that the man was afraid;* though a man, and a man of spirit, he was afraid, a panic seized him, not knowing but it might be a spectre, a spirit, or a demon, as Jarchi; and such an instance we have in history [u] of an apparition, which seemed to put off clothes, and place itself in a bed where a man lay, &c. *and turned himself;* to see who it was: *and, behold, a woman lay at his feet;* which he knew by putting his hand upon her head, as Jarchi thinks, and so knew her by her head-dress, or vail; or rather by her voice, as Aben Ezra, and who supposes the moon might shine, and he might be able to discern she had no beard, as well as also discover her by her clothes.

Ver. 9. *And he said, who art thou?* &c.] He spoke quick and short, as one displeased, or however surprised and frightened, just coming out of sleep, and in the night: *and she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid;* that had gleaned in his fields with his maidens, and with whom he had conversed there, and knew her by name: *spread therefore thy skirt over thy handmaid;* which seems to account for the reason of her uncovering his feet, or turning up the skirt of his garment that was upon them; not through wantonness

[s] Midrash Ruth, ut supra.
[t] Nec pudor in stipula, &c. Ovid. Fast. l. 1.
[u] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 9.

and immodesty, but to direct him, when opportunity offered, to spread it over her as a token of his taking her in marriage, and of her being under his care and protection, and of her subjection to him; so the Targum, "let thy name be called upon me to take me "for a wife." Whether the custom now used with the Jews at marriage, for a man to cast the skirt of his *talith*, or outward garment, over the head of his spouse, and cover it, was in use so early, is questionable; and yet something like it seems to have been done, as this phrase intimates, and to which there is an allusion in Ezek. xvi. 8. So Jarchi, "spread the "skirt of thy garments to cover me with thy *talith*, "and this is expressive of marriage;" and Aben Ezra says, it intimates taking her to him for wife; though as the word signifies a wing, the allusion may be to the wings of birds spread over their young, to cherish and protect them, which are acts to be done by a man to his wife: *for thou* art *a near kinsman*; as she had been informed by Naomi, to whom the right of redemption of her husband's estate belonged, and in whom it lay to marry her, and raise up seed to his kinsman, her former husband.

Ver. 10. *And he said, blessed* be *thou of the Lord, my daughter*, &c.] Instead of calling her an immodest woman for laying herself down at his feet, and a bold impudent woman, she being poor, to ask marriage of him; and instead of being angry with her, and chiding and reproving her for disturbing and frightening him in the night, he blesses her, and prays to God to bless her, and prosper her in what she had engaged, and in a kind and loving manner calls her his daughter: for *thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning*; that is, to her husband's family; she had shewn much love to her husband living and dying, and to her mother-in-law, in leaving her country and kindred to come with her into a strange country, and in labour to support her, as she had done, all which was great kindness; to which the Targum adds, her being proselyted; but the kindness she now shewed exceeded all the former, in that she was desirous, according to the law of God, to build up her husband's family, to marry the next near kinsman, even though an old man, to raise up seed to the name and memory of her husband: *inasmuch as thou followedst not the young men, whether poor or rich*; the phrase of following young men is not to be understood of committing fornication with them, as the Targum explains it, but of marriage to them: she shunned their company and conversation, and did not put herself in the way of being caressed and addressed by them, and refused every thing of that sort; and did not choose to follow any young man, rich or poor, as a bride follows her husband when married to him. Now Boaz mentions this as an instance of her virtue, and of her great respect to her husband's family, that a woman of such amiable qualities, virtuous, young, and beautiful, who doubtless might have been married to a young man in her own country, or in Israel, but chose to marry the nearest of kin in her husband's family, to perpetuate his name and memory; the Jews say[t] Boaz was now 80 years of age, and Ruth 40.

Ver. 11. *And now, my daughter, fear not*, &c.] Either of being forced and defiled, to which she had exposed herself by lying down at a man's feet, or of being reproached as an immodest woman for so doing, or of being despised as a poor woman, and of not succeeding in her suit and enterprise: *and I will do to thee all that thou requirest*; which could be done according to the law of God, and without injury to another person after mentioned: *for all the city of my people doth know that thou* art *a virtuous woman*; or righteous, as the Targum; a good woman, possessed of grace and virtue, having every agreeable qualification to recommend to the marriage-state; and therefore, should they come to the knowledge of the step taken to obtain it, will never reproach thee for it, nor blame me for marrying a person, though poor, of such an excellent character, which, by her conduct and behaviour, was universally established. It is in the original text, *all the gate of my people*[u]; meaning either all the people that pass through the gate of the city, that is, all the inhabitants of it, or the whole court of judicature, the elders of the city, that sit in judgment there, as was usual in gates of cities, see ch. iv. 1, 9. So the Targum, "it is manifest before all that sit in the gate of the "great sanhedrim of my people that thou art a righte"ous woman."

Ver. 12. *And now it is true, that I* am thy *near kinsman*, &c.] Her husband and he being brothers' sons, so own cousins: *howbeit, there is a kinsman nearer than I*: who was, the Jews say[w], the brother of her husband's father, and so his uncle, which was a nearer relation than an own cousin.

Ver. 13. *Tarry this day*, &c.] Or lodge here tonight, where she was; this he said not from any ill design upon her, but for her own safety and honour, that she might not be exposed to danger or disgrace, by returning home at such an unseasonable time of night. The first letter in the word for *tarry* is larger than usual in the Hebrew text; which may be done to raise the attention of the reader, to observe it as a thing very singular, that a widow should lodge with a man without any diminution of her chastity; so Buxtorf[x] says, that hereby attention is noted, even the honesty of Boaz ordering Ruth to lodge without a man, and wait until a nearer kinsman, according to the law, should come, and promising that on failure thereof he would be the lawful redeemer; but Dr. Lightfoot[y] observes, that as there is a special mark over a word in the story of Lot's eldest daughter lying with her father, Gen. xix. 34. and a special mark on this word here, in the story of Ruth going to Boaz his bed, seems to relate one to the other, and both together to point at the great providence of God in bringing light out of darkness, Ruth, a mother of Christ, out of the incest of Lot: *and it shall be, in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well, let him do the kinsman's part*: by marrying Ruth, and redeeming her husband's estate, which if he did, it would

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[t] Midrash Ruth, fol. 31. 4. & 34. 2.
[u] כל־שער עמי tota porta populi mei, Montanus; so Vatablus, Tigurine version.
[w] Midrash Ruth, ut supra. Jarchi in loc.
[x] Tiberias, c. 14. p. 39.
[y] Works, vol. 1. p. 48.

be all very well, and right according to law; and it would be very well for Ruth, as Aben Ezra and Abendana interpret it; seeing, as they observe, that kinsman was a very respectable man, a man of great esteem and worth, a man of wealth and authority, and she would be well matched to him. Some think, as the same writers observe, that the word *Tob*, translated *well*, is the name of the kinsman, the same with *Tobias*; so R. Joshuah says[z], that Salmon (who was the father of Boaz), and Elimelech (the father of Ruth's husband), and Tob (this near kinsman), were brethren: *but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth*: that is, he swore he would marry her, and redeem the inheritance, if the other would not; for the phrase, *as the Lord liveth*, is the form of an oath, it is swearing by the living God; so the Targum, "I say with an oath "before the Lord, that as I have spoken unto thee, so "will I do:" *lie down until the morning*; and take some sleep and rest, and be at ease in mind, depending upon the performance of what I have promised.

Ver. 14. *And she lay at his feet until the morning*, &c.] In the same place where she first lay herself down: *and she rose up before one could know another* because of the darkness, as the Targum, it not being yet break of day: *and he said, let it not be known that a woman came into the floor*: to whom he spoke these words is not said, perhaps to Ruth, whom he might call to arise so early as she did, before one could know another, and distinguish a man from a woman; and so sent her away, and bid her be cautious, as much as in her lay, that it might not be known she had been there; for though they were both conscious of their purity and chastity, yet it became them to be careful of their good name, and to prevent scandal upon them, or hinder the nearer kinsman from doing his part, who might refuse upon hearing that Boaz and Ruth had been together; or this was said to his young men, as the Targum adds, charging them to let no one know of it; which is not so likely: it is the sense of some Jewish writers[a], that Boaz said this in his heart, in an ejaculatory prayer to God, entreating that affair might be a secret, that it might not be known that a woman had been in the floor that night, lest the name of God should be blasphemed, and he and Ruth be wrongfully reproached.

Ver. 15. *Also he said*, &c.] Which seems to confirm the first sense, that what he had said before was to Ruth, beside which he also said to her what follows: *bring the vail which thou hast upon thee, and hold it*: by which it appears that he rose also thus early, since he ordered her to bring her vail to him, and hold it with both her hands, whilst he filled it from the heap of corn: this vail was either what she wore on her head, as women used to do, or a coverlet she brought with her to cover herself with, when she lay down; the Septuagint renders it a *girdle*, that is, an apron she tied or girt about her; which is as likely as any thing: *and when she held it, he measured six measures of barley*; what these measures were is not expressed; the Targum is six seahs or bushels, as the Vulgate Latin version, but that is too much, and more than a woman could carry; unless we suppose, with the Targum, that she had strength from the Lord to carry it, and was extraordinarily assisted by him in it, which is not very probable; rather six omers, an omer being the tenth part of an ephah, and so was a quantity she might be able to carry: *and laid it upon her*; upon her shoulder, or put it on her head, it being, no doubt, as much as she could well bear, and which required some assistance to help her up with it: *and she went into the city*; of Beth-lehem, with her burden; or rather *he went*[b]; for the word is masculine, and to be understood of Boaz, who accompanied her to the city, lest she should meet with any that should abuse her; and so the Targum expresses it, "Boaz went into the city."

Ver. 16. *And when she came to her mother-in-law*, &c.] To Naomi, in Beth-lehem: *she said, who art thou, my daughter?* it being duskish, she could not discern her, or perhaps she put the question before she opened the door and saw her; though one would think, if Ruth had called to her, she would have known her voice: rather therefore the particle may be rendered, *what* or *how*[c], instead of *who*; and the sense be, what had befallen her? what success had she had? how had things gone with her? was she married or no? or rather, had she got a promise of it? or was it likely that she should be married? with which the answer agrees: *and she told her all that the man had done to her*: what kindness he had shewn her, what promises he had made to her, that either he, or a nearer kinsman, would marry her, and redeem her husband's estate.

Ver. 17. *And she said, these six* measures *of barley gave he me*, &c.] Which she laid down before her, which was a proof of his kindness to her, that she was acceptable to him, and had well sped; of these six measures, see ver. 15. which by some are allegorically interpreted of six blessings that should be bestowed upon her, as *the spirit of wisdom, understanding*, &c. as Isa. xi. 2. so Jarchi; or of six persons that should spring from her, as David, Daniel, and his companions, and the King Messiah, as the Targum: *for he said unto me, go not empty unto thy mother-in-law*; which, as it expressed a regard to Naomi, and a compassionate concern for her support, so would give her assurance of the success Ruth met with, she would relate to her.

Ver. 18. *Then, said she, sit still, my daughter*, &c.] Keep at home, say nothing of this affair to any person, be easy about it, take no other steps in it, wait the issue of it: *until thou know how the matter will fall*; not that she thought it was a chance matter, a fortuitous and contingent event with respect to God; for all decrees come from heaven, as Aben Ezra on the text says, and particularly marriages are decreed in heaven, and come about according to such decrees; so the Targum, "sit, my daughter, with me, in the "house, until the time thou shall know how it is de-"creed from heaven:" *for the man will not be at rest until he have finished the thing this day*, which she con-

[z] In Midrash Ruth, ut supra.

[a] Midrash Ruth, fol. 34. 14. so some in Abendana in Miclol Yophi in loc.

[b] ויבא & ingressus est, Tigurine version. Drusius, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[c] מה את quid egisti? V. L. quid tibi? Tigurine version; so R. Jonah in Aben Ezra, & Abendana in loc. quomodo tu filia mea? Nold. p. 602. No. 1026.

cluded, partly from his known integrity and faithfulness, diligence and industry, and partly from his affection to Ruth, and her interest in it; for she perceived she had got his heart, both by what he had said to her, and by the present he had sent by her, and she was satisfied he would not be easy until he knew whether he should have her or no.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter relates how an offer was made to the nearest kinsman of Ruth to redeem her, and the field her husband left, which he refused to do, ver. 1—8. upon which Boaz redeemed both, and married Ruth before the elders of the city as witnesses, and who congratulated him and her on that occasion, ver. 9—12. to whom a son was born, called Obed by the neighbours, ver. 13—17. and the chapter is concluded with the genealogy of David, who sprung from him, ver. 18—22.

Ver. 1. *Then went Boaz up to the gate*, &c.] In the middle of the day, as Josephus[d] says, to the gate of the city, where people were continually passing and repassing to and from the country, and where he was most likely to meet with the person he wanted to see and converse with, and where courts of judicature were usually held, and where it was proper to call one to determine the affair he had in hand; so the Targum, "and Boaz "went up to the gate of the house of judgment of the "sanhedrim:" *and set him down there*; waiting for the person or persons passing by, with whom he chose to speak: *and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by*; the kinsman that was nearer than he, of whom he had spoke to Ruth, that if he would not redeem her, he would; a *behold* is prefixed to this, to observe the providence of God that ordered it so, that he should come that way just at the time Boaz was sitting there, and waiting for him; who perhaps was going into his field to look after his threshers and winnowers, as Boaz had been: *unto whom he said, ho, such an one*; calling him by his name, though it is not expressed; which the writer of this history might not know, or, if he did, thought it not material to give it, some have been of opinion that it is purposely concealed, as a just retaliation to him, that as he chose not to raise up seed to his kinsman, to perpetuate his name, so his own is buried in oblivion; though it might be done in his favour, that his name might not be known, and lie under disgrace, for refusing to act the part he ought according to the law to have done; hence the plucking off the shoe, and spitting in his face, were done to such an one by way of contempt and reproach. The words are *peloni almoni*, words used by the Hebrews of persons and places, whose names they either could not, or did not choose to mention, which two words are contracted into *palmoni* in Dan. viii. 13. The name of this man was Tob or Tobias, according to some Jewish writers, see the note on ch. iii. 13. to him Boaz said, *turn aside, and sit down here*; *and he turned aside, and sat down*; instead of going right forward, as he intended, about his business, he turned on one side as he was desired, and sat down by Boaz.

Ver. 2. *And he took ten men of the elders of the city*, &c.] Who were such, not merely in age but in office, who were the heads of thousands, fifties, and tens; ten of whom were a quorum to do business in judiciary affairs, to determine such matters as Boaz had to propose, as to whom the right of redemption of a brother and kinsman's widow, and her estate, belonged, and who were the proper witnesses of the refusal of the one to do it, and of the other's doing it; and from hence the Jews[e] gather, that the blessing of the bride and bridegroom at their marriage is not to be done by less than ten persons: *and said, sit ye down here, and they sat down*; and so made a full court.

Ver. 3. *And he said unto the kinsman*, &c.] That is, Boaz said to the kinsman he called to, and who sat down by him before the ten elders that were present: *Naomi, that is come again out of the land of Moab, selleth a parcel of land*; meaning, that she was determined upon it, and was about to do it, and would do it quickly, and he had it in commission to propose it to a purchaser: *which was our brother Elimelech's*; not in a strict sense, but being akin to the kinsman and himself, and having been a neighbour of them all, and an inhabitant of the place, he is called their brother; though some Jewish writers[f] say, that he was in a strict sense a brother of Boaz and this kinsman, and that Tob, Elimelech, and Boaz, were brethren, and so Tob was reckoned the nearest kinsman, and had the first right to redeem, because he was the elder brother; but this does not seem likely; see the note on ch. iii. 13.

Ver. 4. *And I thought to advertise thee*, &c.] To give him notice of it; or *I said*[g]; he said in his heart and mind, purposing to do it; or he said it to Ruth, promising her that he would do it: *saying, buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people*; or before those that sat there, even the elders, as witnesses of the purchase: *if thou wilt redeem it, redeem it*; for it was redeemable by a near kinsman according to the law, even when sold to another, in Lev. xxv. 25. *but if thou wilt not redeem* it, then *tell me, that I may know*; what to do in this affair, whether to redeem it or not: *for there is none to redeem* it *besides thee, and I am after thee*; he was the first, and Boaz was the next near kinsman, to whom the right of redemption belonged: *and he said, I will redeem it*; he chose to make the purchase, he liked the land, which he probably full well knew, and it might lie near his own, and make a good addition to it; and as the widow was determined, and under a necessity to sell, he might expect to have it at a cheap rate; all which might induce him at once to agree to be the purchaser.

Ver. 5. *Then said Boaz*, &c.] In order to try the

[d] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 4.
[e] Misnah Megillah, c. 4. sect. 3. T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 7. 1. Midrash Ruth, fol. 35. 1.
[f] Midrash Ruth, fol. 31. 2.
[g] ואני אמרתי & ego dixi, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

kinsman, whether he would abide by his resolution, he acquaints him with what he had as yet concealed: *what day thou buyest the field of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead*; the wife of Mahlon, who was dead, the eldest son of Naomi, and so his widow, Ruth the Moabitess, had the reversion of the estate: wherefore the purchase must be made of her as well as of Naomi, and the purchase could not be made of her without marrying her; which, though no law obliged to, yet it seems to be a condition of the purchase annexed to it by Naomi, that she would sell it to no man, unless he would consent to marry Ruth, for whose settlement she had a great concern, having been very dutiful and affectionate to her; which is clearly intimated in the next clause: *to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance*; and so Naomi had another end to answer thereby, not only to provide a good husband for her daughter-in-law, but to perpetuate the name of her son, agreeably to the design of the law in Deut. xxv. 5.

Ver. 6. *And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself*, &c.] On such a condition, because he had a wife, as the Targum suggests; and to take another would, as that intimates, tend to introduce contention into his family, and make him uncomfortable; so Josephus says[h], he had a wife and children, for that reason it was not convenient for him to take the purchase on such a condition: *lest I mar my own inheritance*: he considered, that as he had a wife and children already, and as he might have more by marrying Ruth, his family-expenses would be increased, and his estate diminished; and what would remain must be divided among many, and this estate in particular go to Ruth's first-born, whereby his own inheritance would be scattered and crumbled, and come to little or nothing; add to all which, he might suppose that her ancient mother Naomi would be upon his hands to maintain also: *redeem thou my right for thyself*; which I am ready to give up to thee, for thou hast no wife, as the Targum expresses it: *for I cannot redeem it*; in the circumstances I am, and upon the condition annexed to the purchase.

Ver. 7. *Now this* was the manner *in former time in Israel concerning redeeming*, &c.] It is a custom, and not a law, that seems here referred to, when an estate was bought and sold; not the law in Lev. xxv. 25. for though that respects the redemption of an estate by a near kinsman, yet no such manner was enjoined as here practised afterwards, made mention of; nor the law in Deut. xxv. 5. which does not concern the redemption of estates, nor a kinsman's marrying the widow of a deceased kinsman, but a brother's marrying the widow of a deceased brother, and the rites and ceremonies there enjoined upon refusal are different from those here used; though Josephus[i] is express for it, that the law is here referred to; but this is not only concerning purchase of estates, but *concerning changing* also, one field for another, as Aben Ezra interprets it: *for to confirm all things*; the following custom was observed for the confirmation of any bargain whatever, whether by sale or barter, and where there was no marriage in the case: *a man plucked off his shoe and gave it to his neighbour*; signifying thereby, that he yielded his right to him in the thing sold or bartered; the Targum says, he plucked off the glove of his right hand, which perhaps was then in use, when the Targumist wrote, and answered the same purpose; and, according to Jarchi, it was a linen cloth, vail, or handkerchief, that was used, and delivered by the one to the other; and of this way of buying writes Elias[k]; at this day, says he, we purchase by a linen cloth or handkerchief, called *sudar*, which is a garment; and this two witnesses take, and explain before them the words of their agreement, and each of the witnesses stretches out the skirt of the garment, and those that take upon them to confirm every matter, touch the skirt of their garments; and this is called purchasing by *sudar*, or the linen cloth: *and this was a testimony in Israel*: a witness to, or a confirmation of the bargain made; but who gave the shoe, whether the kinsman or Boaz, is not certain from the text; and about which the Jewish writers are divided, as Jarchi observes.

Ver. 8. *And therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, buy* it *for me*, &c.] Which is repeated to shew he gave his full consent to it, that he should make the purchase of it if he pleased, and which he confirmed by the following rite: *so he drew off his shoe*; thereby signifying that he relinquished his right to the purchase of the estate, and ceded it to him; the Targum has it, "and Boaz drew off the glove off his right "hand, and bought it of him;" and so Aben Ezra, "and Boaz drew off his shoe, and gave it to his kins-"man," as if this was some acknowledgment for yielding his right unto him; and about this there is a great dissension among the Jewish writers[l]; one says it was the shoe of Boaz that was plucked off; another says it was the shoe of the kinsman; which latter seems rightest: and it may be observed, that this custom is different from what is enjoined Deut. xxv. there the woman was to pluck off the shoe of him that refused to marry her, but here the man plucked off his own shoe, who chose not to redeem; nor is there mention of spitting in his face; nor does it appear that Ruth did the one or the other; though Josephus[m] affirms it, and says, that she both plucked off his shoe, and spit in his face; neither of which are mentioned.

Ver. 9. *And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people*, &c.] Who were present at the gate of the city, or in court: *ye are witnesses this day that I have bought all that* was *Elimelech's*: all the land which belonged to him, who was the husband of Naomi, and the father of Ruth's husband, whose estate Boaz now bought, paying the value for it to Naomi: *and all that* was *Chilion's and Mahlon's*: the two sons of Elimelech, who, had they been living, would have enjoyed their father's estate; but they being dead, it devolved on the mother, and after her on the widows, who must therefore agree to the sale of the estate, as Ruth did, see ver. 5. Of Orpah no notice is taken, because she returned to her own land; and besides Mahlon, the hus-

[h] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 9. sect. 4.
[i] Ibid.
[k] Tishbi, p. 207. See Leo Modena's History of the Rites, &c. of the present Jews, part 2. c. 6.
[l] Midrash Ruth, fol. 35. 2.
[m] Ut supra.

band of Ruth, was the elder brother, and therefore had the first right to the inheritance; but as it was in the hands of Naomi now, the purchase was made of her principally, and therefore Boaz is said to purchase it *of the hand of Naomi*; to whom the money was paid, and who delivered the estate to him.

Ver. 10. *Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife*, &c.] Which was the condition on which the purchase of the land was, that whoever bought that should take her for his wife; nor did Boaz do evil in marrying her, though a Moabitess. Moab was not one of the nations with whom marriage was forbidden; and though it was a Heathenish and idolatrous nation, and so on that account it was not fit and proper to marry with such, yet Ruth was become a proselytess; nor was this contrary to the law in Deut. xxiii. 3. since, according to the sense the Jews give of it, it respects men, and not women, and such men who otherwise were capable of bearing offices in the congregation; "an Ammonite, "and a Moabite (they say[a]) are forbidden, and their "prohibition is a perpetual one, but their women are "free immediately:" *to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance*; the name of Mahlon, Ruth's former husband, to whom the inheritance would have come had he lived; the raising up of his name is not upon a son of her's by Boaz, for her first-born was called Obed, and not Mahlon, and is always spoken of as the son of Boaz, and not of Mahlon, but upon his inheritance, having bought his wife along with it, which the register of the purchase would shew, and so cause his name to be remembered; and, as Jarchi says, when Ruth went in and out upon the estate or inheritance, they would say, this was the wife of Mahlon, and so through her his name would be made mention of: *that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of this place*; might not be quite forgotten both in the city and in the court, and be remembered no more: *ye are witnesses this day*; this is repeated, that they might answer to it, as they do in the next verse.

Ver. 11. *And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, we are witnesses*, &c.] Both of the purchase of the estate by Boaz being legally made, and of the marriage of Ruth to him, the condition of the bargain: *the Lord make the woman that is come into thine house*; not into his house, strictly and literally taken, the place of his habitation; for both he and she were now at the gate of the city, and as yet she was not introduced into his house; but by his marriage of her she was brought into his family, and was become a principal part of it, being his wife. This is a wish, prayer, or benediction of the elders, of one in the name of the rest, congratulating the married couple, and wishing them well; and particularly that the woman Boaz had married before them, as witnesses, might be *like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel*; the two wives of Jacob; the Targum adds, with twelve tribes; for though some of the tribes sprung from their maids, which they gave to Jacob, yet the children born of them were reckoned theirs by a moral estimation, as some express it. Rachel is set before Leah, though the youngest, and had the fewest children, because she was his first wife in his intention, and according to the covenant made with her father, though imposed upon and deceived; and she was his more lawful wife, and his most beloved one. By the children of these two, and their maidens, the house or family of Israel was built up, and became a great nation, consisting of twelve tribes, very numerous: *and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-lehem*; two names of one and the same place, Gen. xxxv. 19. Mic. v. 2. These words seem to be directed to Boaz, particularly praying that he might continue to do worthy and virtuous actions, as well as increase in wealth and riches, power and authority, and retain his name and fame, and grow in credit and reputation among his fellow-citizens.

Ver. 12. *And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah*, &c.] Of whose tribe the Beth-lehemites were, and were also of the house or family of Pharez, as appears from ver. 18, &c. who was born to Judah of Tamar, one of another nation, as Ruth was, and from whom sprung a very numerous family, one of the five families of Judah; and they wish that the family of Boaz, by Ruth, might be as numerous; and if Boaz was the same with Ibzan, as the Jews say, though that wants proof, he had a very numerous offspring, thirty sons and thirty daughters, Judg. xii. 8, 9. *of the seed which the Lord shall give thee of this young woman*; by which it is plain Ruth was present, for they do, as it were, point to her, and that she was a young woman, though a widow: the Jews say she was forty years of age, as observed in ch. iii. 10. and the elders wish and pray he might have a numerous family of the children the Lord would give him by her; and this might be the rather expected of her, as being a young woman, yet only as the gift of God, as children are, Psal. cxxvii. 3.

Ver. 13. *So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife*, &c.] Without any other rites or ceremonies than what are here expressed; for as yet the rites and ceremonies now in use with the Jews[o], in marriages, had not obtained: *and when he went in unto her*; which is a modest expression of the conjugal duty performed by him: *the Lord gave her conception*; for this is of God, let the circumstance of the person, as to age, be as it may: *and she bare a son*; at the year's end, as Josephus[p] relates.

Ver. 14. *And the women said unto Naomi*, &c.] The inhabitants of Beth-lehem, as they fell into her company; or perhaps these were the women that were called to the labour of Ruth, and attended the birth of the child: *blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman*; a grandchild born to her that day. In Moab she was bereaved of her husband and of two sons; but now she is not left without a relation, a kinsman, and a redeemer, for which the women blessed God, and stirred her up to do the same. Alshech observes, that the women said, blessed be the Lord, because from him would spring the Messiah of the Lord, as did. Some refer this to Boaz, to whom the name

[a] Misn. Yebamot, c. 8. sect. 3.
[o] Vid. Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. c. 39. Leo Modena's History of the Rites of the present Jews, part 4. c. 3.
[p] Ut supra.

of kinsman, or redeemer, more properly belonged; and who appeared to have done the office and duty of such an one, by redeeming the estate of his kinsman, and marrying his widow, the effect of which was, that a son was born, who would be heir of the estate; but the text speaks of what was done that day, and what is after said in the next verse all relates to the child born: *that his name may be famous in Israel:* some refer this to the name of God, by whose providence this was brought about; others to Boaz, who was well spoken of for his charity, integrity, and humility, shewn in redeeming the estate, and taking Ruth to wife; or rather it refers to the new-born child, of whom they express their hope and confidence, that when he came to man's estate would be very famous and honourable in Israel, being a worthy and virtuous man himself, and the progenitor of such illustrious persons as Jesse, David, &c. and even of the Messiah.

Ver. 15. *And he shall be unto thee a restorer of* thy *life,* &c.] Of the joys, pleasures, and comforts of it, which she had been deprived of through the death of her husband and her two sons, ever since which she had lived a sorrowful life; all the comfort she had was from her daughter-in-law, and now a grandchild being born to her of her would be a means of restoring comfort to her mourning sorrowful spirit, and give her pleasure in those years in which she did not expect any: *and a nourisher of thine old age:* that would when grown up feed her, support her, and supply her with all necessaries of life, being heir to a large and rich estate: *for thy daughter-in-law which loveth thee:* Ruth the wife of Boaz, who had shewn her love, in leaving her own country and kindred, to come along with her into a strange land, and who had laboured for her support in it, and still retained the same affection for her: *which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him:* either which had been so in the time of her widowhood, as the Targum; or rather which was so now, being the wife of so rich a person, and having now brought forth a son, heir to the estate, who would be more capable of doing for her than if she had seven sons living, having no other than their paternal estate.

Ver. 16. *And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom,* &c.] As a token of her most tender love and affection for it; this it is probable she did quickly after the birth of it: *and became a nurse unto it;* that is, after the mother had suckled and weaned it, then she took it from her, and brought it up.

Ver. 17. *And the women her neighbours gave it a name,* &c.] Josephus says [y] Naomi gave it, by the advice of her neighbours; very probably on the eighth day when he was circumcised, and the neighbours were invited on that occasion, at which time it seems it was usual to give names to children, see Luke i. 59. The Romans gave names to females on the 8th day, to the males on the 9th; hence the goddess Nundina had her name [z]; the Greeks generally on the 10th, sometimes on the 7th [a]: it was commonly the province of the father to give the name, and sometimes his neighbours and nearest friends were called, and in their presence the name was given, and by any of them he should choose in his stead [b]: *saying, there is a son born to Naomi:* to her family, and even to herself, being born of her who had been wife to her eldest son; and this was to her as instead of him, and was as he to her; so Aben Ezra compares this with Exod. ii. 10. and moreover, this child was born, as the neighbours presaged, for the great comfort and advantage of Naomi, to be her supporter and nourisher in her old age, ver. 15. *and they called his name Obed;* which signifies *serving,* as Josephus [c] rightly observes, though he does not always give the true sense of Hebrew words: this name was given, not in remembrance of the service his mother was obliged to, before marriage with Boaz; but rather on the account of the service that he would be of to Naomi, as they hoped and believed; though the reason of it, as given by the Targum, is not to be overlooked, which interprets it, "who served the Lord of the "world with a perfect heart;" and so they might have some respect to his being hereafter a servant of the Lord: *he is the father of Jesse, and the father of David;* so Jesse is called the Beth-lehemite, 1 Sam. xvi. 1. being of the city of Beth-lehem, of which city Boaz was when his son Obed was born, who was the father of Jesse; of whom was David king of Israel, and from whom sprung the Messiah, for whose sake this book was written, that his genealogy might clearly appear; and of which use it is made by the Evangelists Matthew and Luke.

Ver. 18. *Now these are the generations of Pharez,* &c.] The son of Judah, by Tamar before mentioned, ver. 12. see Gen. xxxviii. 29. for the intention of this genealogy is to confirm the truth of Jacob's prophecy, of Shiloh the Messiah coming from the tribe of Judah, Gen. xlix. 10. and therefore it begins with Pharez, well known to be the son of Judah, and ends with David, whose son the Messiah was to be, as is owned by all Jews and Gentiles that believe the divine revelation: *Pharez begat Hezron;* who was one of those that went down with Jacob into Egypt, being born in the land of Canaan, Gen. xlvi. 12. called Esrom in Matt. i. 3. Luke iii. 33.

Ver. 19. *And Hezron begat Ram,* &c.] Called Aram by the Septuagint, and so in Matt. i. 3. Luke iii. 33. *and Ram begat Amminadab;* in whose name there is no variation, neither in the book of Chronicles nor in the Evangelists; both these, as well as the next, were born in Egypt.

Ver. 20. *And Amminadab begat Nahshon,* &c.] The prince of the tribe of Judah, as the Targum adds; and so he was when the Israelites were come out of Egypt, and were in the wilderness at the time of the dedication of the altar, Numb. vii. 12. called Naasson, Matt. i. 4. Luke iii. 32. *and Nahshon begat Salmon;* or, as in the Hebrew text, Salmah, and in 1 Chron. ii. 11. Salma; and yet in the verse following Salmon, as we read it.

Ver. 21. *And Salmon begat Boaz,* &c.] Of Rahab the harlot, whom he married, Matt. i. 5. the very same person that makes a principal part of this book, and

[y] Ut supra.
[z] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 25.
[a] Harpocration & Suidas in voce Ἑβδομευομένου, Scholiast. in Aristoph. Aves, p. 265. & Euripid. & Aristot. in ib.
[b] Vid. Sperling. de Baptism. Ethnic. c. 14 & 15.
[c] Ibid.

whom the Targum here takes to be the judge Ibzan, as in ch. i. 1. see the note there: *and Boaz begat Obed*; of Ruth; of whom see the preceding verses.

Ver. 22. *And Obed begat Jesse*, &c.] The Bethlehemite, the father of David: *and Jesse begat David*; the Targum adds, the king of Israel; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions add, the king: from whence it is by some concluded that this book was written by Samuel, not only after the birth of David, but after he had been anointed king by him: here being but four generations mentioned, from the coming of the Israelites into Canaan, to the birth of David, which was 360 years, each of the four persons, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, and Jesse, must beget a son when 100 years old and upwards; and which is not at all incredible, as appears by instances in later times, and therefore not at all improbable, that in those ancient times men of sobriety and good constitutions should have children at such an age.

THE FIRST BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED

THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS.

THIS book, in the Hebrew copies, is commonly called Samuel, or the Book of Samuel; in the Syriac version, the Book of Samuel the Prophet; and in the Arabic version, the Book of Samuel the Prophet, which is the First Book of the Kings; and the Septuagint version, the Book of the Kingdom: it has the name of Samuel, because it contains an history of his life and times; and the Jews say [a] it was written by him; and as it may well enough be thought to be, to the end of the 24th chapter; and the rest might be written by Nathan and Gad, as may be gathered from 1 Chron. xxix. 29. as also the following book that bears his name; and both may be called the Books of Kings, because they give an account of the rise of the kings in Israel, and of the two first of them; though some think they were written by Jeremiah, as Abarbinel; and others ascribe them to Ezra: however, there is no doubt to be made of it that this book was written by divine inspiration, when we consider the series of its history, its connexion and harmony with other parts of Scripture; the several things borrowed from it, or alluded to in the book of Psalms, particularly what is observed in Psal. cxiii. 7, 8. seems to be taken out of 1 Sam. ii. 8. and the sanction which the Lord gives to it, by referring to a fact in it, whereby he stopped the mouths of the Scribes and Pharisees cavilling at his disciples, Matt. xii. 3, 4, compared with 1 Sam. xxi. 3, 4, 5, 6. yea, even, as Huetius [b] observes, some Heathen writers have by their testimonies confirmed some passages in these books, which they seem to have been acquainted with, as Nicolaus of Damascus [c], and Eupolemus [d]; it contains an history of the government of Eli, and of the birth of Samuel, and his education under him; of the succession of Samuel in it, and the resignation of it to Saul, when he was chosen king; of his administration of his office, and of things done in the time of it, both before and after his rejection, and of the persecution of David by Saul, and is concluded with his death.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter gives an account of the parents of Samuel, of the trouble his mother met with from her rival, and comfort from her husband, ver. 1—8. of her prayer to God for a son, and of her vow to him, should one be given her, ver. 9—11. of the notice Eli took of her, and of his censure on her, which he afterwards retracted, and comforted her, ver. 12—18. of her conception and the birth of her son, the nursing and weaning of him, ver. 19—23. and of the presentation of him to the Lord, with a sacrifice, ver. 24—28.

Ver. 1. *Now there was a man of Ramathaim-zophim, of Mount Ephraim*, &c.] Ramathaim is a word of the dual number, and signifies two Ramahs; the city consisted of two parts, being built perhaps on two hills, and were called Zophim; because, as the Rabbins say, they looked one to another; or rather, because si-

[a] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.
[b] Demonstrat. Evangel. Prop. 4. p. 199.
[c] Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 2.
[d] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30.

tuated on eminences, there were watch-towers in them, where watchmen were placed; or because they were inhabited by prophets, who were sometimes called watchmen, Ezek. iii. 17. and here is thought to be a school of the prophets, see ch. xix. 19—24. and which seems to be countenanced by the Targum, in which the words are paraphrased thus, "and there was one "man of Ramatha, of the disciples of the prophets;" or, as others think, the sense is this, this man was one of the Ramathites, the inhabitants of Ramah, and of the family of Zuph, or the Zuphites, which gave the name to the land of Zuph, and the grand ancestor of Elkanah is in this verse called Zuph, see ch. ix. 5. According to Jerom[y], this is the same with Arimathea, of which Joseph was, Matt. xxvii. 57. for thus he writes, "Armatha Sophim, the city of Helcanah and "Samuel, in the Thamnitic region near Diospolis (or "Lydda), from whence was Joseph, who in the Gospels is said to be of Arimathea;" but Reland[z] thinks it cannot be the same that was about Lydda, which was all a champaign country; whereas this was in the mountains of Ephraim, which must be sought for to the north of Jerusalem, and not the west, and so it follows: *of Mount Ephraim:* which is added to distinguish it from other Ramahs in several tribes, as in Benjamin, Naphtali, &c. though this may refer not to the situation of Ramathaim, but to the country of this man, who was originally of Mount Ephraim, as was the Levite in Judg. xix. 1. who was the cause of much evil to Israel, as this was of great good, as Kimchi observes: *and his name was Elkanah:* which signifies *God hath possessed:* that is, possessed him, or he was in possession of God; he had an ancestor of the same name, 1 Chron. vi. 23. This man was a Levite, one of the Kohathites, and a descendant of Korah; so that the famous prophet Samuel was of the sons of Korah: *the son of Jeroham, the son of Elihu, the son of Tohu, the son of Zuph;* the three last of these names are somewhat differently read in 1 Chron. vi. 26, 27. where they are Eliab, Nahath, Zophai; and in ver. 34, 35. Eliel, Toah, Zuph: *an Ephrathite:* which appellation is to be connected, according to Kimchi, not with Elkanah, but with Zuph; though neither of them were so called from Beth-lehem-judah, the inhabitants of which were indeed called Ephrathites from Ephratah, another name of it; so Elimelech, and his sons Mahlon and Chilion, being of that city, were so called, Ruth i. 2. not from their being of the tribe of Ephraim, as Jeroboam of that tribe is called an Ephrathite, 1 Kings xi. 26. see Judg. xii. 5. for these were Levites, the descendants of Kohath, in the line of Korah; but because they sojourned in Mount Ephraim, or dwelt there, as Elkanah did; and it is well known that the Kohathites had cities given them in the tribe of Ephraim, Josh. xxi. 5, 21, 22.

Ver. 2. *And he had two wives, &c.*] Which, though connived at in those times, was contrary to the original law of marriage; and for which, though a good man, he was chastised, and had a great deal of vexation and trouble, the two wives not agreeing with each other; perhaps not having children by the one so soon as he hoped and wished for, he took another: *the name of the one was Hannah, and the name of the other Peninnah:* the first name signifies *grace* or *gracious*, and she was a woman who had the grace of God, and very probably was also very comely, beautiful, and acceptable, as she was in the sight of her husband; the other signifies a cornered gem, a precious stone or jewel, as the pearl, ruby, amethyst, &c. Very likely Hannah was his first wife, and having no children by her, he took Peninnah, who proved to be a rough diamond: *and Peninnah had children, but Hannah had no children;* how many Peninnah had is not said, perhaps ten; see ver. 8. and that Hannah had none was not because she was naturally barren, but because the Lord had shut up her womb, or restrained her from bearing children, to put her upon praying for one, and that the birth of Samuel might be the more remarkable; see ver. 5.

Ver. 3. *This man went up out of his city yearly, &c.*] From year to year; or, as the Targum, from the time of the solemn appointed feast to the solemn appointed feast, from one to another; there were three of them in the year, at which all the males in Israel were to appear at the tabernacle; and being a Levite, this man was the more careful to observe this rule. He is said to *go up* out of his city, which was Ramathaim or Ramah; for though it was built on an eminence, from whence it had its name, yet Shiloh, whither he went, was higher; that being, as Adrichomius says[a], on the highest mountain of all round about Jerusalem, and overtopped all the mountains of the holy land. So that as he first went down the hill from Ramah, he went up an high ascent to Shiloh, which is the place he went up to as follows: *to worship and to sacrifice unto the Lord of hosts in Shiloh;* where the tabernacle was, the place of worship, and the altar of burnt-offerings, on which sacrifices were offered. This place, according to Bunting[b], was 12 miles from Ramah, though others say it was not more than 7 miles from it; hither he went to worship, or bow before the Lord; to pray unto him, as it is commonly interpreted; and being put before sacrifice, is said to be preferable to that, and more acceptable to God, and more eligible to be done in the tabernacle or temple than at home; see Luke xviii. 10. and though he is said to go up to sacrifice, it is not to be understood of his performing it himself, but by others, by the priest; for he himself was a Levite, and could not offer sacrifices. This is the first time that mention is made of this title of Jehovah, Lord of hosts, of all the hosts and armies in heaven and in earth, the Lord of Sabaoth, as in Jam. v. 4. from צבא, an *host*, or army; and from hence the Heathens called some of their deities by the name of Sabazius, as Jupiter Sabazius[c]; and the Phrygians and Thracians used to call Bacchus Sabazius, and other Grecians following them did the same[d]: *and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas the priests of the Lord, were there:* Eli was the next judge of Israel after Sam-

[y] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. K.
[z] Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 581.
[a] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 30. So Sandys's Travels, l. 3. p. 157.
[b] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 122.
[c] Valer. Maxim. l. 1. c. 3. Vid. D. Herbert de Cherbury de Relig. Gent. c. 3. p. 22.

[d] Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 3. p. 212. Harpocration in voce Σαβοί, Lucian. Concil. deor. sect. 4. Cicero de legibus, l. 2. Aristophan. vespæ, v. 9, 10. Aves, p. 582. & Scholia in ib. Lysistrata, p. 860. & Scholia in ib.

son, and who also was the high-priest, as is generally supposed; but when and how the high-priesthood came into his family is nowhere said, who was a descendant of Ithamar, the younger son of Aaron, in whose line it continued to the time of Solomon; and Josephus[e] places three between Phinehas and Eli, who were all of the line of Eleazar, whom he calls Abiezer, Bouci, and Ozis; but their Scripture names are Abishua, Bukki, and Uzzi, 1 Chron. vi. 50, 51. And according to him, after Uzzi came Eli to be high-priest, and therefore must be the first of the line of Ithamar that was in that office. His two sons are mentioned as officiating as priests in Shiloh, at the time Elkanah used to go yearly thither to worship and sacrifice; who were very wicked men, as appears by an after-account of them; and it is generally thought that this is observed here, to shew that the wickedness of these priests did not hinder this good man from doing his duty; nor did he make use of it as an excuse for not attending the worship of the sanctuary.

Ver. 4. *And when the time was that Elkanah offered,* &c.] That is, brought his offering to the priest, to offer it for him, which was at one of the three festivals. According to R. Joshua Ben Levi[f], this was at the time of Pentecost; but Abarbinel thinks it was at the time of the in-gathering of the fruits of the earth, which was a time of rejoicing, even the feast of tabernacles, and which is most likely: *he gave to Peninnah his wife, and to all her sons and her daughters, portions:* parts of the offering, every one a part, or portion; by which it appears, that this was a peace-offering he offered, the greater part of which belonged to the owner, and which he made a feast of for his family and friends; see Deut. xii. 5, 6, 7. and xvi. 10—15. Jerom[g] interprets these portions of garments.

Ver. 5. *But unto Hannah he gave a worthy portion,* &c.] Or, one choice portion, as the Targum; the best part or portion in the peace-offering, of what the priest had not; he had the breast and the right shoulder, the next best piece he gave to Hannah; and the word being of the dual number, some render it a double portion; others, *one part of two faces*[h]; which Jerom interprets, which might be received with a cheerful countenance, it was so good and excellent in its kind; others interpret it that he gave it with a sorrowful[i] and displeased countenance, because of the reason following, that she had no children; but Ben Gersom understands it of a part or portion of meat that had two faces or appearances; that he gave her one of the pieces, one part of which was very fat, and the other had no fat on it, so that she might choose what she liked best: *for he loved Hannah;* loved her best, and therefore did every thing to please her, and make her comfortable under her affliction for want of children, and to express his tender affection for her: *but the Lord had shut up her womb;* restrained her from conception, and bearing children; see Gen. xx. 18. or *though the Lord had shut up her womb*[k]; this did not abate his love to her.

Ver. 6. *And her adversary also provoked her sore,* &c.] That is, Peninnah, the other wife of Elkanah; for when a man had more wives, two or more, they were usually at enmity to one another, as the two wives of Socrates were, being always jealous lest one should have more love and respect than the other from the husband; and this woman provoked Hannah one time after another, and continually, by upbraiding her with her barrenness; and this was another reason why Elkanah did all he could to comfort her, not only because the Lord had restrained her from bearing children, but because also she that envied and emulated her sadly provoked her: *for to make her fret;* and be uneasy, and murmur at and complain of her unhappy circumstances: some render it, *because she thundered*[l] against her; that is, Peninnah was exceeding loud and clamorous with her reproaches and scoffs, which were grievously provoking to Hannah. So said Socrates, when Xantippe first scolded at him, and then poured foul water on him: did not I say, says he, that Xantippe first thunders, and then rains[m]? *because the Lord had shut up her womb;* it was this Peninnah upbraided her with, and at which Hannah fretted and grieved.

Ver. 7. *And as he did so year by year,* &c.] Elkanah went up every year to Shiloh, and offered sacrifices, taking his family with him, and gave to Peninnah and her children their portion, and to Hannah a double portion, or if but one yet the best: *when she went up to the house of the Lord;* that is, Peninnah, along with her husband, with whom she went every year to the tabernacle at Shiloh: *so she provoked her;* her rival Hannah, upbraiding her with her barrenness; to which she was stirred up by seeing her husband on these festivals take so much notice of her, and shew so much love and respect for her, as always to give her the best portion. Abarbinel thinks that Peninnah and Hannah lived at two separate places, the one at Ramah and the other at Ramatha, which both together are called Ramathaim; and that they only met with and saw one another at these festivals, and then it was that the one was so very insulting and provoking to the other: *therefore she wept and did not eat;* that is, Hannah wept at the insults, reproaches, and scoffs, cast at her by her antagonist; insomuch that she could not eat of the peace-offerings, though her husband always gave her the best part and portion of them; but her grief took away her stomach and appetite, that she could not eat; see Psal. xlii. 3.

Ver. 8. *Then said Elkanah her husband to her, Hannah, why weepest thou?* &c.] Since it was a time of rejoicing, as every festival was, especially at the in-gathering of the fruits of the earth: *and why eatest thou not?* since they were at a feast, and she had the best part and portion of the provision: *and why is thy heart grieved?* to such a degree that she could neither eat nor drink: am *not I better to thee than ten sons?* which, as Jarchi says, Peninnah had borne to him; his meaning is, that the share she had in his love and affections ought to have been esteemed by her more than if she

[e] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 11. sect. 5.
[f] Apud Kimchium in loc.
[g] Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 74. H.
[h] מנה אחת אפים unam portionem duarum facierum, Sanctius Belga.

[i] Sic Stockius, p. 79.
[k] ויהוה quanquam Jehovah, Piscator.
[l] בעבור הרעמה propterea quod intonabat contra eam, Piscator.
[m] Laert. in Vit. Socrat. p. 112.

had ten or many children by him; and it suggests that Peninnah would have been glad to have such a share in his affections as Hannah had; and it would have been more eligible to her, than to have borne him so many children as she had.

Ver. 9. *So Hannah rose up after they had eaten in Shiloh, and after they had drank,* &c.] After dinner, after Elkanah and Peninnah, and their children, had eaten heartily, and drank freely, and made a comfortable meal, and even a feast of it, at the place where the tabernacle and altar were, and their peace-offerings were offered up, part of which they had been regaling themselves with. The Targum is, "after she had eaten "in Shiloh, and after she had drank;" for upon the entreaty of her husband, and to make him easy, she might be prevailed upon to eat somewhat, though it might be but little; and to drink, though it was but water; for as for wine and strong drink, she declares afterwards she had not drank, ver. 15. *now Eli the priest sat upon a seat by a post of the temple of the Lord;* for so the tabernacle was called, and sometimes the temple is called a tabernacle, Jer. x. 20. Now at the door-posts and side of the threshold of the temple of the Lord, as the Targum; at the entrance of the great court of the Israelites, Eli had a seat placed, on which he sat; this must be at the gate of the court of the tabernacle, by the pillars of it; for in the court itself none afterwards might sit but kings of the family of David[o]; here Eli sat as an high-priest and judge, to give advice in difficult cases, and to try and judge all causes that were brought before h[illegible]; some say[p] that he was on this day constituted an high-priest, and others say[q] he was now made a judge; but no doubt he was both high-priest and judge before this time.

Ver. 10. *And she was in bitterness of soul,* &c.] Because of her barrenness, and the taunts and reflections she had met with on that account; her life was bitter to her, she could take no pleasure in any of the comforts of it: *and prayed unto the Lord, and wept sore;* her prayer was with strong crying and tears; it was very fervent and affectionate; she prayed most vehemently, and wept bitterly. This perhaps was about the time of the evening sacrifice, about three or four o'clock in the afternoon; seeing it was after dinner that she arose up and went to prayer in the house of God, at the door of the tabernacle, or near it, as it should seem by the notice Eli took of her, who sat there.

Ver. 11. *And she vowed a vow,* &c.] Which might be confirmed by her husband; otherwise the vow of a woman, if disapproved of by her husband, was not valid, Numb. xxx. 8. and Elkanah might make the same vow his wife did, and so it stood; for as this was a vow of Nazariteship, it is a tradition of the Jews[r], that a man may vow his son to be a Nazarite, but a woman may not; but as this instance contradicts the tradition, they endeavour to explain away this vow, as it may respect a Nazarite, as will be observed hereafter: *and said, O Lord of hosts;* this is properly the first time this title was used by any that we know of; for though it is expressed in ver. 3. there it is used as the words of the writer of this history, and so long after this prayer was put up; see the note there; and it is an observation in the Talmud[s], that from the day God created the world, no man called him the Lord of hosts till Hannah came and called him so: *if thou wilt indeed look upon the affliction of thine handmaid;* the sorrow of heart she had, the reproach she met with, on account of her having no children: *and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid;* which petitions are the same in other words, and are repeated to denote her vehemence and importunity in prayer, and may allude to usages among men, that will look upon a person in distress, and turn away and forget them, and never think of them more; which she deprecates may not be her case with God: *but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man-child;* or, *a seed of men*[t]; a son in the midst of men, as the Targum; such as is desirable by men, as a male child for the most part is; though some Jewish writers interpret it of the seed of righteous, wise, and understanding men, such as be fit to serve the Lord, which seems to be a sense foreign to the text; a man-child she asks, because no other could serve the Lord in the temple; and that she meant by this phrase such an one is clear, because she vowed that a razor should not come on its head, which is never said of females, as Kimchi observes: *then will I give him unto the Lord all the days of his life;* to serve him, and minister unto him in the sanctuary; being born a Levite, it was incumbent on him to serve the Lord, and he had a right to his service; but then a common Levite did not enter on it until 25 or 30 years of age, and was not always serving, but was dismissed from it at 50; but the child she vows, if the Lord would give her such an one, should be trained up in his service from its infancy, and continue in it all the days of its life; and was to be also a perpetual Nazarite, as Samson was, as follows: *and there shall no razor come upon his head;* as was not to come upon a Nazarite, during his Nazariteship, Numb. vi. 5. and as such a vow made by a woman contradicts the tradition of the Jews before mentioned, they give another sense of this clause; as the Targum, which paraphrases it, "and the fear of man shall not be upon him;" but about this there is a division[u]; but that Samuel was a Nazarite, and a perpetual one, is the sense of their best interpreters.

Ver. 12. *And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord,* &c.] Being very earnest and importunate with him to grant her request, and therefore repeated her petition, and prolonged her prayer, being unwilling to let the Lord go, until she had a promise, or some satisfaction, that she should have the thing she asked; some think she continued an hour in prayer: *that Eli marked her mouth;* observed the motion of her lips, and no doubt her distorted countenance, and lift-up eyes and hands, but chiefly the former; not knowing what the woman was at, and what could be the meaning of such motions.

Ver. 13. *Now Hannah, she spake in her heart,* &c.]

[o] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1.
[p] Shocked Tob apud Yalkut, par. 2. fol. 12. 4.
[q] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 37.
[r] Misn. Sotah. c. 3. sect. 8.

[s] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 2.
[t] זרע אנשים semen virorum, Montanus.
[u] Misn. Nazir, c. 9. sect. 5.

It was mental prayer she used, some ejaculations of her mind she sent up to God, which she was sensible were well known to him, and she needed not to express vocally: *only her lips moved*; as her heart endited, and sent up her petitions, as if she had used words and phrases in form: *but her voice was not heard*: that she might not seem to be ostentatious in her prayer, and that she might not interrupt others in their devotions; and she knew that her voice was not necessary with respect to God: *therefore Eli thought she had been drunken*; by the motions she made, and gestures she used, as if she was muttering something to herself, and by her long continuance therein, and it being after a feast she had been at with her husband, and the rest of the family; from all which Eli concluded this must be her case.

Ver. 14. *And Eli said unto her, how long wilt thou be drunken?* &c.] What, every day drunk? what, continually in this wicked practice? when will it be left off? for Eli might have observed on other days, and at other times, odd looks, and a strange behaviour in her, which he took for the effects of drinking too much wine: or how long will this drunken fit last? she had been a considerable time as he thought in it, and it was not gone off yet: the Targum is, "how long wilt "thou behave like a fool, or a mad woman?" as drunken people generally do act, as if they were fools, or mad: *put away thy wine from thee*: not as if she had any with her there to drink of, but he advises her, since it had such an effect upon her, to abstain from it, and wholly disuse it, and so break off such an habit and custom she had got into; or he would have her go home and sleep it out, and wait till she had digested it, and the strength of it was gone off, before she came to such a place of devotion and worship; from hence the Jews say[w] it may be learnt, that a drunken person ought not to pray.

Ver. 15. *And Hannah answered and said, no, my lord*, &c.] That is not my case, you have greatly mistaken it; she answered with great mildness and meekness, without falling into a passion at such a scandalous imputation upon her, and with great respect and reverence to Eli, suitable to his office; so in after-times the high-priest used to be addressed after this manner, particularly on the day of atonement, *Lord high-priest*, do so and so[x]; indeed these words of Hannah are interpreted as not so very respectful, as if the sense was, not a lord art thou in this matter; nor does the Holy Ghost dwell upon thee[y]; which thou hast sufficiently shewn, or thou wouldest never have suspected me of drunkenness: *I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit*; depressed with trouble and grief on account of afflictions; if she was drunk, it was not with wine, but with sorrow: or *a woman of a hard spirit*[z]; which is sometimes taken in an ill sense, and, according to Abarbinel, is here denied by her, who connects this clause with the preceding thus; not, my lord, am I a woman of a hard spirit, or such a hardened wretch, and such an impudent woman, as I must be, were it so, to come drunk into the house of God, and pretend to pray unto him: *I have drank neither wine nor strong drink*; not any sort of intoxicating liquors that day, neither wine new or old, as the Targum: *but have poured out my soul before the Lord*; the affliction of it, as the same paraphrase; the grievances and distresses, the complaints of her soul, which were many, and which she had poured out before the Lord freely and plentifully, and which had taken up some time to do it; see Psal. lxii. 8. and the title of Psal. cii. where phrases similar to this are used, and which seem to be taken from hence.

Ver. 16. *Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial*, &c.] A yokeless, a lawless, impudent, and abandoned creature; one of the wickedest, vilest, and most profligate wretches; as she must be to come drunk into the sanctuary of God; see 1 Sam. xxv. 17, 25. Drunkenness in man is an abominable crime, but much more in a woman. The Romans[a] forbad wine to women, and drunkenness in them was a capital crime, as adultery, or any other; and indeed a drunken woman is liable to all manner of sin: *for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto*; out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak, whether it is matter of trouble or of joy; the heart of Hannah was full of grief, and her mouth full of complaints, on which she long dwelt, in order to give vent thereunto, and ease herself.

Ver. 17. *Then Eli answered and said, go in peace*, &c.] He found he was mistaken in her, and that her discourse was not only sober and rational, but religious and spiritual; and therefore dismisses her in peace, and bids her not distress herself with what he had said to her, nor with any thing she had met with from others, or from the Lord; but expect peace and prosperity, and particularly success in what she had been engaged, and had been solicitous for: *and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him*; which may be considered either as a prayer for her, he joining with her in a request to the Lord, that what she had asked might be granted; or as a prophecy that so it would be, it being revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, as the high-priest of the Lord; or impressed by an impulse upon his spirit that the favour asked would be given; and therefore she might go home in peace, and with satisfaction of mind.

Ver. 18. *And she said, let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight*, &c.] She had found favour in his sight she perceived, and she desires it might be continued and increased; and that as he had prayed for her, he would still use his interest at the throne of grace for her: *so the woman went her way*; took her leave of Eli, and went from the tabernacle to her husband: *and did eat*; what remained of the peace-offerings, which were to be eaten that night, and not left till the morning; and though she would not eat her dinner, her heart was so full of grief, yet she could now make a good supper, being eased and relieved in her mind: *and her countenance was no more sad*; sorrowful and dejected, but cheerful, brisk, and lively; believing that her prayers, and those of the high-priest, would be answered.

[w] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 1.
[x] Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 3, 5, 7.
[y] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 31. 2. Jarchi in loc.
[z] קשת רוח dura spiritu, Pagninus, Montanus.
[a] Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 14. c. 13.

Ver. 19. *And they rose up in the morning early*, &c.] Partly for devotion, and partly for the sake of their journey: *and worshipped before the Lord*; went up to the tabernacle, and prayed with their faces towards that part of it, the western part, where stood the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence; and when they no doubt gave thanks for all the favours they had received there, and prayed for a safe and prosperous journey home, committing themselves to the care of divine Providence: *and returned, and came to their house to Ramah*: or Ramatha, the same with Ramathaim, ver. 1. Abarbinel thinks that Elkanah had two houses, one at Ramah for Peninnah, and another at Ramatha for Hannah; and that this was Hannah's house, to which they returned and came: *and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife*: cohabited with her as a man with his wife; it is a modest expression of the conjugal act; see Gen. iv. 1. and is observed to shew that the conception and birth of Samuel were not in a supernatural way, but in the ordinary way and manner of generation: *and the Lord remembered her*; the prayer she had made to him, opened her womb, as he had before shut it, and gave her power to conceive.

Ver. 20. *Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about, after Hannah had conceived*, &c.] Or, *at the revolutions of days*[b]; at the end of a year, of a complete year, as Ben Melech, from their return from Shiloh; for it might be some time after their return that she conceived; or rather the sense is, that at nine months' end, the usual time of a woman's going with-child from her conception, which is the date here given: *that she bare a son*; was brought-to-bed of a son: *and called his name Samuel*, saying, *because I have asked him of the Lord*: one would think rather his name should have been Saul, for the reason given; but, as Ben Gersom observes, givers of names are not always grammatically strict and critical in them, or in the etymology of them, as in the names of Reuben and Noah, in which he instances; and this may be the rather overlooked in a woman, than in a man of learning. According to Kimchi, it is as if it was Saul-meel; that is, *asked of God*, and by contraction Samuel; but Hillerus[c] gives a better account of this name, and takes it to be composed of Saul-mul-el, asked before God, in the sight of God, before the ark of God. This name Hannah gave her son (for sometimes the father, and sometimes the mother, gave the name) in memory of the wonderful favour and goodness of God in granting her request; and to impress her own mind with a sense of the obligation she lay under, to perform her vow, and to engage her son the more readily to give up himself to the service of God, when he reflected on his name, and the reason of it.

Ver. 21. *And the man Elkanah, and all his house*, &c.] All his family, excepting Hannah, and her son Samuel; or all the men of his house, as the Targum; for only the males were obliged to appear at the three festivals: *went up to Shiloh*; to the house of God there: *to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice*; either the passover, to which men commonly went up with their families: see Luke ii. 41, 42. or rather it may be what was offered at the feast of tabernacles, as Abarbinel thinks, the time of the in-gathering the fruits of the earth, when men went up with their families to offer sacrifice, and express their joy on that account, Deut. xvi. 10—15. *and his vow*; which he had made between feast and feast; for whatever vows men made at home, on any account, they paid them at the yearly festivals; and this vow might be on the account of the birth of his son, by way of thanksgiving for that.

Ver. 22. *But Hannah went not up*, &c.] For women, though they might go if they pleased to the yearly feasts, yet they were not obliged to it; whether she went up at the time for her purification, and for the presenting and redemption of the first-born, is not certain; some say the Levites were not obliged by that law, the perquisites of it falling to them, and so did not go up; others that she did, though it is not expressed, the Scriptures not relating all facts that were done; though by what follows it looks as if she did not: *for she said unto her husband, I will not go up until the child be weaned*: which, according to Jarchi, was at the end of 22 months; but others say at the end of 24 months, or 2 years, as Kimchi and Ben Melech; and sometimes a child was three years old before it was weaned, and sometimes longer, which very probably was the case here; see the note on Gen. xxi. 8. Comestor[d] observes, there was a three-fold weaning of children in old times; the first from their mother's milk, when three years old; the second from their tender age, and care of a dry nurse, when seven years old; the third from childish manners, when at twelve years of age; and that it is this last and metaphorical weaning which is here meant, when Samuel was 12 years of age, and fit to serve in the temple; but the proper sense is best, since she is said to bring him when weaned: her reason for it seems to be this, because had she went up with her sucking child, she must have brought him back again, since he would not be fit to be left behind, and would be entirely incapable of any kind of service in the sanctuary; and according to the nature of her vow, she could not think of bringing him back again, after she had once entered him there: and then *I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord*; and minister in the service of the sanctuary in what might be suitable to his age; there and then she would present him, and give him up to the Lord, as she had promised she would: *and there abide for ever*: that is, as long as he lived; for her vow was that he should be a Nazarite all the days of his life, and be separated to the service of God as long as he had a being in the world.

Ver. 23. *And Elkanah her husband said unto her, do what seemeth thee good*, &c.] He spake like a kind and indulgent husband, knowing that she would not thereby break any law of God; and it might be more for her own health, and the health of the child, to stay longer: *tarry till thou have weaned him*; when he would be more fit for the journey, and to be left behind: *only the Lord establish his word*: which some understand of the prophecy of Eli, that God would grant her request, which being delivered under the direction of the spirit

[b] לתקפות הימים in revolutionibus dierum, Montanus; so Piscator.

[c] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 418, 419, 497.

[d] Apud Weemse's Observ. Nat. c. 18. p. 76.

of God, is called his word; but this was already fulfilled, and established by Hannah's bearing a son: or the word *his* refers not to the Lord, but to Samuel, and so may respect the word which his mother spake concerning him; either when she made her vow, as Abendana, that he should be a perpetual Nazarite, and the Lord's as long as he lived: and so Elkanah wishes that he might have health and grow strong, and be fit for the service of the Lord, and live many years to perform it; or what she had just now said, as Abarbinel, that he should abide in the house of God for ever, or as long as he lived: *so the woman abode:* at home, whilst Elkanah and his family went up to Shiloh: *and gave her son suck until she weaned him;* did not put him out to a wet or dry nurse, but suckled him herself with what nature had provided for his nourishment, as becomes women to do, if their circumstances of health, and the provisions of nature, will admit of it.

Ver. 24. *And when she had weaned him,* &c.] At the usual time of weaning children; see the note on the preceding verse; some refer this not only to the milk of the breast, from which he was weaned, but to such food as was common to children, and so supposes him grown up to nine or ten years of age: *she took him up with her;* to the tabernacle at Shiloh, at a yearly festival: *with three bullocks;* for three sorts of offerings, burnt-offering, sin-offering, and peace-offering; or since one only is spoken of as slain, that is, for sacrifice, the other two might be for food to entertain her family and friends with whilst there; or as a present to the high-priest, to whose care she committed her son: *and one ephah of flour:* if the bullocks were all sacrificed, three tenth-deals, or three tenth-parts of the ephah, went for a meat-offering to each bullock, which made nine parts out of ten, and the tenth part she had to dispose of at pleasure; see Numb. xv. 9. though that seems to be restrained to a burnt-offering only: *and a bottle of wine;* part of which might be for the drink-offering which always attended a meat-offering, and the rest for her own use, and that of her friends: *and brought him unto the house of the Lord in Shiloh:* the tabernacle there, and delivered him up to the care of the high-priest, to be trained up in the service of God: *and the child was young;* a very child, very young in years, a little infant; not a sucking child, as the Targum, because weaned, otherwise of a very tender age; though some think this expresses that he was a well-grown lad, and was sharp and acute, and could well distinguish between good and evil.

Ver. 25. *And they slew a bullock,* &c.] One of the three Hannah brought, unless the singular is put for the plural, and so all three were slain, some for sacrifice, and some for food perhaps; or if only one was slain, it might be offered as a sacrifice previous to the presentation of Samuel; or else was made a present of to Eli, at the introduction of Samuel to him, as follows: *and brought the child to Eli;* to be under his care, to be instructed and trained up by him in the service of the tabernacle; from hence it appears that Elkanah the husband of Hannah came along with her at this time.

Ver. 26. *And she said, O my lord,* &c.] According to the Targum, it is a supplication or request, I beseech thee, my lord; that is, to look upon her son, and take him under his care as his disciple or scholar, to instruct him in the law of God, and enter him into his service; to which Eli might be very backward and indifferent, and even treat it with some degree of contempt, that such a young Levite should be brought to him, when the soonest the Levites were admitted was at 25 years of age: *as thy soul liveth, my lord;* which Ben Gersom takes for the form of an oath, as if she swore to the truth of what follows by the life of the high-priest; but as it was forbidden to swear by any but by the living God, by his life, it cannot be thought so good a woman as Hannah would be guilty of such a sinful and Heathenish practice; this rather is a wish or prayer for his life and health, and the continuance thereof, to bring up her son in the exercise of true religion: *I am the woman that stood by thee here, praying unto the Lord;* by which it appears that Eli was now at the tabernacle, and in the same place he was, ver. 9. when she was some years ago praying near him, at the distance of 4 cubits, as the Jews say: she takes no notice of his mistaking her for a drunken woman, nor of his censure on her, and the reproof he gave her; but puts him in mind only of her praying to the Lord standing near to him, which made him take the more notice of her; standing is a prayer-posture; the Jews say there is no standing but what is prayer, or prayer is meant by it; see the note on Matt. vi. 5.

Ver. 27. *For this child I prayed,* &c.] Which she now had in her hand, and was presenting to Eli: *and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him;* and which he also desired might be granted her, or foretold that it would be, ver. 17. though perhaps he knew not then particularly what it was she asked; nor did she acquaint him with it at parting, as she now did, having obtained of the Lord what she was so solicitous for, and now makes mention of with thankfulness.

Ver. 28. *Therefore also I have lent him to the Lord,* &c.] To be employed in his service, not for a few days, months, or years, but for his whole life. The Targum is, "I have delivered him, that he may minister before the Lord;" as she had received him from him as an answer of prayer, she gave him up to him again according to her vow: *as long as he liveth he shall be lent unto the Lord;* or as the Targum, "all the days that he lives he shall be ministering before the Lord;" or *all the days he shall be asked* (or *required*) *by* or *for the Lord*[*]; that is, he shall be lent unto him, and serve him as long as it is desired: *and he worshipped the Lord there;* in the tabernacle at the same time; either Elkanah, who with Hannah brought the child to Eli, and now gave thanks to God for giving them the child, and prayed unto him that he might be received into the service of the sanctuary; or else Eli, to whom the child was brought for admittance, who when he heard that Hannah's request was granted, which he had entreated also might be, or had declared it would be, bowed his head, and gave thanks to God for it; or rather the child Samuel, as he was taught and trained up, bowed himself before the Lord, and wor-

[*] Quamdiu שׁאול, h. e. expetitus aut requisitur, Peter Martyr; quoties a Jehova postulatur, Piscator.

shipped him in the tabernacle as soon as he was brought into it, though a child; for he only is spoken of in this and the preceding verse; and by some interpreters [f] the name Samuel is supplied; the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read in the plural number, *and they worshipped the Lord there:* that is, Elkanah and his wife; so Mr. Weemse [g] translates and interprets it.

CHAP. II.

IN this chapter the song of Hannah is recorded, ver. 1—10. and an account is given of the return of Elkanah and Hannah to their own home, and of the care she took yearly to provide a coat for Samuel, and of her being blessed with many other children, and of the growth and ministry of Samuel before the Lord, ver. 11, 18—21, 26. and of the wickedness of the sons of Eli, ver. 12—17. and of Eli's too gentle treatment of them when he reproved them for it, ver. 22—25. and of a sharp message sent him from the Lord on that account, threatening destruction to his house, of which the death of his two sons would be a sign, ver. 27—36.

Ver. 1. *And Hannah prayed and said,* &c.] She had prayed before, but that was mental, this vocal; she had prayed and was answered, and had what she prayed for, and now she gives thanks for it; and thanksgiving is one kind of prayer, or a part of it; see 1 Tim. ii. 1. Phil. iv. 6. wherefore though what follows is a song, it was expressed in prayer; and therefore it is said she prayed, and that by a spirit of prophecy, as the Targum; hence she is by the Jews [h] reckoned one of the seven prophetesses; and indeed in this song she not only relates the gracious experiences of divine goodness she had been favoured with, and celebrates the divine perfections, and treats of the dealings of God with men, both in a way of providence and grace: but prophesies of things that should be done hereafter in Israel, and particularly of the Messiah and of his kingdom. There is a great likeness in this song to the song of the Virgin Mary; compare ver. 1. with Luke i. 46, 47. and ver. 2. with ver. 49. and ver. 4, 8. with ver. 51, 53. *my heart rejoiceth in the Lord;* not in her son the Lord had given her, but in the goodness and kindness of the Lord in bestowing him on her, as an answer of prayer; which shewed great condescension to her, the notice he took of her, the love he had to her, and his well-pleasedness in her, and his acceptance of her prayer through Christ; she rejoiced not in her husband, nor in the wealth and riches they were possessed of, nor in any creature-enjoyments, but in the Lord, the giver of all; nor in her religious services and sacrifices, but in the Lord Christ, through whom her duties were acceptable to God, and who was the antitype of the sacrifices offered; and it is in the person, offices, and grace of Christ, that we should alone rejoice; see Phil. iv. 4. and iii. 3. this joy of Hannah's was not worldly, but spiritual; not outward, but inward; not hypocritical, but real and hearty: *mine horn is exalted in the Lord:* which supposes that she had been in a low estate, was crest-fallen, and her horn was defiled in the dust, as Job says was his case, ch. xvi. 15. when God had shut up her womb, and her adversary upbraided her with it, and provoked and fretted her; and when she was so full of grief, that she could not eat her food, and prayed in the bitterness of her soul; but now she could lift up her horn and her head, as horned creatures, to whom the allusion is, do, when they are lively and strong; now she could look pleasant and cheerful, and even triumph, being raised to an high estate, and greatly favoured of the Lord, to whom she ascribes this change of her state and circumstances: it was owing to his power and grace that she was thus strengthened and exalted; as it is owing to the same, that the people of God, who are in a low estate by nature, are raised out of it in conversion, and brought into an open state of grace and favour with God, and put into the possession of rich blessings and mercies, and have hope of eternal glory, on account of which they can exult and triumph: *my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies;* meaning Peninnah, and those that provoked her, and upbraided her with her barrenness, to whom she was not able to make any reply; but now her mouth was opened, and she could speak largely, and did; not in a way of reproach and reviling, in retaliation for what she had met with from others; but in prayer to God, to whom she could come with open mouth, and use freedom and boldness, and plead with importunity, fervency, and in faith, and in praise and thanksgiving to him for the great and good things he had done for her, and would now freely and largely speak of them to others; to some, her friends, to their joy and pleasure; and to others, her enemies, to their grief and confusion: *because I rejoice in thy salvation;* not only in temporal salvation wrought by the Lord for her, whereby she was delivered from the reproach of barrenness, through a son being given unto her; but in spiritual and eternal salvation, through the Messiah, she had knowledge of, and faith in, as appears from ver. 10. as all believers in him do, as it is contrived by the wisdom of God, wrought out by Christ, and applied by his Spirit; it being so great, so suitable, so perfect and complete, entirely free, and of an everlasting duration; see Psal. xx. 5. Isa. xxv. 9.

Ver. 2. There is *none holy as the Lord,* &c.] From the consideration of what the Lord had done for her, which had filled her heart and mouth with joy and praise, she is led to celebrate the perfections of God, and begins with his holiness, in which he is glorious, and which appears in all his ways and works; he is essentially, originally, independently, perfectly, and immutably holy, as others are not. Angels are holy, but not of themselves; their holiness is from the

[f] Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[g] Observat. Nat. c. 18. p. 77.
[h] T. Megillah, fol. 14. 1.

Lord; nor is it perfect in comparison of his, and therefore they cover their faces while they celebrate that perfection of his; nor immutable, at least not naturally so, as the loss of it in those that fell demonstrates. Of men, some under the legal dispensation were holy, not truly, but in a typical and ceremonial sense; some are only outwardly and hypocritically holy, and only so in the sight of men, not in the sight of God; and those that are truly holy, being called to holiness, and have the principle of it implanted in them, and live holy lives and conversations; yet though there is a likeness of the holiness of God in them, being made partakers of the divine nature; it is far from an equality to it; for the holiness of the best of men is imperfect; they are not without sin in them, nor without sin committed by them, and perfection is disclaimed by them all; but the Lord is without iniquity, just and true is he; none in his nature, nor in any of his works, not the least shadow thereof: *for there is none besides thee;* there is no God besides him; no being but what is of him, and none is holy but by him; the holiness of angels is from him; the holiness of Adam in innocence was of him; and all the holiness of his chosen ones comes from him, to which they are chosen by him, and which is secured in that choice unto them, and are sanctified by God the Father, in Christ, and through the Spirit: *neither is there any rock like our God:* the word *rock* is used for Deity, and sometimes for a false one, Deut. xxxii. 31. and so it may here, and the sense be, there is no god like to our God; there is indeed none besides him; there are fictitious gods, and nominal ones, as the idols of the Gentiles, and who are so in an improper and figurative sense, as magistrates; but there is but one true and living God; nor is there any like him for the perfections of his nature, and the blessings of his goodness, whether in providence or grace. Under this metaphor of a rock, our Lord Jesus Christ is often signified; he is the rock of Israel, the rock of refuge, and of salvation; and there is no rock can do what he does, hide and shelter from the justice of God; there is no rock like him for strength and duration; none like him for a foundation to build upon, or for safety and protection from the wrath of God, and the rage of men, see Psal. xviii. 31.

Ver. 3. *Talk no more so exceeding proudly,* &c.] At such an high rate, in such an overbearing manner, as if above every one; this may have respect to Peninnah, and all that joined with her to provoke Hannah to anger, and make her fret, insulting and triumphing over her, because she had not children, as they had; but now their mouths would be stopped, and their talk over, and not give themselves the haughty airs they had done, at least there would be no occasion for them: *let not arrogancy come out of your mouth;* arrogating to themselves, and to their merits, what they enjoyed, as children, riches, &c. when all come from the Lord; or what is *hard*[i], intolerable, which bears so hard on those to whom it is said, that it cannot be bore with; or what is *old*[k], and trite, old sayings concerning barren women, as if of no use in the world, and disagreeable to God, and as having no share in his favour. The Targum renders the word by reproaches, or blasphemies: *for the Lord is a God of knowledge:* or *knowledges*[l]; of perfect knowledge; he knows all persons and things; he knows himself, his perfections, purposes, thoughts, words and works; he knows all his creatures, animate and inanimate, rational and irrational, angels and men; the hearts of all men; all that they say, all their hard sayings, all their proud, haughty, overbearing expressions, calumnies, and reproaches, as well as all they think and all they do, good or bad; and God will sooner or later convince them of and punish them for their hard speeches against his people: and he is the author of all knowledge, natural, civil, spiritual, and evangelical: *and by him actions are weighed;* his own actions; his works *ad intra;* his purposes and decrees, the counsels of his will, and the thoughts of his heart, the things his mind is set upon; all his appointments and designs, his whole will and pleasure; all are pondered by him, and are formed with the utmost wisdom, and for the best ends and purposes: and all his actions and works without, whether of creation, providence, and grace, all are weighed and done according to infinite wisdom, unerring justice and truth; all respecting things temporal or spiritual, what relate to the outward estate of men, or to their everlasting happiness: all the actions of men, as they are known unto him, they are weighed and examined by him, whether they proceed from a right principle to a right end or no; upon which, many actions, thought to be good, are not found to be so, and others, though good, yet not found perfect before God; so that there is no justification nor salvation by the best: or the sense is, such actions as are done well, they are *directed to him*[m]; as they are ordained by him that men should walk in them, they are for his use, and are done with a view to his glory. There is a double reading of these words; the marginal, which we follow, is *to* or *by him* actions are directed or weighed; but the textual reading is a negative, *actions are not weighed*[n], or numbered; the works of God can't be comprehended, or the actions of men are not disposed and ordered without his will and pleasure, or can't be performed unless he wills or permits; and all are disposed of, overruled, and directed, to answer his own ends and purposes.

Ver. 4. *The bows of the mighty men are broken,* &c.] Hannah, from relating gracious experiences, and celebrating the divine perfections of holiness, omniscience, and sovereignty, passes on to take notice of the dealings of God with men in providence and grace; *bows* are here put for all military arms, which men of might and war make use of, and which God can easily break in pieces, and so make war to cease in the earth, and hinder warlike men from doing what they design and attempt; they are enfeebled and weakened by him, and their hands cannot perform their enterprises: so the bows of Satan, and his principalities and powers, are broken, and his fiery darts are quenched, and the people of the Lord enabled to stand against him, and wrestle with him and them, being strong

[i] עתק durum, Vatablus, Drusius, Piscator; so R. Isaiah.
[k] Vetera, V. L. vetus, Pagninus, Montanus.
[l] אל דעות Deus scientiarum, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Drusius.
[m] ולו נתכנו ipsi directa sunt, Pagninus.
[n] Non disponuntur, Junius & Tremellius; non numerantur, so some in Vatablus; non perficiuntur, so some in Munster.

in the Lord, and in the power of his might, as it follows: *and they that stumbled are girt with strength*; who, through weakness, are ready to stumble at every thing they meet with in the way; yet, being girded with strength by the Lord, are able to do great exploits, as David did, that being his case, Psal. xviii. 29, 32. so such as are weak in grace, in faith, in knowledge, and ready to stumble at every trial and exercise, let it come from what quarter it will; yet being girded by the Lord with strength, are able to exercise grace, perform duty, go through every service they are called to, whether in a way of doing or suffering, to bear the yoke and cross of Christ, to oppose every enemy, to walk on in the ways of God, and to persevere in faith and holiness to the end.

Ver. 5. They that are *full have hired out themselves for bread*, &c.] Such as have been full of the good things of this life have been stripped of all, and reduced to such circumstances as to be obliged to hire themselves out to persons to labour under them for their bread. Hannah has either respect to some instances she had known, or prophesies of what would be hereafter, and was fulfilled in the Israelites, when in the hands of the Egyptians and Assyrians, Lam. iv. 6. and may be exemplified in the case of the prodigal son, Luke xv. 13—16. and is true of such who have larger gifts, but not grace, and which they exercise for lucre-sake, and are mere hirelings; and of self-righteous persons who are full of themselves, of their goodness and righteousness, purity and power; are quite mercenary do all they do for gain, work for life, and labour for perishing meat, and for that which is not bread, and is unsatisfying: *and* they that were *hungry ceased*; that is, from being hungry, being filled with good things, having a large and sufficient supply to satisfy their craving desires, Luke i. 53. Such are the changes sometimes in Providence, that those who have lived in great plenty and fulness are obliged to work for their bread; and, on the other hand, such as have been starving, and in famishing circumstances, have been brought into very plentiful and affluent ones. The *hungry*, in a spiritual sense, are such who hunger and thirst after Christ, and his righteousness, for justification before God; after him and his blood for the remission of their sins, and the cleansing of their souls; after him, and salvation by him, in whom alone it is to be had; after a view of interest in him, and a greater degree of knowledge of him; and after more communion with him in his word and ordinances; and after the enjoyment of them for that purpose: now when they enjoy what they are craving after, they cease to hire out themselves for bread, as others do; they don't cease from working, but from dependence on their works, on which they can't feed and live, having found and got other and better bread to feed upon; they cease to be hungry, for they are filled and satisfied with the love of God, with the righteousness of Christ, with the blessings of grace, and salvation by him, with the goodness of his house, and with all the fulness of God and Christ; and so having what satisfies them, they desire no other food, shall have no more want, or be in a starving condition any more, especially this will be the case hereafter: *so that the barren hath born seven*: meaning herself, who had born many, even five children besides Samuel, ver. 20, 21. which either was the case before this song was delivered; or rather what she believed would be the case after Eli had blessed her, and prayed for the children by her; seven being a number put for many, Prov. xxiv. 16. Isa. iv. 1. *and she that hath many children is waxed feeble*; and incapable of bearing more, and stripped of what she had; this may be understood of Peninnah, concerning whom the Jews have this tradition[a], which Jarchi relates, that when Hannah bore one child, Peninnah buried two; and whereas Hannah had five, Peninnah lost all her ten children. This may be applied to the case of the Gentile and Jewish churches, under the Gospel dispensation, when more were the children of the desolate or barren, the Gentiles, than of the married wife, the Jews, Isa. liv. 1.

Ver. 6. *The Lord killeth, and maketh alive*, &c.] Which is true of different persons; some he takes away by death, and others he preserves and continues in life; and of the same persons, whom God removes by death, and restores them to life again, of which there are instances both in the Old and New Testament; and be they which they will, both are of God, he is the great Disposer of life and death. Death is of him; it is by his appointment; it is sent by his order; and when it has a commission from him, there is no resisting it; and let it be brought about by what means it will, still it is of God: and life is of him; it is first given by him, and it is preserved by him; and though taken away, it shall be restored at the resurrection of the dead; of which some interpret this clause, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom observe: and what is here said is true, in a spiritual sense; the Lord kills by the law, or shews men that they are dead in sin, and in a law-sense; and he makes alive by his spirit, through the Gospel, quickening such who were dead in trespasses and sins; which is his own work, and the effect of divine power and grace; see the note on Deut. xxxii. 39. *he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up*; he bringeth some very near to the grave, to the very brink of it; so that in their own apprehensions, and in the opinion of their friends, they are just dropping into it, and no hope of recovery left; when he says to them Return, and brings them back from the pit, and delivers them from going into it, Job xxxiii. 22, 28, 30. Psal. xc. 3. and even when they are laid in it, he brings up out of it again, as in the case of Lazarus, and which will be the case in the resurrection, John v. 28, 29.

Ver. 7. *The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich*, &c.] Which is true in a natural sense of the same persons, as might be exemplified in the case of Job; and of different persons, as in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus; for both poverty and riches are of God, see Prov. xxii. 2. and xxx. 8. Poverty is of God; for though it is sometimes owing to a man's own conduct, yet that there is such a difference among men in general, that some should be poor, and others rich, is owing to the wise providence of God, that men may be dependent on one another. Riches are of God, and are

[a] Vid. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 34. K.

the gifts of his bountiful providence; for though they are oftentimes the fruits of industry and diligence, as means, yet not always; and whenever they are, they are to be ascribed to the blessing of God attending the diligent hand. This is also true in a spiritual sense; for though spiritual poverty is owing to the fall of Adam, and to the actual sins and transgressions of men, whereby they become poor and miserable, yet all this is not without the knowledge and will of God; and it is he that makes men sensible of their poverty, and then makes them rich in spiritual things, with his own grace, and the blessings of it, with the riches of grace here, and of glory hereafter; all which flow from the good will of God, who has laid up much for his people, bestowed much on them, and entitles them to more; and which come to them through the poverty of Christ, who, though he was rich, became poor, that they through his poverty might be made rich, 2 Cor. viii. 9. *he bringeth low, and lifteth up;* which has been verified in the same persons, as in Job, Nebuchadnezzar, &c. and in different persons, for he puts down one, and raises up another; so he rejected Saul from being king, and took David from the sheepfold, debased Haman, and raised Mordecai to great dignity: and, in a spiritual sense, the Lord shews men the low estate and condition they are brought into by sin, humbles them under a sense of it, brings down their proud spirits to sit at the feet of Jesus, and to submit to him, and to his righteousness; and he lifts them up by his son out of their fallen, captive, and miserable estate, and by his spirit and grace brings them out of the horrible pit of nature into the state of grace; sets them upon the rock Christ, and makes their mountain to stand strong by the discoveries of his love, and will at last lift them up to glory, and place them on the same throne with Christ.

Ver. 8. *He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill,* &c.] This is but a further illustration of what is before expressed. Literally; such poor as are beggars, are those that are extremely poor, that sit in the dust and beg, and have nothing but a dunghill to lie on; yet God is able to raise and lift up persons in such an extremely low condition to a very high one: spiritually; such are the poor, who are poor in spirit, and spiritually poor, and are sensible of it, and they, and they only, are beggars. For all that are poor, as they are not sensible of their poverty, so they beg not; but some are and beg; they knock at the door of grace and mercy; their language is petitionary, they entreat the grace and mercy of God; their posture is standing, and waiting till they have an answer; they are importunate, and will not easily take a denial; and they observe all opportunities to get relief, and are thankful for every thing that is given them. Their condition, in which they are, is represented by the *dust* and *dunghill:* which in general denotes that they are in a mean estate, in a sinful one, and in a very polluted and loathsome one; in this condition the Lord finds them, when he calls them by his grace; and from this he raises and lifts them up by his spirit and grace, out of which they could never have raised themselves; and in which estate of sin and misery they must have lain, had he not exerted his powerful efficacious grace, in bringing them into a glorious one, next described: *to set them among princes;* the people of God called by grace, who are the sons of the King of kings by adoption, manifested in their regeneration and faith; have a princely spirit, the spirit of adoption, a free, generous, and bountiful one; live and look like princes, are well fed and clothed, and attended; have the riches of princes, and are heirs of a kingdom: and to be set among them, is to be made one, and ranked as such; to have a place and a name in the church, and among the people of God; to sit down with them at the table of the Lord, and have communion with them: *and to make them inherit the throne of glory;* eternal glory and happiness, which as it is signified by a kingdom and crown, so by a throne, and is the same with Christ's, Rev. iii. 21. and therefore must be a glorious one: and this is had by way of inheritance; not obtained by industry, nor purchased with money; but comes by adoption-grace, and belongs only to children, is a bequest of our heavenly Father, and comes through the death of Christ the testator; and this phrase denotes not barely the right unto, but the possession of his happiness and glory: *for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them;* the earth has its foundations on which it is laid, and its pillars by which it is supported; but these are no other than the power and providence of God; otherwise the earth is hung upon nothing, in the open circumambient air; and that God can and does do this may well be thought, and to do all the above things in providence and grace, related in the preceding verses; in the support, and for the proof of which, this is observed. Figuratively, the pillars of the earth may design the princes of the world, the supreme rulers of it, and civil magistrates, who are sometimes called corner-stones, and the shields of the earth, Zech. x. 4. Psal. xlvii. 9. and so pillars, because they are the means of cementing, supporting, and protecting the people of the earth, and of preserving their peace and property. Likewise good men may be meant in a figurative sense, who, as they are the salt of the earth, are the pillars of it, for whose sake it was made, and is supported, and continued in being; the church is the pillar and ground of truth; and every good man is a pillar in the house of God, and especially ministers of the Gospel; see Rev. iii. 12. 1 Tim. iii. 15. Gal. ii. 9. Prov. ix. 1.

Ver. 9. *He will keep the feet of his saints,* &c.] Now follow promises and prophecies of future things respecting the Israel of God, either in a literal or spiritual sense. By *his saints* are meant not angels, though they are his holy ones, but men, and a body of them; who though unholy in themselves, nor can they make themselves holy, yet are made so by the grace of God, in consequence of electing grace, by which they are chosen to be holy, from Christ the source and spring of all holiness, by the Holy Spirit of God, as the efficient cause, and which is done in effectual vocation; hence they live holy lives and conversations, though not altogether without sin in the present state. The word also signifies such to whom God has been kind and gracious, and on whom he has bestowed blessings of goodness, and who are bountiful and beneficent to others. These are the Lord's, whom he has set apart for himself, and has sanctified in Christ, and by his

spirit; and of these he is keeper, not angels, nor ministers of the word, nor themselves, but the Lord himself is the keeper of them; and who is an able, faithful, tender and compassionate, constant and everlasting keeper of them; and particularly he keeps their *feet;* he indeed keeps their whole persons, their bodies and souls; the members of their bodies, and the powers of their souls, their head, their heart, their affections, from turning aside from him; he guides, directs, and orders all their actions and goings; he keeps their feet in his own ways, where he has guided them; he keeps them in Christ the way, and in all the paths of faith, truth, righteousness, and holiness, and in the way everlasting: he keeps them from falling; for though they are liable to fall into sin, and by temptation, and from a lively exercise of grace, yet not totally and finally; they are secured from it by his love to them; the promises he has made them; his power exerted on their behalf; their being in the hands of Christ, and the glory of all the three Persons concerned herein: *and the wicked shall be silent in darkness;* sin has spread *darkness* over all human nature; every man is born and brought up in darkness, and walks in it: a state of unregeneracy is a state of darkness, in which wicked men continue; and they are in the dark about God, the perfections of his nature, his mind and will, word and worship; about Christ, and the way of life, peace, and salvation by him; about their own state and condition by nature, and the danger they are in; about the nature and necessity of regeneration; and about the Scriptures, and the doctrines of the Gospel; and living and dying in such a state, darkness, blackness of darkness, is their portion for ever: so the Targum, "the wicked "in hell in darkness shall be judged:" and it is said they shall be *silent* in it; they are quiet, easy, and content in the state of natural darkness in which they are; they neither do nor will understand; they don't care to come to the light, but shun the means of light and knowledge; they have nothing to say of God, of Christ, of the Spirit of God, or of divine things; they can talk enough of evil things, and pour them out in great plenty, but not of any good; and when their evils are charged upon them by the law, their mouths are stopped, and they pronounced guilty, and have nothing to say why justice and judgment should not take place; and so they will be silent and speechless at the great day of judgment. Some interpret it, they shall be *cut off in darkness:* so Kimchi and Ben Melech; that is, by death, by the hand of God, by the sword of justice: *for by strength shall no man prevail:* which is a reason both why God will keep his saints, and why the wicked shall be silent, or cut off and perish: with respect to good men, they are not saved, kept, and preserved by their own strength; they are not saved without a righteousness, without regeneration, without repentance towards God, and faith in Christ; neither of which they can perform in their own strength: nor can a saint keep himself from, or prevail over his spiritual enemies of himself, not over sin, nor Satan, nor the world; but it is by the power of God that he is kept through faith unto salvation: and with respect to wicked men, these shall not prevail by their strength over good men, or the church, who are built upon a rock, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail; nor can the wicked so prevail by their strength as to hinder their being cut off, and cast into outer darkness; they have no power over the spirit to retain it in the day of death; and whether they will or no, they shall be cast into hell, and go into everlasting punishment.

Ver. 10. *The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces,* &c.] Or Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, *shall break in pieces those that contend with him;* with the Lord, or with his people, or with Samuel particularly; for this may be considered as a prophecy of Hannah concerning her son, what God would do for him against his enemies, that should rise up, contend, and fight with him, as the Philistines; of whom Ben Gersom interprets it, whom the Lord discomfited and broke to pieces; see the literal fulfilment of this prophecy in ch. 7. in a spiritual sense all wicked men are the enemies of God, and of his people, and sooner or later shall be broken to pieces. Some, in a good sense; when they are smitten with the words of his mouth, cut to the heart, and made contrite; are humbled and brought into subjection to him, and their enmity slain and abolished, and they filled with love to him; and are so broken to pieces, that they have nothing to depend upon, or trust in for life or salvation, but apply to Christ alone for it. Others, in an ill sense; and the meaning is, that the wicked shall be utterly destroyed by the Lord, with an everlasting destruction, with an incurable and irreparable one; shall be broken in pieces like a potter's vessel, which can never be put together again, see Psal. ii. 9. Rev. ii. 27. *out of heaven shall he thunder upon them;* as the Lord did upon the Philistines in the times of Samuel, when Israel were engaged in war with them, ch. vii. 10. And the last vial of the wrath of God, poured out upon his adversaries the antichristian states, will be attended with thunders and lightnings, Rev. xvi. 17, 18. it denotes the terrible manner in which God will destroy his adversaries; the Septuagint version is, *the Lord ascended to heaven and thundered;* hence Procopius Gazæus, following this version, says, Hannah prophesied of the taking up of the Saviour, and of the mission of the Holy Ghost, and of the preaching of the apostles, and of the second coming of Christ, as follows: *the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth;* not of the land of Israel by Samuel, as some interpret it, see ch. vii. 15—17. but of the whole world, and may refer to the government of it in general by the Lord, or to the judgment of it by his Son; for he judges none, but has committed all judgment to him; who at his first coming judged the world, by the ministry of the word in Judea and in the Gentile world, by setting up ordinances, and by qualifying and constituting persons to act in the government of his church under him; and at his spiritual coming he will take to himself his great power and reign, and judge the whore of Babylon; and at his last or second coming he will judge the whole world, quick and dead, righteous and wicked: *and he shall give strength unto his king;* either who was made king in the times of Samuel, Saul, who was the first of the kings of Israel, or David, whom Samuel anointed; and it is true of them both, that the Lord gave them strength to fight with and conquer their enemies; or rather the King Messiah, who in

the next clause is called the Lord's anointed, or Messiah: *and exalt the horn of his anointed*: and so the Targum paraphrases the words, "he shall give strength "to his king, and enlarge the kingdom of his Messiah;" with which Kimchi agrees, and says, the thing is doubled or repeated, for the King is the Messiah; and to him the words are applied by other Jewish writers[p], ancient and modern. Christ is King over all, angels and men, particularly he is King of saints; he is Jehovah's King, set up and anointed by him from everlasting; was in time promised as such, and in the fulness of time came in that character, and at his ascension to heaven was made and declared Lord and Christ; and through the success of his Gospel in the world has appeared yet more so, and will be still more manifest in the latter day, when he shall be King over all the earth, and especially in his personal reign. Now when *strength* is said to be given him, this must be understood either of strength given to him in human nature, to perform the great work of our redemption and salvation, which required great strength; as a divine Person he needed none, as man he did; or of that strength communicated to him as Mediator, to give unto his people, in whom they have both righteousness and strength; or rather of that power and dominion given him as King particularly; all power in heaven and in earth were given him at his resurrection, and will appear more fully hereafter, when his kingdom will be from sea to sea, and his dominion from the river to the ends of the earth, see Dan. vii. 13, 14. And the same thing is meant by *horn*, which is an emblem of strength, power, dominion, and glory; hence he himself is called the horn of David, and the horn of salvation; it is a name and title given to kings, Dan. vii. 24. Rev. xvii. 12. in allusion to the horns of beasts, in which their strength lies to defend themselves, and annoy their enemies; and the exaltation of him prophesied of may respect and include his resurrection from the dead, ascension to heaven, session at the right hand of God, the judgment of all committed to him, and the glorious exercise of his kingly office in the spiritual and personal reigns. This is the first time we meet with the word Messiah, or anointed, as ascribed to a divine Person, the Son of God; who has this name or title from his being anointed, not with material oil, but with the oil of gladness, with the Holy Ghost, and his gifts and graces without measure; and who is called the Lord's anointed, because he was anointed by his Father to be prophet, priest, and King, or invested by him with those offices even from eternity, see Psal. ii. 6. Prov. viii. 22, 23. and which was more manifestly declared at his birth, his baptism, and ascension to heaven; see Luke ii. 40, 52. Acts x. 37, 38. and ii. 36.

Ver. 11. *And Elkanah went to Ramah to his house*, &c.] Of which see ch. i. 19. This was after he had offered the sacrifices at the feast, worshipped the Lord, and Hannah had delivered her prayer or song of praise, and both had committed Samuel to the care of Eli, and left him with him: *and the child did minister unto the Lord before Eli the priest*: he not only read in the book of the law, but learned to sing the praises of God vocally, and to play upon an instrument of music used in the service of God in those times, and to light the lamps in the tabernacle, and open and shut the doors of it, and the like; which were suitable to his age, and which might not be quite so tender as some have thought; or this may respect some small beginnings in the ministry of the sanctuary, in which he gradually increased under the inspection, guidance, and instruction of Eli, which is meant by ministering before him; the Targum is, "in the life of Eli the priest;" he began his ministration before his death.

Ver. 12. *Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial*, &c.] Not that Eli their father was Belial, a wicked man; but though they had so good a father, they were very wicked men, unprofitable abandoned wretches, that cast off the yoke of the law of God, and gave themselves up to all manner of wickedness: *they knew not the Lord*: not that they had no knowledge of God in theory, or were real atheists, but they were so practically; they denied him in works, they had no love to him, nor fear of him, and departed from his ways and worship, as much as if they were entirely ignorant of him; so the Targum, "they did not know to fear "before the Lord," or serve him; or, as Kimchi, "they did not know the way of the Lord," that is, practically.

Ver. 13. *And the priest's custom with the people was*, &c.] Not what was according to the will and law of God, but which the sons of Eli had introduced; and in which they were followed by the rest of the priests, and so it became an established custom, and had the force of a law, statute, or judgment, as the word signifies: that *when any man offered sacrifice*; not any sort of sacrifice, for if it was a burnt-offering, it was wholly consumed by fire, and in that the following custom could not take place; and if it was a sin-offering, that was eaten by the priests, and so there was no need of takin. such a method as after related; but a peace-offering, part of which belonged to the Lord, the fat that was burnt, and the breast and shoulder to the priest, and the rest to the owner, who made a feast of it for his family and friends: *the priest's servant came while the flesh was in seething*; that is, while those parts were boiling for the owner and his family; which was done in some part of the tabernacle, as afterwards in the temple: *with a flesh-hook of three teeth in his hand*; with a three-forked instrument, with which he was sent by order of the priest that slew the sacrifice, and offered it, to whom belonged the parts before mentioned, allowed him by the law; but not content with these, he sent his servant, while the rest were boiling, with such an instrument as here described, to draw up more out of the boiling-pot.

Ver. 14. *And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or cauldron, or pot*, &c.] Whatever vessel was made use of, larger or lesser, according to the quantity of flesh the owner boiled for himself and friends, the trident the priest's servant brought with him, he struck into the boiler to the bottom of it: *all that the flesh-hook brought up the priest took for himself*; as his own property; whereas no part of it at all belonged to him, he having had the breast and shoulder delivered to

[p] Zohar in Gen. fol. 58. 4. Midrash Echa Rabbati, fol. 53. 3. R. Saadiah Gaon, Comment. in Dan. vii. 13.

him in the first place; and yet, by this method, all that he could drag up with this three-forked instrument he claimed as his own: which might be much, that would hang upon three teeth of it, or in which they were fastened; and, according to Abarbinel, each of them would bring up a pound of flesh, and perhaps more: *so they did in Shiloh, unto all the Israelites that came thither;* to offer their sacrifices, which was the proper place for them, the tabernacle and altar being there; and men of all ranks and degrees were treated alike, princes and people, rich and poor; the custom universally obtained, and all sorts of men met with the same usage.

Ver. 15. *Also before they burnt the fat,* &c.] Which belonged to the Lord, and was to be offered to him by fire, in the first place, as it ought to be; and the order of sacrificing required that he should have his part first before the priest or the owner: but so impious were the priests become, that *the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed;* not to the priest that offered, but to the man that brought his sacrifice to be offered by the priest: *give flesh to roast for the priest;* meaning, not what was his by law, as the breast and shoulder, though for these he ought to have stayed until the fat was offered to the Lord; but other parts of the peace-offering, which he had no right unto, for roasting or boiling, and yet in an imperious manner demanded it by his servant: *for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw;* though this was not the only reason of this demand, because he liked roast meat better than boiled; but because the three-forked flesh-hook did not always bring up the best pieces out of the boiling-pot; and therefore he resolved to have flesh raw, that he might have the best, as well as dress it to his own liking.

Ver. 16. *And if any man said unto him, let them not fail to burn the fat presently,* &c.] Or stay till they have offered the fat, as the Targum; let that be done in the first place, which may be quickly done, in a very little time, and let as much haste be made as can be to do it: *and then take* as much *as thy soul desireth;* by which it appears that the men that brought the sacrifice had more religion at heart, and were more concerned for the honour and glory of God than the priest; being willing to suffer in their property, but could not bear that the Lord should be dishonoured, and so rudely treated: they were willing the priests should take what they pleased of theirs, though they had no right to any; only they desired the Lord might be served first, which was but reasonable: *then he would answer him,* nay, *but thou shalt give it me now; and if not, I will take it by force;* signifying, he would not stay till the fat was burnt, and the Lord had his portion, but he would have it directly; and if he would not give it him freely, he would take it whether he would or no; to such a height of insolence and impiety were the priests arrived, as to put it in the power of their servants to make such wicked demands, and treat God, and those that brought their sacrifices to him, in such a contemptuous manner.

Ver. 17. *Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord,* &c.] That is, the sons of Eli; for they were the ringleaders who set these bad examples, which other priests followed, and therefore the sin is ascribed to them; and which was sadly aggravated by taking what was not their own, and by taking it in a forcible manner, and before the Lord had his part in the offering, and all this done in the tabernacle, in the presence of God; which plainly shewed that they had not the fear of God before their eyes, nor any sense of his omniscience and omnipresence, any more than of his holiness and justice: *for men abhorred the offering of the Lord;* it was irksome and disagreeable to them to bring their sacrifices, when they saw the law of God was not attended to, and the rules of sacrificing were not observed; such contempt of God, such abuse of sacrifices, such injury done to the sacrificers, and such covetousness and sensuality in the priests, that it even set the people against sacrifices, and made them loath them, and neglect to bring them. And this aggravated the sin of the young men, though the sacrificers were not excused hereby, ver. 24.

Ver. 18. *But Samuel ministered before the Lord,* &c.] The ministration of Samuel, though a child, is observed both before and after the account of the ill behaviour and wickedness of Eli's sons; partly to the shame and disgrace of them, and as serving to aggravate their sin, and make it appear the more black and heinous; and partly to his honour and reputation, that he was not corrupted and turned aside from God by their evil practices. The phrase here used is different from that in ver. 11. there he is said to minister before Eli, under his direction and guidance, but here before the Lord; being now engaged in higher services, and which he could perform without the assistance of Eli, as in the presence of God more immediately; it seems to have respect to him when more grown in age, stature, knowledge, and experience, though here related; yet still being *a child;* not got out of his childhood, or arrived to manhood: *girded with a linen ephod;* such as priests used to wear, but not Levites in common, nor extraordinary persons on extraordinary occasions, see 1 Sam. xxii. 18. 2 Sam. vi. 14. This seems to be a peculiar favour, and a special honour which Eli granted to Samuel when so very young, on account of the grace of God bestowed on him in a wonderful manner; and because brought up in the tabernacle as a holy person, and a Nazarite; and because his birth was foretold, and he asked of God, as his name signified, as Procopius Gazaeus observes.

Ver. 19. *Moreover, his mother made him a little coat,* &c.] Suitable to his stature; this was an outer coat to wear over others, and this also was such an one as the priests wore; it is the same word that is used for the priest's *robe,* Exod. xxviii. 4. and this, it is very likely, was altogether of her own spinning, and weaving, and making up; which were works women did in those times; and this Hannah did partly out of her great love to her son Samuel, and partly to lessen the expense that Eli, or the congregation, were at in the maintenance of him; and the Talmudists[q] observe, that a priest might

[q] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 23. 1.

wear a garment, and minister in it, if his mother made it; and they give instances of priests, Ishmael and Eleazar, for whom their mothers made garments: *and brought it to him from year to year;* for it seems this was only to be worn at festivals, and not on common days; and therefore she did not leave it with him, but took it home with her, and brought it again at the returning festival: *when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice;* whether at the passover, or at Pentecost, or at the feast of tabernacles; and it is very probable she came with her husband at them all, yearly; for though she was not by the law obliged thereunto, yet her religious zeal and devotion, and her great desire to see her son as often as she could, induced her to come.

Ver. 20. *And Eli blessed Elkanah and his wife,* &c.] Not only the first time they brought Samuel to him, and left him with him; but every year they came to worship, as the Jewish commentators mostly interpret it: *and said, the Lord give thee seed of this woman;* children by her, year after year; *for the loan which is lent to the Lord;* instead of Samuel, who was asked of the Lord and given to him again; and as they were thereby in some measure deprived of him, and could not always enjoy him, and be delighted with him, Eli prayed for them, and gave them his benediction as a priest, that they might be favoured with other children, who might be of delight and service to them when in old age: *and they went unto their own home;* at Ramah, as in ver. 11. or *to his place*[r], *Elkanah's;* hence Kimchi concludes that Hannah was of another city originally; but the Targum is, " to their place;" and indeed, what was now the place or home of the one, was of the other.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord visited Hannah,* &c.] In a way of mercy, approving and confirming the blessing of Eli; or rather granting the blessing he prayed for, by giving her power to conceive, bear, and bring forth children, as the following words explain it: *so that she conceived and bare three sons and two daughters;* whereby the prophecy of Hannah was fulfilled, ver. 5. and was no doubt matter of great joy to her, though of these children we nowhere else read, nor even of their names. Josephus[s] says, Elkanah had other sons by Hannah, and three daughters; which agrees not with the text: *and the child Samuel grew before the Lord;* in age and stature, in grace and goodness, and improved much in the worship and service of God, both in the theory and practice of it; or became great with him, high in his esteem and favour, and was blessed with much of his presence, and with large gifts of his grace.

Ver. 22. *Now Eli was very old,* &c.] It is very probable he was now about 90 years of age, since when he died he was 98, ch. iv. 15. which is observed to shew his incapacity for the discharge of his office, and inspection into public affairs; which gave his sons an opportunity of acting the wicked part they did without reproof, and with impunity, Eli knowing nothing of it; and accounts in some measure for the gentle reproof he gave them, when he did know of it; for being old, he was not so full of spirit and vigour, and more propense to tenderness and mercy; besides, his sons were grown up and married, and he had less authority over them; though he ought to have considered himself not as a father only, but as an high-priest and judge of Israel, and performed his office as such; however, it must be a great affliction to him in his old age, and added to the weight of it, that his sons should behave so unworthily as they did: *and heard all that his sons had done unto Israel;* who, besides what was by the law allowed them, took flesh out of the pot as it was boiling, and demanded raw flesh to roast before the fat was offered to the Lord; and in this manner they used all, without distinction, that came with their sacrifices: *and how they lay with the women that assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation;* not that they lay with them at the door in a public beastly manner; but the women that came thither they decoyed into their own apartments, or into some of the courts of the tabernacle, and there debauched them: who these women were, and what their business at the tabernacle, is not easy to say; some think they came about business which belonged to women to do there, as to wash and clean the rooms, to sew and spin, and the like; but one would think that these latter works should be done, not at the door of the tabernacle, but in some apartment in it, or rather at their own houses, for the use of it: the Targum is, that they there assembled to pray, which is more likely, and that they were devout women; who came there in large numbers, for the word used has the signification of armies; to perform religious exercises in fasting, and praying, and bringing sacrifices to be offered for them; though they don't seem to be such, as was Anna the prophetess, Luke ii. 37. who made their abode in the tabernacle, and served God night and day with fastings and prayers, since these were only at the door of the tabernacle; nor were there in the tabernacle conveniences for such persons, as afterwards in the temple. The Jews, for the most part, by these understand lying-in-women, who came with their offerings for purification, attended with many other women, their relations, friends, and neighbours, and which especially, when several met together on such an occasion, made a crowd at the door of the tabernacle; and some are of opinion that these men did not lie with them, or debauch them, according to the literal sense of the word; but that they delayed the offering of their nests of doves they brought, so that they were forced to stay all night, and could not return home; and because by this means they were restrained from their husbands, it is reckoned as if these men had lain with them[t]; and which they think is confirmed, in that the man of God sent to Eli, after mentioned, takes no notice of this lewdness of theirs, only of their ill behaviour as to sacrifices; but the text is so express for their debauchery, that it cannot be denied.

Ver. 23. *And he said unto them, why do ye such things?* &c.] As to impose upon the people that bring their offerings, by taking more than is due,

[r] למקומו in locum suum, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius, &c.
[s] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 10. sect. 3.

[t] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 2. Ben Gersom & Abarbinel in loc.

and in a very indecent and imperious manner; and especially to defile the women when they came to worship: these were very scandalous sins, and deserved a more severe reprimand, and indeed a greater chastisement than by mere words; Eli should have rebuked them more sharply, and laid open the evil of their doings, and as a judge punished them for them: *for I hear of your evil doings by all this people*: the inhabitants of Shiloh, or who came thither to worship, who were continually making their complaints to Eli; which still shews his backwardness to reprove them in the manner he did until he was obliged to it by the continual remonstrances of the people against the practices of his sons; he did not attend to the information he had from a few persons, until it became general.

Ver. 24. *Nay, my sons*, &c.] This seems to be too soft and smooth an appellation, too kind and endearing, considering the offence they were guilty of, and were now reproving for; rather they deserved to be called sons of Belial, the children of the devil, than sons of Eli, or brutes and shameless wretches, and such-like hard names: *for it is no good report that I hear*; a very bad one; far from being good, scarce any thing worse could have been said of them; to rob persons of the flesh of their offerings, when there was a sufficient allowance made for them by law, and to be so impious as to require what was not their due, and even before the Lord had his; and to debauch the women that came to religious worship, and that in the sacred place of worship, they also being priests of the Lord, and married men; sins very shocking and sadly aggravated, and yet Eli treats them in this gentle manner: *ye make the Lord's people to transgress*; by causing them to forbear to bring their sacrifices, being used in such an injurious and overbearing way; and by decoying the women into uncleanness, and by setting examples to others: or, *to cry out*; as in the margin of our Bibles, to exclaim against them for their exorbitant and lewd practices; so the Targum, "the "people of the Lord murmur because so ill used by "them:" this clause may be read in connexion with the former, *it is no good report that I hear*, which *ye cause to pass through the Lord's people*: ye occasion the people to speak ill of you everywhere, in the camp of Israel, throughout the whole nation; the report as it is bad, it is general, is in every one's mouth; so Maimonides [w] interprets it; with which Jarchi and others agree [x].

Ver. 25. *If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him*, &c. When one man does an injury to another in his person and property, the case is brought before the judge, he hears it, examines into it, and determines upon it, and does justice, orders that the injured person have satisfaction made him, and so the matter is ended: *but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?* all sin is in some sense against God, as it is contrary to his nature, and a breach of his law, and especially bold, daring, presumptuous sins; but there are some sins that are more immediately and particularly against God, as sins against the first table of the law, which relate to the worship of God, and such were the sins of Eli's sons in the affair of sacrifices; all sin against God is aggravated by the perfections of his nature, and made tremendous, as being against a God of strict justice, of unspotted purity and holiness, and who is omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent; and by the relation and connexion there is between God and men, he is their Creator and Preserver, the God of their lives and mercies, and of all the blessings they enjoy, and yet sin against him! who will entreat the favour of God for such persons, ask pardon for them, and beseech the Lord to be propitious and merciful to them? who on earth will do it? such persons are scarce and rare, few care to stand up in the gap between God and sinners; in some cases they ought not, in others they cannot. Eli suggests by this question, that he could not, even for his own sons; and who in heaven can or will do it? not saints departed, who know nothing of what is done below, nor angels, only the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the only Mediator between God and men, who has engaged his heart to approach unto God, and interpose between him and sinful men, and has made peace and reconciliation by his blood, and is become the propitiation for sin, and ever lives to make intercession for transgressors, and is always prevalent and successful in his mediation and intercession; excepting him, there is none to entreat for those that have sinned against the Lord, see 1 John ii. 1, 2. In answer to this question, *who shall entreat for him?* the Jews say [y], repentance and good works; but these are insufficient advocates for a sinner, without the atoning sacrifice of Christ, who is the only propitiation for sin, and upon which a plea for pardon can only be founded: *notwithstanding, they hearkened not unto the voice of their father*; to his reproofs and counsels, his reasonings and expostulations; though his rebukes were so gentle, and this last reasoning of his so close and strong, so nervous and striking: *because the Lord would slay them*; it was his purpose and decree, his will and pleasure, to cut them off for their wickedness; wherefore he gave them up to a judicial blindness, and hardness of heart, as he did Pharaoh, so that they were proof against all advice, admonitions, and arguments used with them: some choose to read the words, *therefore the Lord would slay them* [z], because they were disobedient to the voice of their father; but the former sense is best; for his will to destroy them was not so much for their disregard to the reproofs of their father, in which he himself was culpable, as for their breach of his laws.

Ver. 26. *And the child Samuel grew up*, &c.] Increased in stature and in grace, grew more and more in all respects, and better and better, whilst Eli's sons grew worse and worse; the contrast between these make the one to shine and appear illustrious, and the other to look the blacker: or *he went on, and grew, and* was *good* [a]; as he proceeded on in years, and

[w] Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 21.
[x] Vid. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 55. 2. & prefat. Ben Chayim. ad Bib. Heb. Bomberg. & Buxtorf.
[y] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 87. 1.

[z] כי ideo, Noldius, p. 393. No. 1312. idcirco vel quapropter, Quistorp. so Patrick.
[a] הלך וגדל וטוב ambulans, & grandescens & bonus, Montanus; so Vatablus & Drusius.

grew in stature, he appeared more and more to be a good man, a virtuous, holy, and gracious person: *and was in favour both with the Lord, and also with men:* the Lord was pleased to give him some tokens of his favour, that he delighted in him, that he was well-pleasing in his sight, and that his person and services were acceptable to him; and the more Eli's sons disgusted the people by their ill lives and conduct, the greater esteem among them did Samuel obtain by his becoming life and conversation; all admired him, spoke well of him, and thanked God that in such bad times he was raising up one among them, of whom they had the most hopeful prospect of usefulness to them.

Ver. 27. *And there came a man of God unto Eli, &c.*] A prophet, as the Targum; he had gifts and graces bestowed on him by the Lord, qualifying him for that office; he came from God, and spoke in his name, as prophets used to do: who this was is not said, nor can it be known with certainty; many conjectures are made; some think he might be Phinehas, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel[a], which is not at all likely; it is not probable that he was living, for if he had been alive, Eli would not have been high-priest; the more ancient Jews say[b] he was Elkanah, the father of Samuel; and so Jarchi; and he is said in the Targum on ch. i. 1, to be one of the disciples of the prophets, and was reckoned by them among the 200 prophets that prophesied in Israel[c]; but of his prophecy we nowhere read in Scripture, or that he was one: others[d] think he was Samuel himself, who through modesty conceals his name; but he was now a child, as in the preceding verse; indeed, some are of opinion that what follows is recorded in this chapter by way of anticipation, and properly belongs to, and is a part of the message sent from the Lord by Samuel to Eli, in the following chapter: *and said unto him, thus saith the Lord:* using the language prophets in after-times did, who spake not of themselves, but in the name of the Lord; and from whence it appears that this was not a divine Person, the Son of God in human form, since he never used to speak in this manner when he appeared: *did I plainly appear to the house of thy father, when they were in Egypt in Pharaoh's house?* he did; this was evident and certain, and a wonderful instance of condescending goodness: the house of his father is the house of Aaron, who, and all his sons, were born in Egypt, from whose youngest son, Ithamar, Eli descended; and to whom the Lord appeared when in Egypt, and sent him to meet Moses, whose spokesman he appointed him to be; and who prophesied in Egypt, and reproved the Israelites, which is recorded in Ezekiel, ch. xx. as say the Jews[e].

Ver. 28. *And did I choose him out of all the tribes of Israel to be my priest, &c.*] He did; of all the tribes of Israel the Lord chose the tribe of Levi to place the priesthood in, and of all the families of that tribe he chose the house of Aaron, Eli's ancestor, to minister in the priest's office, see Exod. xxviii. 1. *to offer upon mine altar;* burnt-offerings, sin-offerings, and peace-offerings; this is the altar of burnt-offering, which stood in the court of the tabernacle: *to burn incense;* on the altar of incense, which was in the holy place, and on which incense was burnt morning and evening: *to wear an ephod before me?* in which was the breast-plate, with the Urim and Thummim, with which the high-priest went into the most holy place, where was the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence, and where he inquired of the Lord by the above things: *and did I give unto the house of thy father all the offerings made by fire of the children of Israel?* he did; the priests who were of the house of Aaron had not only the sin-offerings, and part of the peace-offerings, but even of the offerings made by fire, the burnt-offerings; the skin of them was the priest's, and the meat-offerings that went along with them, see Lev. vi. 25, 26. and vii. 8, 9, 10, 33, 34, 35. Numb. xviii. 8, 9, 10. which were given them for their maintenance. Now these instances of God's goodness to the family of Aaron are mentioned to aggravate the sins of Eli and his sons.

Ver. 29. *Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice, and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation, &c.*] To be offered in the tabernacle, where the Lord had his dwelling; which they might be said to kick and spurn at, despising them, as if there were not enough of them, nor the best of them given to them for their maintenance; a metaphor taken from cattle well fed and fat, which kick and spurn with their feet at even the owners and feeders of them. The Targum is, "why do ye use force with the holy offer-"ings?" that is, take them away by force, when there was such a sufficient quantity allowed them for their support. Some understand this of their driving away such, that before used to bring their sacrifices to be offered, but being so ill treated, refrained from bringing them: *and honourest thy sons above me;* by suffering them to take their part of the sacrifices, and even what did not belong to them, before God had his part, or before the fat was burnt; and by continuing them in their office, to the dishonour of God, his name and worship, when they ought to have been turned out by him and punished; but by this he preferred the honour of his sons before the honour of God, and chose rather that he should be dishonoured, than that they should be censured: *to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people?* they took the best pieces of the peace-offerings from them by force, having no right unto them; and this they did to indulge their luxury and sensuality, which Eli connived at; and it is highly probable took part of the roasted meat his sons provided for themselves, out of the choicest pieces of the offerings of the people; since he himself is included in this clause, *to make yourselves fat,* as his sons might be, and it is certain he himself was, ch. iv. 18.

Ver. 30. *Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, &c.*] This being the case, so much contempt cast upon his sacrifices, and dishonour on himself: *I said indeed*

[a] Judæi apud Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. A.
[b] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 53.
[c] T. Bab. Megillah, fol. 14. 1.
[d] See Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 2. c. 3. p. 250.
[e] Jarchi & Ben Gersom in loc.

that *thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever*: or minister in the priest's office before him: if the house of Aaron in general is meant, it did continue so to do, in one branch or another of it, as long as the Mosaic dispensation lasted, which is meant by the phrase *for ever*: but since it is afterwards denied that it should, rather the house of Ithamar, or of the immediate parent of Eli, is meant, and this said when the priesthood was translated from the family of Eleazar to the family of Ithamar; when, and on what account that was done, we nowhere read. It is a tradition[f], that it was in the time of the Levite's concubine; and because Phinehas, and the other priests, did not go from city to city, and reprove the Israelites for the many sins they were fallen into, that the priesthood was taken away out of the family of Eleazar, and translated to that of Ithamar: *but now the Lord saith, be it far from me*: to continue the priesthood in the line of Ithamar; which argues no change in the purposes or promises of God, this being not a decree of his, but a declaration of his will; that if the house of Ithamar behaved well in the discharge of the office of the high-priest, it should continue with them to the end of the Mosaic dispensation, but if not, it should be taken from them, and restored to the family of Eleazar; as it was in Solomon's time: *for them that honour me I will honour*; as Phinehas the son of Eleazar did at Shittim, where he shewed his zeal for the Lord of hosts, and had the promise of the everlasting priesthood; and which continued in his family until the Babylonish captivity, excepting the interval in which it was in the family of Ithamar, and for what reason is not known: *and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed*; as the posterity of Eli, whose sons despised the Lord, and his offerings, as appeared by their conduct; and these were killed in battle in one day, and in the times of Solomon, Abiathar, of the posterity of Eli, was thrust out of the priesthood, and Zadok, of the line of Eleazar, was put in his room, 1 Kings ii. 27, 35.

Ver. 31. *Behold, the days come*, &c.] Or, *are coming*[g]; and will quickly come, in a very little time the things, after threatened, began to take place, even in the days of Eli's sons, and the whole was accomplished in about 80 years after: *that I will cut off thine arm, and the arm of thy father's house*; that is, the strength of him and them, as the Targum, the strength of a man for doing business lying in his arm; meaning by it not long life, as Kimchi, who concludes this sense from what follows; but rather power and authority, or the exercise of the office of high-priest, which gave him and his family great esteem and power; or it may be best of all, his children, which are the strength of a man, and the support of his family, see Gen. xlix. 3. *that there shall not be an old man in thine house*; as there were none when he died, and his two sons, the same day; and the children they left were very young, and Ahitub, who was one of them, could not die an old man, since Ahimelech his son was priest in the time of Saul, who with 85 priests were slain by his order; and Abiathar his son was deprived of his priesthood in the time of Solomon; though some understand this not of an elder in years, but in office; and that the sense is, that there should be none of his family a senator, or a member of the great sanhedrim, or court of judicature; and so it is interpreted in the Talmud[h]; with which agree Ben Gersom and Abarbinel.

Ver. 32. *And thou shalt see an enemy* in my *habitation*, &c.] Either the Philistines in the land of Israel, where God chose to dwell, who quickly after made war against Israel, and pitched in Aphek, ch. iv. 1. or, as in the margin of our Bibles, and other versions[i], *thou shalt see the affliction of the tabernacle*; as he did when the ark of God was taken, at the news of which he died, ch. iv. 17, 18. and so the Targum understands it of affliction and calamity, yet not of the house of God, but of his own house; paraphrasing the words thus, "and thou shalt see the calamity that shall come upon "the men of thine house, for the sins which they have "committed before me in the house of my sanctuary:" but it seems best to interpret it of a rival, which not he in his own person should see, but whom his posterity should see high-priest in the temple; as they did in Solomon's time, when Abiathar, of the family of Eli, was thrust out, and Zadok, of the family of Eleazar, was put in; for, as Kimchi observes, when a man has two wives, they are rivals or adversaries to one another, jealous and emulous of each other, as Elkanah's two wives were, and of one of them the same word is used as here, ch. i. 6. so when one high-priest was put out, and another taken in, the one was the rival or adversary of the other, as in the case referred to: *in all the wealth which God shall give Israel*; which points exactly at the time when this should be, even when God did well to Israel, gave them great prosperity, wealth and riches, quietness and safety, a famous temple built for the worship of God, and every thing in a flourishing condition, both with respect to temporals and spirituals, as was in the days of Solomon, see 1 Kings iv. 20, 25. and x. 27. and then it was amidst all that plenty and prosperity, and when the high-priesthood was most honourable and profitable, that Eli's family was turned out of it, and another put into it: *and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever*; see the note on the preceding verse; this is repeated for confirmation, and with this addition, that this would be the case for ever.

Ver. 33. *And the man of thine*, &c.] Of his family, which should spring from him: whom *I shall not cut off from mine altar*; from serving there: who though he shall not be an high-priest, but a common priest, as all the descendants of Aaron were, shall be *to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart*; that is, the eyes and heart of his posterity; who though they should see of their family ministering in the priest's office, yet should make so poor a figure on account of their outward meanness and poverty, or because of their want of wisdom, and intellectual endowments, or because of their scandalous lives, that it would fill their hearts with grief and sorrow, and their eyes with tears, so that their eyes would fail, and be consumed,

[f] Midrash Samuel, apud Jarch. & Kimch. in loc.
[g] באים venientes, Montanus.
[h] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 14. 1.

[i] צר מעון θλίψιν κατοικητηρίου, Symmachus; angustiam tabernaculi, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

and their hearts be broken: *and all the increase of thine house shall die in the flower of their age*; or *die men*[k]; grown men, not children, when it would not be so great an affliction to part with them; but when at man's estate, in the prime of their days, perhaps about thirty years of age, the time when the priests entered upon their office to do all the work of it: the Targum is, "shall be killed young men:" it is more than once said in the Talmud[l], that there was a family in Jerusalem, the men of which died at eighteen years of age; they came and informed Juchanan ben Zaccai of it: he said to them, perhaps of the family of Eli are ye, as it is said, 1 Sam. ii. 33.

Ver. 34. *This shall be a sign unto thee*, &c.] A confirming one, that all which had been now said would be fulfilled: *that shall come upon thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas*: which Eli would live to see fulfilled on them; and when it was, he might be assured the rest would be most certainly accomplished, and it was this: *in one day they shall die both of them*; as they did in battle with the Philistines, ch. iv. 11.

Ver. 35. *And I will raise up a faithful priest*, &c.] Not Samuel, as some, for he was not of the seed of Aaron, and of the priestly race; nor had he a sure house, for his sons declined from the ways of truth and justice; but Zadok, as it is commonly interpreted, who was put into the office of the high-priest by Solomon when he came to the throne, in the room of Abiathar, of the line of Eli: who was an upright man, and faithfully discharged his office, and answered to his name, which signifies righteous, see Ezek. xliv. 15. that *shall do according to* that which is *in my heart, and in my mind*; according to the secret will and pleasure of God, as revealed in his word; do every thing relating to the office of an high-priest, according to the laws of God respecting it; so the Targum, "that shall do according to my word, and according to my will:" *and I will build him a sure house*; which some understand of a numerous family and posterity he should have to succeed him, so that there should never be wanting one of his seed to fill up that high office; or rather it may design the establishment of the high-priesthood in his family, which was an everlasting one, as promised to Phinehas his ancestor, and which continued unto the times of the Messiah, who put an end to it, by fulfilling it; unless it can be thought that this may refer to the temple built by Solomon, which was a firm house, in comparison of the tabernacle, which was a movable one; it was built for Zadok and his posterity, who was the first that officiated in it as a legal priest. There is one writer, who says[m], "this agrees with no "man, only with our Lord Jesus, who is called our "high-priest, that offered up a sacrifice to the father "for us—therefore to Christ properly this prophecy "belongs; but, according to the history, to Zadok:" and Christ is said indeed to be a faithful, as well as a merciful high-priest, faithful to him that appointed him, and faithful to those for whom he officiated; he always did the things which pleased his father, was obedient to his will and commands in all respects; and a sure house is built by him, his church, against which the gates of hell can never prevail: however, the next clause is by others interpreted of him, *and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever*; or *before my Messiah*, as the high-priests did; they were types of Christ, and represented him, and acted under him, and in his stead, and prefigured and pointed at what he was to do, when he came in the flesh, and now does in the most holy place in heaven. Though it is more commonly understood of Zadok and his posterity, walking or ministering, as the Targum, before Solomon the Lord's anointed, and before the kings of the house of David, as they did until the Babylonish captivity.

Ver. 36. *And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left in thine house*, &c.] That is not cut off by death, the few remains of Eli's posterity in succeeding times, after the high-priesthood was removed out of his family into another; so that they were reduced at best to common priests, and these, as it should seem, degraded from that office for their mal-administration of it, or scandalous lives: *shall come and crouch to him for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread*; which Grotius interprets of their coming to God, and bowing themselves before him, and praying to him for the smallest piece of money to cast into the treasury, and for a morsel of bread to be accepted as an offering, instead of a bullock, sheep, lamb, or even a bird, which they were not able to bring; but the meaning is, that such should be the low estate of Eli's family, when another, even Zadok, was made high-priest, that they should come and humble themselves before him, as the Targum expresses it, beseeching him to give them a piece of silver, even the smallest piece, that is, as the word signifies, a *gerah* or *meah*, about a penny or three halfpence of our money, the 20th part of a shekel, Ezek. xlv. 12. and a piece of bread, not a whole loaf, but a slice of it, to such extremity would they be brought: *and shall say, put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread*: or into one of the wards of the priests; their custodies or courses, as the Targum; with which the Jewish commentators generally agree, and of which there were 24; see 1 Chron. xxiv. 4—19. and there are some traces of them in the New Testament, see Luke i. 5—8. but these were regular priests, who were in those courses, and had a sufficient maintenance for them, and had not barely a piece of bread to live on, or just enough to keep them from starving, as the phrase denotes; wherefore this must be understood, as before hinted, of priests degraded from their office, on some account or another, and reduced to poverty and want; and therefore, that they might be kept from starving, would solicit the high-priest in those days, and beg that he would put them in some inferior post under the priests, to do the meanest offices for them, slay the sacrifices for them, wash their pots, open and shut up doors, and the like, that so they might have a living, though a poor one; and this may reasonably be thought to be the case of Eli's posterity, in process of time, after Abiathar was deposed from the high-priest's office, and was ordered to go and live upon his fields

[k] ימותו אנשים morientur viri, Montanus, Tigurine version; moriantur virili ætate, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so V. L.

[l] T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 18. 1. & Yebamot, fol. 105. 1.

[m] Procopius Gazæus in loc.

and farm at Anathoth, 1 Kings ii. 26. with which compare Ezek. xliv. 10—14. This, as Ben Gersom observes, was a fit punishment, and a righteous retaliation on Eli's posterity, that they should be brought to crouch to others, and be glad of a morsel of bread, who had behaved so imperiously towards the Lord's people, and had taken away their flesh from them by force; and, not content with their allowance, took the best pieces of the sacrifices, to make themselves fat with them.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter gives an account of the Lord's calling to Samuel in the night-season, which he first took for the voice of Eli, but being instructed by him, made answer to the voice, ver. 1—10. and of a message sent from him by Samuel to Eli, foretelling the destruction of his family, ver. 11—14. and of the delivery of it to him, which Samuel was first fearful of doing, but, encouraged by Eli, he delivered it to him, to which he patiently submitted, ver. 15—18. and the chapter is closed with the establishment of Samuel as a prophet of the Lord, who continued to appear and reveal himself to him, ver. 19—21.

Ver. 1. *And the child Samuel ministered unto the Lord before Eli,* &c.] Under his direction and instruction; the Targum is, in the life of Eli, and in such parts of service, relating to the tabernacle of the Lord, as he was capable of, such as opening and shutting the doors of it, lighting the lamps, singing the praises of God, &c. according to Josephus [a], and others, he was now about 12 years of age: *and the word of the Lord was precious in those days;* that is, a word from the Lord in a dream or vision, directing, informing, instructing, or reproving, this was very rarely had; of late there had been but very few instances; and which accounts for it why not only the child Samuel knew not that it was the voice of the Lord that called to him, but Eli himself thought nothing of it until he had called a third time, so rare and scarce was any instance of this kind; for which reason these words are premised in the following narration: and as every thing that is scarce and rare is generally precious, so the word of God in this way also was; and so it is as considered in every view of it; as the written word of God; when there was but little of it penned, as at this time, and few or none to teach and instruct in it, Eli being old, and his sons so vile; or when it is forbidden to be read, and the copies of it destroyed, and become scarce, as in the times of Dioclesian; or when there are but very few faithful evangelical ministers of the word; which, though it is always precious to them that have precious faith in it, the promises of it being exceeding great and precious, and the truths of it more precious than fine gold, and the grand subject of it a precious Saviour, who is so in his person, offices, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; yet is generally more precious when there is a scarcity of it, when God makes a man, a Gospel minister, more precious than fine gold, even than the golden wedge of Ophir, see Isa. xiii. 12. where the word is used in the same sense as here: there was *no open vision;* or prophecy, as the Targum; no public known prophet raised up, to whom the people could apply for counsel, direction, and instruction in divine things; in all the times of the judges we read only of Deborah the prophetess, and one prophet more, Judg. iv. 14. and vi. 8. excepting the man of God lately sent to Eli, ch. ii. 27. and this want of prophecy served to set off with greater foil the glory of Samuel as a prophet of the Lord, when he was an established one; there having been none of that character in the memory of man, and therefore he is spoken of as at the head of the prophets, Acts iii. 24. for though there might be some private visions to particular persons, or God might appear in vision to private persons for their own special use and instruction; yet there was no public vision, or what was for public good and general use: some render it, *no broken-up vision* [b]; it lay hid, concealed out of sight, as if it was immured and shut up within walls, or like water pent up, that can't break through its fences, and spread itself; or *not multiplied,* as R. Isaiah, not frequent and repeated, the instances of it few and rare; the sense of this clause is much the same as the former.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass at that time,* &c.] When the word of the Lord was scarce and precious, and there was no open vision; or, as Ben Gersom, the same day the man of God came to Eli at night, the following affair happened: *when Eli was laid down in his place;* on his bed to sleep, in one of the chambers or apartments of the tabernacle; for as there were such in the temple for the priests, so in that: *and his eyes began to wax dim,* that *he could not see;* to help himself to any thing he might want when in bed; which seems to be the reason Samuel lay near him, and why, when he heard his voice, he immediately ran to him, supposing he needed his assistance. Some, as Kimchi and others, understand this not of the eyes of his body, but of his mind; and that the Holy Spirit, as a spirit of prophecy, was departing from him, because of his connivance at the sins of his sons; and so the following prophecy came not to him, but to Samuel.

Ver. 3. *And ere the lamp of God went out in the temple of the Lord,* &c.] The tabernacle so called; lamp is put for the lamps in the candlestick in the tabernacle, which were lighted every evening, and burnt till morning; by which time some of them at least usually went out, only it is said the western lamp never went out. Now the reason why this is observed is to shew that it was in the night, before morning, that the following transaction was: some by this lamp understand the lamp of prophecy, that before that was quite extinct in Eli, only began to depart, as his eyes are said to

[a] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 10. sect. 4.

[b] נפרץ perrupta, Piscator; fracta vel rupta, Drusius.

begin to wax dim, the spirit of prophecy came to Samuel; so that, as the Jews express it, before one sun was set another arose; thus before the sun of Moses set, the sun of Joshua arose; and before the sun of Eli set, the sun of Samuel arose: *where the ark of God was*; that is, in the temple or tabernacle; not in that part of it where the lamps were burning in the candlestick, that was in the holy place; but the ark was in the holy of holies, where the Lord dwelt, and was the symbol of his presence; and which is observed to point out the place from whence the voice came, after mentioned; and which the Targum expresses here, "and a voice was heard out of the temple of the "Lord, where the ark of the Lord was:" *and Samuel was laid down to* sleep; after Eli was in bed, and Samuel had done all his business, he laid himself down to sleep in his place; in the court of the Levites, as the Targum, with which the Jewish commentators in general agree: it must be somewhere near to Eli, so that he could quickly come at him, when he needed his assistance; though, according to the Misnah[r], the priests shut the doors of the court within, and the Levites slept without. It is highly probable that Samuel's apartment was near to Eli, or he could not have so readily come to him, as it is plain he did. This circumstance is also observed, to shew that it was in the night, and before morning, that the following vision was; and, as Kimchi thinks, about cock-crowing; and it may be from hence Strabo[s] had the notion, that Moses ordered such to sleep (in the temple) for themselves, and others, who were fit to receive good dreams, and who might expect from God a good gift, who lived soberly and righteously; and because the tabernacle was covered with skins, hence might spring the notion of others to sleep in temples, for the above reason, under the skins of the sacrifices, see the note on Amos ii. 8. though they seem rather to have slept upon them, for the above purposes, namely, to converse with their deities, and get knowledge from them[t].

Ver. 4. *That the Lord called Samuel*, &c.] By a voice which came forth from the most holy place, from between the cherubim, the seat of the divine Majesty: *and he answered, here am I*: which was not intended to declare the place where he was, but to express his readiness and cheerfulness to do any thing that was required of him.

Ver. 5. *And he ran unto Eli, and said, here am I*, &c.] He got out of his bed as fast as he could, and put on his clothes, and ran with all haste to the apartment where Eli lay, supposing he wanted some immediate assistance, which he was there ready to give him to the utmost of his ability; and he made the more haste, as knowing his age and infirmities, and being desirous, out of affection to him, to help him as soon as possible: *for thou calledst me*; he took it to be the voice of Eli, partly because there was no other man in the tabernacle, it being in the middle of the night, or early in the morning, before the doors were opened, or any of the priests were come in to minister, and partly because the voice might be very much like Eli's, and which was done to direct him to him: *and he said, I called not, lie down again*; he signified he wanted nothing, and so had no occasion to call him, nor had he, but bid him go to bed again, and sleep quietly: *and he went and lay down*; and very probably fell asleep again.

Ver. 6. *And the Lord called yet again, Samuel*, &c.] Called him a second time by his name, with a like audible voice as before: *and Samuel arose, and went to Eli*; did not run as before, being perhaps more thoughtful of this affair, that he should be called a second time, and careful not to awake Eli, should he be mistaken again, and find him asleep: *and said, here am I, for thou didst call me*: perceiving that he was awake, he desired to know what he wanted, and he was ready to help him; for he was now certain of it that he did call him: *and he answered, I called not, my son, lie down again*; by this appellation, *my son*, he expresses his affection to him, and signifies he took it kindly that he should shew such readiness to do any thing for him, and would not have him be discouraged and abashed, because he was mistaken, but return to his bed and rest again.

Ver. 7. *Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord*, &c.] He knew that Jehovah, the God of Israel, was the true God; he had spiritual knowledge of him, and knew somewhat of his word and worship, ways and ordinances, in which he had been instructed by Eli; wherefore, though the Targum is, "Samuel had not yet "learned to know doctrine from the Lord;" it can only be understood, that he had not learnt it perfectly; somewhat he knew of it, but in an imperfect manner, being a child: but the sense of the word is, that as yet he was ignorant that God had used to speak with an ordinary and familiar voice to men, as Maimonides says[u]; he perhaps had never heard of any such thing, and much less was experimentally acquainted with it, that God ever did speak after such a manner to men, and could not distinguish between the voice of God and the voice of Eli: *neither was the word of the Lord yet revealed unto him*; what of the written word that was in being he had, and read, as the law of Moses; but the meaning is, that no word of prophecy of the Lord was revealed unto him, as the Targum; he never had prophesied as yet, and knew not the form and manner of prophecy, as the above writer observes, or what methods God took to reveal himself, his mind and will, to men, at least not this by an audible voice.

Ver. 8. *And the Lord called Samuel again the third time*, &c.] In the same manner he had done before, expressing his name no doubt: *and he arose and went to Eli, and said, here am I, for thou didst call me*; as if he should say, it must certainly be so, I cannot be mistaken a third time: *and Eli perceived that the Lord had called the child*; he was satisfied now that Samuel must have heard a voice, and he knew there was no man in the tabernacle but himself, and therefore it must be the voice of the Lord out of the most holy place; and he had formerly been acquainted with such voices, and used to them, and now called them to mind; and besides, as Aben Ezra observes, he was the rather confirmed in this, that the Lord called Samuel,

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[r] Middot, c. 1. sect. 8.
[s] Geograph. l. 16. p. 523.
[t] Vid. Virgil. Æneid. 7. huc dona Sacerdos, &c. ver. 86—95.
[u] Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 44.

because Samuel heard the voice, and not Eli, though Eli lay nearer the most holy place than Samuel did; which shewed that this must be the voice of prophecy the Lord makes whom he pleases to hear; and that Eli might be fully persuaded of this, before the matter of the prophecy was delivered to him, Samuel was so often directed to him.

Ver. 9. *Therefore Eli said unto Samuel, go, lie down,* &c.] Once more; *and it shall be, if he call thee;* the voice, or the Lord by it: *that thou shalt say, speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth;* his meaning is, that he should not rise and come to him, as he had done, but continue on his bed, on hearing the voice again, but desire the Lord to speak to him what he had to say, to which he was ready to attend: *so Samuel went and lay down in his place;* which, as commonly understood, was in the court of the Levites, see the note on ver. 3.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord came, and stood,* &c.] At the place where Samuel lay; either there was, as Kimchi, a form before his eyes in the vision of prophecy, some visible corporeal shape assumed; or a bright splendour, an illustrious appearance of the glory of God; or it may be rather the voice, which before seemed to be at some distance whereabout Eli lay; it now seemed nearer, and was as the voice of one just by him, that sounded in his ears: *and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel:* repeating his name, in order the more to excite his attention: *then Samuel answered, speak, for thy servant heareth;* he leaves out the word *Lord*, which Eli bid him use; for he might be afraid as yet to make mention of the name of the Lord in the vision of prophecy, as Kimchi speaks; or lest it should be the voice of another, as Jarchi; as yet he might not be quite certain whether it was the voice of the Lord, or the voice of a man; for that he should have any mistrust of its being the voice of a demon or spectre, there is no reason to believe.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord said to Samuel,* &c.] The voice of the Lord continued speaking to him: *behold, I will do a thing in Israel;* which may be particularly interpreted of the taking of the ark, and the slaying of the two sons of Eli; and which is elsewhere represented as the Lord's doing, for the sins of Eli's family, Psal. lxxviii. 61, 62. *at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle;* be struck with horror and amazement, and quite stunned, and know not what to think or say, like persons surprised with a violent clap of thunder, which strikes their ears so strongly, that the noise of it is not soon gone from them; this was verified in Eli, and in his daughter-in-law particularly, who, at the news of the above things, the one fell backwards and broke his neck, and the other fell into labour and died; and all Israel were struck with astonishment at these things.

Ver. 12. *In that day I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house,* &c.] Or family, that is, by the man of God, ch. ii. 27. as that he would cut off the strength of it, that there should not be an old man in it; and such as remained should be reduced to the utmost poverty and meanness; this shews that that prophecy was antecedent to this, contrary to the sense of some: *when I begin, I will also make an end;* not immediately, and at once, but by degrees; he began in the death of Hophni and Phinehas, and went on in the slaughter of Abimelech, and the 85 priests at Nob, in the times of Saul, and finished in the thrusting out of Abiathar from the priesthood, in the times of Solomon, whereby that family was brought to disgrace and poverty.

Ver. 13. *For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever,* &c.] That is, bring his judgments upon them, which should continue on them to their utter destruction; this, as to the substance, he said before by the man of God: *for the iniquity which he knoweth;* for the iniquity of his sons, which he was thoroughly informed of, and fully acquainted with by others; and somewhat of which he must have been sensible of, and seen with his own eyes, and therefore was inexcusable: *because his sons made themselves vile;* mean and contemptible in the sight of men, abhorred and accursed in the sight of God, by taking the flesh of the sacrifices of the people, which did not belong to them, who came to sacrifice, and by debauching the women that came to the door of the tabernacle for religious service. It is said this clause was originally written, *because his sons made light of me;* or cursed the Lord, and is one of the eighteen places called the correction of the Scribes, who corrected it as we have it; and it may be observed, the Septuagint version is, *because his sons spake ill of God;* or cursed him; however, this they did, they preferred their lusts, and the indulging of them, to the honour and glory of God: this Eli knew, *and he restrained them not;* from their evil practices; he did not make use of his authority, neither as a father, and especially not as high-priest, and the judge of Israel, who ought not only to have sharply reproved them, which he did not, but to have censured or punished them, and turned them out of their office: *or did not frown upon them*[1], as in the margin of our Bibles; he did not knit his brows, or wrinkle up his face, and by his countenance shew his displeasure at their proceedings, but in an easy, smooth, gentle manner, expostulated with them about them.

Ver. 14. *And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli,* &c.] Either had done this before, which was signified to him by the man of God, or did swear now for the confirmation of his threatenings, and to assure the certain performance of them: *that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever;* not even typically, which was all that legal sacrifice could do; and not so that the priesthood should ever return to the family again, as the office of high-priesthood never did; or, as Abarbinel interprets it, because of sacrifice and offering, that the iniquity Eli's sons were guilty of in taking the flesh of the sacrifices and offerings, which did not belong to them, and before the Lord had his part, should never be expiated.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel lay until the morning,* &c.] It is not said he slept; it can hardly be thought he should, when it is considered what a new, strange, and uncommon thing had befallen him; what honour had been conferred on him a child, that the Lord should

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[1] ולא כהה בהם & non contraxit frontem, Osiander; non contraxit rugas, Belg. De Dieu.

vouchsafe to speak and communicate his mind to him, and what dreadful things were said of Eli's family; all which must greatly affect his mind, and keep him waking: however, he lay musing thereon until morning, and then arose, *and opened the doors of the house of the Lord;* as he had used to do, and which was the business of the Levites; though he had been so highly honoured, he was not elated with it, nor thought himself above so low and mean an employment in the house of God; nor did he run to Eli or others, boasting of what he had met with that night, but modestly and carefully attended to what was his common and constant employment every morning: *and Samuel feared to shew Eli the vision;* the vision of prophecy, as the Targum; what God had foretold should befall him and his family, lest he should be grieved on more accounts than one; partly because he, an old man, an high-priest, and judge of Israel, was overlooked and neglected, and the prophecy was delivered to a child, and not to him; and partly because of the sad things that should come upon his family.

Ver. 16. *Then Eli called Samuel,* &c.] Perceiving he was risen by the opening of the doors of the tabernacle, which he might hear; and observing he did not come to him as usual, to know whether he wanted any thing, and being impatient to hear what was said to him of the Lord: *and he said, Samuel, my son;* called him by his name, and in a very tender and affectionate manner, the more to engage him to hasten to him, and thereby also putting him in mind of his filial duty to obey him: *and he answered, here* am *I;* ready to attend and perform any service enjoined him.

Ver. 17. *And he said, what* is *the thing that* the Lord *hath said unto thee?* &c.] The word *Lord* is not in the text, but it is *that it hath said;* the voice that had so often called him in the night, and which yet Eli knew was the voice of the Lord; and as it was, he was sensible there was something of importance said, and he had great reason to believe it respected him and his family; and the rather he might conclude this, by what the man of God had lately said to him, whose words perhaps he had too much slighted, questioning his authority; and therefore the Lord took this way and method to assure him that what was said came from him: for hereby Eli was fully convinced that this voice Samuel heard was of the Lord, and so what was said must be from him, and this he was impatient to know: *I pray thee, hide it not from me:* and he not only beseeched and entreated him, but adjured him, as in the next clause: *God do so to thee, and more also, if thou hide any thing from me of all the things that he said unto thee:* it is the form of an oath or curse, wishing that God would do some great evil to him, and more than he chose to express, if he concealed any thing from him that had been told him. So Kimchi and Abarbinel take it to be an oath; and Josephus[u] and Procopius Gazæus on the place say, that Eli obliged Samuel by oaths and curses to declare what had been said to him.

Ver. 18. *And Samuel told him every whit, and hid nothing from him,* &c.] And so approved himself to be a faithful prophet of God, and man of God, as he is afterwards called; the whole counsel of God is to be declared by his servants the prophets, and the ministers of his word; nothing is to be concealed, which it is the will of God should be made known, whether it be pleasing or displeasing to man: *and he said, it is the Lord;* that has said it, and there is nothing to be said against it, and that will do it; and there is no resisting him: or *the Lord is he*[w]; who has a sovereign right to all his creatures, and may dispose of them as he pleases; he is all-wise, and does all things well; he is holy and righteous in all his ways and works, and there is no unrighteousness in him; he is faithful to his word, whether in a way of promise or threatening; and all he does to his people is in love, mercy, and kindness: *let him do what seemeth him good;* not what seems good to men, or is so in their esteem, but what seems good to the Lord, who knows what is best for his people, and can do nothing but what is good; all is good he does; there is nothing but goodness in him, and nothing but goodness comes from him; he does good, and nothing else, and even when he afflicts his people; all he does is well done in creation, providence, and grace: and Eli's desire is, that he would fulfil the good pleasure of his will; he appears to be in an excellent temper, not surly and morose, taking it ill that such a message should be sent him by a child; nor was he unaffected with the case of his family, but humbly submitted to the will of God, and acquiesces in it as good, and neither arraigns his justice, nor murmurs at his providences.

Ver. 19. *And Samuel grew,* &c.] Not only in years and stature, but in grace and goodness, in wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, both with respect to things natural and spiritual, and in esteem, credit, and reputation among men: *and the Lord was with him;* he was not only in favour with men, but with God; and had fresh and repeated tokens of the grace and good will of God towards him; he indulged him with his presence, and assisted him in his service, and prospered and succeeded him in all things in which he was engaged. The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord was "his help;" the essential Word of God, the Messiah: *and did let none of his words fall to the ground*[x]; in allusion either to water that falls to the ground, and becomes useless, or to an arrow falling out of the bow, and to the ground, before it reaches the mark, and so unsuccessful[y]; or to any weapon of war, sword or spear, falling out of the hand of the soldier, whereby he is disarmed and rendered unserviceable: and these words, according to Kimchi, and in which he is followed by Abarbinel, are to be understood, not only of the words which he spake by the Holy Ghost under a spirit of prophecy, and had their exact accomplishment; but his common words, which were spoken by weight and measure, as the last expresses it, and which were delivered out according to the rules of justice, probity, and truth; and so he failed not of performing that which he had said, or of doing what was right, whereby Israel knew he was fit, prepared, and designed to be a prophet of the Lord, as in the following

[u] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 10. sect. 4.

[w] יהוה הוא Κύριος αὐτός, Sept. Dominus ipse, Montanus.

[x] Χαμαιπετὲς ἔπος. Pindar. Pythia, ode 6.

[y] Vid. Homer. Iliad. 17. ver. 633.

verse; but it seems rather to have respect to the things predicted by him under a spirit of prophecy concerning Eli and his house, which soon began to be fulfilled.

Ver. 20. *And all Israel, from Dan even unto Beer-sheba*, &c.] That is, from the most northern border of the land of Israel, on which Dan lay, to the utmost border of it southward, where Beer-sheba was, the fame of Samuel for his piety, prudence, and prophecy, was spread abroad; so that all *knew that Samuel was established* to be *a prophet of the Lord*; or that he was *faithful*[z] to God and man, to be credited in what he said; and so a fit man to be a prophet of the Lord, being eminently qualified with gifts by him for that office; the Targum is, "that Samuel was faithful in "the words of the prophecy of the Lord," in relating them.

Ver. 21. *And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh*, &c.] In the tabernacle there; he had appeared before to Samuel, when he called him, and declared to him what he designed and resolved to do to Eli and his family, and now appeared again to him in the same place before the battle of the Israelites with the Philistines, of which there is an account in the following chapter. Such appearances had not been usual in Shiloh for a long time, but were now renewed and repeated: *for the Lord revealed himself to Samuel by the Word of the Lord*: by Christ, the Word of the Lord, who appeared to him, it is probable, in an human form, as he was wont to do to the patriarchs and prophets, and by whom the Lord revealed his mind and will unto them, being the Angel of his presence, and the messenger of his covenant; or by giving him a word of command to be delivered by him to the children of Israel, and which is expressed and delivered in the next chapter.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter is a narrative of a war between Israel and the Philistines, in the time of Samuel, and of the consequences of it. In the first battle, the Philistines had the better of the Israelites, which caused the latter to inquire into the reason of it, and who proposed to fetch the ark of the Lord, and did, to repair their loss, and prepare for a second battle, in which they hoped to succeed, and which struck a panic into their enemies, ver. 1—7. who yet encouraged and stirred up one another to behave in a courageous manner, and victory a second time was on their side, a great number of the Israelites were slain, among whom were Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli, and the ark of God was taken, ver. 8—11. the news of which being brought to Eli, he fell back and died, ver. 12—18. and to his daughter-in-law, who upon it fell into labour, and died also, ver. 19—22.

Ver. 1. *And the word of Samuel came to all Israel*, &c.] Or was *known*, as the Targum, the word of prophecy by him, which related to what befell Eli and his family; this was spread throughout the land, and every one almost had knowledge of it, and which began to be fulfilled in the war between Israel and the Philistines, after related; or the doctrine, instructions, and exhortations of Samuel to the people of Israel, were by the means of others conveyed throughout the land; and yet they went into measures which proved fatal and ruinous to them; or the word of Samuel, which was from the Lord, came to Israel, to stir them up to go to war with the Philistines, whereby the punishment threatened to Eli's family would begin to have its accomplishment: *now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle*; according to the word of Samuel, or of the Lord by him; though Ben Gersom thinks they did this of themselves, which was their sin, and did not ask counsel of the Lord, nor of Samuel his prophet; but it seems as if the Philistines were the aggressors, and first came forth to war against them, and they went out to meet them[a], as the word is, and defend themselves as it became them: this was forty years after the death of Samson, and at the end of Eli's government, who judged Israel so many years, when they had recruited themselves, and recovered their losses they sustained by Samson; and when they perceived a new judge was raised up among the Israelites, who was likely to be of great service to them, and to prevent their authority over them, and therefore thought to begin with them betimes: *and pitched beside Ebenezer*; a place so called by anticipation, and had its name from an after-victory obtained, when Samuel set up a stone between Mizpeh and Shen, and called it by this name, ch. vii. 12. it signifies a stone of help: *and the Philistines pitched in Aphek*: a city in the tribe of Judah, bordering on the Philistines, Josh. xv. 53. see the note on Josh. xii. 18.

Ver. 2. *And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel*, &c.] Prepared for battle, and put themselves in a posture for it; formed themselves in a line of battle, and so invited and challenged the Israelites to fight them: *and when they joined battle*; engaged with each other, the Israelites doing the same, putting themselves in a proper form and posture for fighting; or *the battle was spread*, or *spread itself*[b]; that is, as the Targum, they that made war were spread; the soldiers were placed in order for battle, to the right and left, which took up on both sides a large space; though Abarbinel understands this in a very different sense, and takes the word to have the same signification as in Psal. lxxviii. 60. where it has the sense of forsaking; and so here the Israelites forsook the battle, and fled, which brought on their destruction, flight being, as the Jews say[c], the beginning of fall or ruin, as it follows: *Israel was smitten before the Philistines*; they had the worst of it and were beaten: *and they slew of the army in the field about* 4,000 *men*; so many fell upon the spot, in the field.

[z] נאמן fidelis, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.
[a] לקראת in occursum, Pagninus, Montanus.
[b] ותטש המלחמה & diffusum est prælium, Pagninus, Montanus, Drusius.
[c] Misn. Sotah, c. 8. sect. 6.

Ver. 3. *And when the people came into the camp*, &c.] At Eben-ezer, where they pitched their tents, and from whence they went out to battle, and whither they returned after their defeat: *the elders of Israel said, wherefore hath the Lord smitten us to-day before the Philistines?* they were right in ascribing it to the Lord, who had suffered them to be defeated by their enemies, but it is strange they should be so insensible of the cause of it; there was a reason ready at hand, their sins and iniquities were the cause of it, the corruption of manners among them, their neglect of bringing their offerings to the Lord, and the idolatry that many of them were guilty of, at least secretly, ch. ii. 24. and vii. 3. to punish them for which, they were brought into this war, and smitten in it; and yet they wonder at it, that so it should be, that they the people of God should be smitten before Heathens and uncircumcised Philistines; and the rather, since they went to battle with them according to the word of the Lord by Samuel; not considering that they went into this war without humiliation for their sins, and without praying to God for success, and that it was intended as a correction of them for their offences against God: *let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of Shiloh unto us*: in which the law was, sometimes called the covenant between God and them; and which was a symbol of the divine Presence, for want of which they supposed they had not the presence of God with them, and so had not success; and the rather they were encouraged to take this step and method, because that formerly Israel had success against their enemies when the ark was with them, Numb. xxxi. 6. Josh. vi. 6. though no doubt in this there was an overruling providence of God, by which they were led to take such a step as this, in order to bring the two sons of Eli into the camp, that they might be slain in one day, according to the divine prediction: *that when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies*: foolishly placing their confidence in an external symbol, and not in the Lord himself; ascribing salvation to that, which only belongs to him, whether of a temporal or spiritual kind: and such folly and vanity are men guilty of when they seek to, make use of, and trust in any thing short of Christ for salvation; as in carnal descent; in the rituals of the law; in the ordinances of the Gospel; in any religious exercises, private or public; or in any works of righteousness done by them: in Christ alone is salvation from spiritual enemies; and indeed from the Lord only is salvation and deliverance from temporal enemies.

Ver. 4. *So the people sent to Shiloh*, &c.] They liked the proposal of the elders, took their advice, and joined with them in a message to Eli the high-priest at Shiloh: *that they might bring from thence the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts*, which *dwelleth between the cherubim*: which overshadowed the mercy-seat that was upon the ark, and was the residence of the divine Majesty: wherefore having this with them, they concluded they should have the presence of God with them, and so success, see Psal. lxxx. 1. and xcix. 1. *and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas*, were *there with the ark of the covenant of God*; these, either with or without the leave of Eli, took the ark out of the tabernacle, and carried it on their shoulders to the camp, or however attended it there, being borne by other priests or Levites; and by this means they were brought into the camp, and so to battle, to meet their doom there; according to Bunting[a], it was carried by them 42 miles.

Ver. 5. *And when the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp*, &c.] Being brought thither by the men that carried it: *all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again*; this they did as now sure of victory, because of the ark, and to give spirit and courage to each other to go forth to battle, and to strike a panic into their enemies.

Ver. 6. *And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout*, &c.] For it being so loud as to make the earth ring, it was heard in the camp of the Philistines, which might not be at any great distance from the camp of Israel; how far from each other were Aphek and Eben-ezer is not certain; *they said, what meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?* they could not conceive what should be the reason of it, seeing they had no occasion to shout for joy, having been lately defeated; and a shout is made generally just before a battle is begun, and the onset made, or when victory is obtained; neither of which was the case now: *and they understood that the ark of the Lord was come into the camp*: this they understood by spies, which they sent to find out the meaning of the shout; which is more propable than that they came to the knowledge of it by deserters; seeing it is not very likely that any Israelites would desert to the Philistines.

Ver. 7. *And the Philistines were afraid*, &c.] When the spies returned, and reported to them the reason of the shouting: *for they said, God is come into the camp*: into the camp of Israel, because the ark represented him, and was the symbol of his presence; and these Heathens might take the ark itself for an idol of the Israelites; the Targum is, "the ark of God is come:" *and they said, woe unto us*: it is all over with us, destruction and ruin will be our case, victory will go on their side now their God is among them: *for there hath not been such a thing heretofore*: if by this they meant that the ark had never been in the camp of Israel before, they were mistaken; and it is no great wonder they should, being not so well acquainted with the affairs of Israel, and their customs; or rather, it was not so yesterday, or three days ago, when they were defeated; there was no shouting then: or the state of the war is altered; before we fought with the men of Israel, but now we must fight with the God of Israel also.

Ver. 8. *Woe unto us, who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty gods?* &c.] Of whom they spake in an ironical and sneering manner; or if seriously and through fear, they use their own Heathenish language, as if the Israelites had many gods, as they had, though mightier than theirs; though the Syriac and Arabic versions read in the singular, out of the hand of God, or the most strong God; and so the Targum, out of the hand of the Word of the Lord: *these are the gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wil-*

[a] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 123.

derness: the ten plagues were inflicted on the Egyptians in the land of Egypt, and not in the wilderness; wherefore the Philistines may be supposed to be mistaken in this circumstance; which is not to be wondered at, since many historians who have written of the affairs of the Jews have been mistaken in them, as Justin, Tacitus, and others; nay, even Josephus himself in some things: but perhaps respect is had to the drowning of Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea, which had the wilderness of Etham on both sides of it; and this stroke was the finishing one of the plagues on the Egyptians. R. Joseph Kimchi supposes the word for wilderness has the signification of speech, as in Cant. iv. 3. and that the sense of the Philistines is, that God smote the Egyptians with all the plagues he did by his word, his orders, and commands; but now he was come in person, and would smite them by himself; this sense Abarbinel calls a beautiful one.

Ver. 9. *Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines*, &c.] Since this was all they had to depend upon, their manly courage; if they did not exert that it was all over with them; and seeing their case was desperate, having gods as well as men to fight with, it became them to exert themselves to the uttermost; which did they, there was a possibility still of gaining victory, and so immortal honour to themselves; these words seem to be spoken by the generals and officers of the army of the Philistines to the common soldiers: *that ye be not servants to the Hebrews, as they have been to you*: that is, before and in the times of Samson; but it appears from hence that at this time neither the Philistines ruled over the Israelites, nor the Israelites over them; but as there was danger of their becoming subject to Israel, they had better die gloriously in the field of battle than to be in the base state of servitude: *quit yourselves like men, and fight*; this is repeated to animate them to battle, which they supposed was not far off by the shoutings of the Israelites, and which they must prepare for.

Ver. 10. *And the Philistines fought*, &c.] With great ardour and spirit, quitted themselves like men of valour and courage, their case being desperate as they imagined, since God was in the camp of Israel: *and Israel was smitten*: were routed and beaten: *and they fled every man into his tent*; such of them as escaped the sword of the Philistines fled to their own houses in the several cities from whence they came; so the Targum, "every man to his city;" so that their army was quite broken up: *and there was a very great slaughter*, far greater than in the first battle: *for there fell of Israel 30,000 footmen*; their army chiefly, if not altogether, consisting of footmen, there being few horses in Israel; and if any cavalry now, these may be supposed to flee; before they lost only 4,000, now 30,000; so that the ark was no security to them, which was suffered, to shew their vain trust and confidence in it.

Ver. 11. *And the ark of God was taken*, &c.] By the Philistines; which was suffered partly as a punishment to the Israelites, for fetching it from the tabernacle without the will of God, and for their vain confidence in it; and partly that the Philistines might have an experiment of the power and might of God, as Procopius Gazæus observes, by what they would suffer through having it among them; some have thought that this was an emblem of Christ being delivered into the hands of the Gentiles, and of the Gospel being translated from the Jews to them: *and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain*; which fulfilled the prophecy of the man of God, that they should both die in one day, ch. ii. 34. It is very probable they stood fast by the ark, and chose rather to die than to give it up freely; having received a charge from their father, that if the ark was taken, not to desire life, nor ever dare to come into his presence more, as Josephus[a] relates.

Ver. 12. *And there ran a man of Benjamin out of the army*, &c.] Out of the rank in which he was, before the whole army was quite broken up. This was a young man, as Josephus[b] says, which is highly probable; though not at all to be depended on is what the Jews[c] say, that this was Saul, after king of Israel: *and came to Shiloh the same day*; which, according to Bunting[d], was 42 miles from Eben-ezer, near to which the battle was fought; and that it was a long way is pretty plain by the remark made, that this messenger came the same day the battle was fought; though not at such a distance as some Jewish writers say, some 60, some 120 miles[e]; which is not at all probable: *with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head*: which were both tokens of distress and mourning, and shewed that he was a messenger of bad tidings from the army; see the note on Josh. vii. 6.

Ver. 13. *And when he came*, &c.] To Shiloh; he either passed by Eli, who being blind could not see him, ver. 15. or he came in at another gate of the city on the other side of it, as Abarbinel thinks; though the former seems more likely by what follows, he not choosing to deliver the bad news to Eli first, whom he knew it would very much grive, and therefore slipped by him into the city: *lo, Eli sat upon a seat by the way-side watching*: by the *hand* of the way, as the marginal reading, and which we follow; it seems to be a place where two ways or more met, and where was a way-post erected, with an hand directing what places they led to. The text is, *he*, or *it smote*, as if his heart smote him for letting the ark go; so Kimchi[f]; here Eli had a seat placed, which, as the Targum says, was at the ascent of the way to the gate; and so the Septuagint has it, at the gate; and Josephus[g] says it was at one of the gates; either of his own house, or of the tabernacle, or rather of the city; here he was watching for news, to hear what he could, and as soon as he could, how it fared with the army, with his sons, and especially with the ark; *for his heart trembled for the ark of God*; not so much for his sons, whose death he might expect from the divine prediction, but for the ark, about which he was doubtful; fearing lest it should fall into the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, who would triumph upon it, and which

[a] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 11. sect. 2.
[b] Ibid. sect. 3.
[c] Shalshalet Hakabala. fol. 8. 1. Jarchi in loc.
[d] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 122.
[e] Midrash Schemuel apud Abarbinel in loc.
[f] Vid. David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 47. 1.
[g] Ut supra.

would make sad the heart of every true Israelite, and reflect much dishonour on the God of Israel; and very probably he might tremble the more when he reflected on his own sin and folly in suffering his sons to take it with them. Eli here may represent a good man in pain for the church of God, and the interest of religion in declining times, both with respect to ministers of the word, and members of churches: as when Gospel ministers are removed by death, few raised up in their stead, and those that do appear in the ministry, either unregenerate, as it may be feared; or have not gifts and abilities qualifying them for it; or are of immoral lives and conversations, or propagate false doctrines, errors, and heresies: and also when among professors of religion and members of churches there is a great decay of powerful godliness; and they are got into a drowsy, sleepy, frame of spirit, are become lukewarm and indifferent to spiritual exercises, want zeal for the Gospel and cause of Christ; are careless about the honour and interest of religion, unstable and inconstant in doctrine and worship, and in their affections to one another, and the ministers of the word; and their converation not as becomes their profession: *and when the man came into the city, and told it;* how that the army of Israel was beaten, what a number of men was killed, among whom were the two sons of the high-priest, and the ark was taken: *all the city cried out;* that is, all the inhabitants of the city, having most of them perhaps relations and friends in the army, for whom they were concerned, fearing their lives were lost; but especially the loss of the ark was insupportable by them, it being of so much advantage to that city particularly, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual; wherefore, upon hearing this bad news, there was a general shriek and cry throughout the whole city.

Ver. 14. *And when Eli heard the noise of the crying,* &c.] The shrieks of the men and women, which were very clamorous and terrible. Eli had his hearing, though not his sight; he could not see the distress in their countenances, but he heard the lamentations they made: *and said,* what meaneth *the noise of this tumult?* it seems the people ran about, wringing their hands, and making doleful shrieks; the noise of which Eli heard, and the meaning of which he inquired after, or what should be the cause of it: *and the man came in hastily, and told Eli;* or made haste, and came to him, and related all that is after expressed; for Eli was not in any house, but on a seat by the way-side, and therefore could not be said to come *in* to him; but he came *to* him, where he was, being brought by some of the citizens Eli had inquired of what should be the meaning of this noise; and therefore without delay the man was hastened to give the whole account unto him, as it was highly proper he should, being the supreme magistrate.

Ver. 15. *Now Eli was 98 years old,* &c.] Which is very properly observed, he being now come to the end of his days, and which also accounts for his blindness after mentioned: *and his eyes were dim, that he could not see;* could not see the messenger, and read in his countenance, and perceive by his clothes rent, and earth on his head, that he was a bringer of bad tidings; or his eyes each of them *stood* [h]; were fixed and immovable, as the eyes of blind men be. In ch. iii. 2. it is said, *his eyes began to wax dim;* but here that they *were* become *dim;* and there might be some years between that time and this, for Samuel then was very young, but now more grown up; though Procopius Gazæus thinks that Eli was then 98 years of age, and that the affair there related was just before his death; but it rather appears to be some time before.

Ver. 16. *And the man said unto Eli, I am he that came out of the army,* &c.] It is very probable that the people Eli inquired of told him there was a messenger come from the army, though they did not choose to relate to him the news he brought: *and I fled to-day out of the army;* so that as he was an eye-witness of what was done in the army, the account he brought was the earliest that could be had, in bringing which he had made great dispatch, having ran perhaps all the way: *and he said, what is there done, my son?* has a battle been fought? on which side is the victory? is Israel beaten, or have they conquered? how do things go? he uses the kind and tender appellation, *my son,* to engage him to tell him all freely and openly.

Ver. 17. *And the messenger answered and said,* &c.] He delivered his account gradually, beginning with generals, and then proceeding to particulars, and with what he thought Eli could better bear the news of, and so prepared him for the worst; in which he acted a wise part: *Israel is fled before the Philistines;* they have given way and retreated, and which might possibly be done without great loss, and which, though it was bad news, might not be so very bad: *and there hath also been a great slaughter among the people:* this is worse news still; however, the number of the slain is not given, nor any mention of particular persons that were killed: so that, for any thing yet said, his own sons might be safe: but then it follows, *and thy two sons also, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead;* the news of which must be very affecting to him, and strike him closely; though he might expect and be prepared for it by what both the man of God and Samuel from the Lord had related to him: *and the ark of God is taken;* the thing he feared, and his heart trembled before for it; this was the closing and cutting part of the account; the messenger foresaw that this would the most affect him, and therefore referred it to the last.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, when he made mention of the ark of God,* &c.] Of the taking of that, it struck him to the heart, and killed him; the rest he bore tolerably well, the flight of Israel before the Philistines, the great slaughter made of them, the death of his two sons; but the taking of the ark was so dreadful to him, that he could not support under it: *that he fell from off the seat backward, by the side of the gate;* which confirms the sense of ver. 13. though whether it was the gate of his own house, or of the tabernacle, or of the city, is not certain; the latter is most probable: it seems the seat on which he sat had no back to it, and might be placed only for present convenience: *and his neck brake;* the back part of it, the *vertebræ* of it, which has its name in Hebrew from the several joints in it: *and he died;* not through the breaking of his neck,

[h] קמה *stetit,* Montanus; *stabant,* Tigurine version.

for it is very probable he died directly upon hearing the ark was taken, and which was the reason of his falling backward, and that brake his neck: *for he was an old man, and heavy;* full of flesh, a very fat man, and so fell heavy, which occasioned the breaking of his neck: *and he had judged Israel 40 years;* had governed them in the capacity both of an high-priest and judge, so that he must enter on his government when 58 years of age; the Septuagint version has it very wrongly 20 years. According to the Jews[i], he died on the 10th of Ijar, answering to part of April and May, and his two sons and the ark taken; for which a fast was kept on it.

Ver. 19. *And his daughter-in-law, Phinehas's wife, was with-child,* near *to be delivered,* &c.] Was near her time, as it is commonly expressed. Ben Gersom derives the word from a root which signifies to complete and finish[k]; denoting that her time to bring forth was completed and filled up; though Josephus[l] says that it was a seven-months' birth, so that she came two months before her time: the margin of our Bibles is, *to cry out*[m]; and so Moses Kimchi, as his brother relates, derives the word from a root which signifies to howl and lament, and so is expressive of a woman's crying out when her pains come upon her: *and when she heard the tidings that the ark of God was taken;* which is mentioned first, as being the most distressing to her: *and that her father-in-law and her husband were dead;* her father-in-law Eli is put first, being the high-priest of God, and so his death gave her the greatest concern, as the death of an high-priest was always matter of grief to the Israelites; and next the death of her husband, who should have succeeded him in the priesthood; for though he was a bad man, yet not so bad as Hophni, as Ben Gersom observes; and therefore the priesthood was continued in his line unto the reign of Solomon; and no notice is taken by her of the death of her brother-in-law: *she bowed herself, and travailed;* put herself in a posture for travailing; perceiving she was coming to it, she fell upon her knees, as the word used signifies; and we are told[n], that the Ethiopian women, when they bring forth, fall upon their knees, and bear their young, rarely making use of a midwife, and so it seems it was the way of the Hebrew women: *for her pains came upon her;* sooner it is very probable than otherwise they would, which is sometimes the case, when frights seize a person in such circumstances: or were *turned upon her*[o]; they ceased, so that she could not make the necessary evacuations after the birth, which issued in her death; some render it, *her doors were turned*[p], or changed; the doors of her womb, as in Job iii. 10. though these had been opened for the bringing forth of her child, yet were reversed, changed, and altered, so as to prevent the after-birth coming away, which caused her death, as follows.

Ver. 20. *And about the time of her death,* &c.] Which quickly came on after she was brought-to-bed: *the women that stood by her;* who were called to her labour, and assisted at it: *said unto her, fear not, for thou hast born a son;* perceiving that she was very low-spirited, endeavoured to cheer and comfort her, by observing to her that the worst was over; and besides she had brought forth a man-child, which was usually matter of joy to a family, and particularly to the woman that bears it, which causes her to forget the sorrows and pains she has gone through in bearing it, John xvi. 21. *but she answered not, neither did she regard it;* said not one word in answer to them, nor was the least affected with joy and pleasure at what they related to her; being not only a dying woman, on the borders of another world, and so had no relish for temporal enjoyments, but also overpressed with grief with what had happened, not only to her family, but more especially to the ark of God.

Ver. 21. *And she named the child Ichabod,* &c.] Which some render, *where is the glory?* as in the margin of our Bibles; but it signifies *no glory,* as Jarchi and Kimchi interpret it; her husband being dead, she gives her child its name; the reason for which name follows: *saying, the glory is departed from Israel;* the God of glory, or the glorious Lord, was departed from Israel; the ark, the symbol of his presence, being taken from them, and carried captive by the enemy; see Psal. lxxviii. 61. *because the ark of God was taken, and because of her father-in-law, and her husband;* who were dead; these are the words either of the writer of this book, or, as Abarbinel thinks, of the women that assisted at her labour; who interpreted the name of the child, and suggested what were her intentions in giving this name, which she had only expressed in general terms; the particulars of which they thought fit to give, agreeably to her meaning, as they supposed; which were the taking of the ark, and the death of her father-in-law, and of her husband; but according to the same writer she before her death corrected the sense they put upon her intention in thus naming the child; shewing that it was not on the account of the death of her father and husband that she supposed the glory to be departed, and therefore named her child Ichabod: but solely and alone because the ark was taken, as in the next verse.

Ver. 22. *And she said,* &c.] Repeating what she had said before, for the confirmation of it, or as correcting what the women had said; and so may be rendered, *but she said;* giving her own and only reason for the name of the child: *the glory is departed from Israel, for the ark of God is taken;* so when the word, worship, and ordinances of God are removed from a people, the glory is gone from them; the God of glory is no more seen among them, who is so glorious in his nature, perfections, and works; and Christ, the Lord of life and glory, is no more held forth unto them in the glories of his person, offices, and grace; and the glorious Gospel of Christ is no more preached unto them, so full of glorious doctrines and promises; and the glorious ordinances of it no more administered: and, when this is the case, the glory is departed from a people; and which is owing to

[i] Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.
[k] כלה absolvere, consummare, perficere, Buxtorf.
[l] Ut supra, sect. 4.
[m] ללה ad ululandum, Montanus; so some in Munster; ad ejulandum, as some in Vatablus.
[n] Ludolph. Hist. Æthiop. l. 1. c. 1*.
[o] נהפכו versæ erant, Pagninus, Montanus.
[p] Quoniam inversi sunt super eam cardines ejus, Munster; so Jarchi; Vid. T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 45. 1.

their formality, lukewarmness, unfruitfulness, negligent attendance on the worship of God, contempt of the word and ordinances, and an unbecoming walk and conversation.

CHAP. V.

THIS chapter relates how that the ark being brought by the Philistines to Ashdod, and placed in the temple of their idol, that fell down before it, ver. 1—5. that the hand of the Lord was upon the men of Ashdod, and smote them with emerods, ver. 6, 7. and being carried to Gath, the men of Gath were smitten likewise with the same, ver. 8, 9. and after that the men of Ekron, whither it also was carried, ver. 10, 11, 12.

Ver. 1. *And the Philistines took the ark of God*, &c.] Which fell into their hands, Israel being beaten, and caused to flee, and the priests that had the care of the ark slain; and when possessed of it, they did not destroy it, nor take out of it what was in it, only took it up: *and brought it from Eben-ezer unto Ashdod*. Eben-ezer was the place where the camp of Israel was pitched, ch. iv. 1. and near to which the battle was fought. Ashdod was one of the five principalities of the Philistines, the same with Azotus, Acts viii. 40. The distance between these two places, according to Bunting[t], was 160 miles; though one would think the distance from each other was not so great: why it was carried to Ashdod is not plain; perhaps it might be the nearest place of note in their country; and certain it is that it was one of their most famous cities, if not the most famous; see the note on Isa. xx. 1. and had a famous idol-temple in it.

Ver. 2. *When the Philistines took the ark of God*, &c.] And had brought it to Ashdod: *they brought it into the house of Dagon*; a temple dedicated to that idol, and in which his image stood; of which see the note on Judg. xvi. 23. *and set it by Dagon*; by the side of him, either in honour to the ark, as Abarbinel, designing to give it homage and adoration, as to their own deity; for though the Gentiles did not choose to change their gods, yet they would add the gods of other nations to them; and such the Philistines might take the ark to be: or else, as Procopius Gazæus, they brought it into their idol's temple, as a trophy of victory, and as a spoil taken from their enemies, and which they dedicated to their idol. Laniado[r] observes, that the word here used signifies servitude, as in Gen. xxxiii. 15. and that the ark was set here to minister to, or serve their god Dagon. The temple of Dagon at Ashdod or Azotus was in being in the times of the Maccabees, and was burnt by Jonathan, 1 Maccab. x. 83, 84.

Ver. 3. *And when they of Ashdod arose early on the morrow*, &c.] Either the people, the inhabitants of the place, who came early to pay their devotions to their idol, before they went on their business; or the priests of the idol, who came to sacrifice in the morning: *and, behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the earth before the ark of the Lord*; as if he was subject to it, and giving adoration to it, and owning it was above him, and had superior power over him: *and they took Dagon, and set him in his place again*; having no notion that it was owing to the ark of God, or to the God of Israel, that he was fallen, but that it was a matter of chance.

Ver. 4. *And when they arose early on the morrow morning*, &c.] For the same purpose as before; unless they had any curiosity to indulge, to see whether the ark and Dagon agreed better together, if they had any suspicion that the former mischance was to be attributed to some variance and disagreement between them: *behold, Dagon was fallen upon his face to the ground before the ark of the Lord*; again, and in a worse condition than before: *and the head of Dagon, and both the palms of his hands, were cut off upon the threshold*; of the temple, upon which he fell with such force, that the threshold cut off his head, and both his hands; which signified he had neither wisdom to contrive for his own safety, nor strength and power to defend himself; and therefore of what advantage could he be to his votaries? This may be an emblem of the fall of idolatry in the Gentile world, before the preaching of Christ and his Gospel in it; or of the idol of man's righteousness, which is set up, though it cannot stand, against the righteousness of Christ, and of man's renouncing that, when convinced of the weakness and insufficiency of it, and submitting to the righteousness of Christ: *only the stump of Dagon was left to him*; his body, as the Targum, his head and hands being cut off; or, as it is in the Hebrew text, only Dagon was left: that is, the fishy part of this idol; for *Dag* signifies a fish; and, as Kimchi relates, this idol, from the navel upwards, had the form of a man, and from thence downwards the form of a fish: and it was the lower part that was left; see the note on Judg. xvi. 23.

Ver. 5. *Therefore neither the priests of Dagon, nor any that come into Dagon's house*, &c.] Neither the priests that continually attended the worship and service of Dagon, nor the people that came there to pay their devotions to him: *tread on the threshold of Dagon in Ashdod unto this day*; but used to leap over it, either reckoning it sacred because touched by their idol, which fell upon it; or rather, as it should seem, in a way of detestation, because it had been the means of cutting off the head and hands of their idol: and this custom not only continued to the latter days of Samuel, the writer of this book; but even among the Philistines in one place or another to the times of Zephaniah, who seems to allude to it, ch. i. 9. In after-times there was another deity worshipped at Ashdod; according to Masius[s], the Philistine Venus, or Astarte, was worshipped in this place; though perhaps she may

[t] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 122.
[r] Cli Yaker, fol. 108. 4.

[s] Comment. in Jos. xv. 47.

be no other than Atergatis, or Adergatis, which with Selden [t] is only a corruption of Addir-dag, the magnificent fish, in which form Dagon is supposed to be; so the Phœnician goddess Derceto, worshipped at Ascalon, had the face of a woman, and the other part was all fish; though Ben Gersom says Dagon was in the form of a man, and which is confirmed by the Complutensian edition of the Septuagint, which on ver. 4 reads, *the soles of his feet were cut off*; which is a much better reading than the common one, *the soles of his hands*, which is not sense; by which it appears that he had head, hands, and feet; wherefore it seems most likely that he had his name from Dagon, signifying corn: see the note on Judg. xvi. 23.

Ver. 6. *But the hand of the Lord was heavy on them of Ashdod*, &c.] Not only on their idol, but on themselves; it had crushed him to pieces, and now it fell heavy on them to their destruction: *and he destroyed them*: either by the disease after mentioned they were smitten with, or rather with some other, since that seems not to be mortal, though painful: it may be with the pestilence: *and smote them with emerods*: more properly hemorrhoids, which, as Kimchi says, was the name of a disease, but he says not what; Ben Gersom calls it a very painful disease, from whence comes a great quantity of blood. Josephus [u] takes it to be the dysentery or bloody flux; it seems to be what we commonly call the piles, and has its name in Hebrew from the height of them, rising up sometimes into high large tumours: even *Ashdod and the coasts thereof*; not only the inhabitants of the city were afflicted with this disease, but those of the villages round about.

Ver. 7. *And when the men of Ashdod saw that it was so*, &c.] That many of their inhabitants were taken away by death, and others afflicted with a painful disease; all which they imputed to the ark being among them: *they said, the ark of the God of Israel shall not abide with us*: like the Gergasenes, who besought Christ to depart their coasts, having more regard for their swine than for him: *for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our god*: not the hand of the ark, unless they took it for a god, but the hand of the God of Israel; in this they were right, and seem to have understood the case better than the other lords they after consulted; his hand was upon Dagon, as appeared by his fall before the ark, and upon them by smiting them with the hemorrhoids, the memory of which abode with the Philistines for ages afterwards; for we are told [w], that the Scythians, having plundered the temple of Venus at Ascalon, one of their five principalities, the goddess inflicted upon them the female disease, or the hemorrhoids; which shews that it was thought to be a disease inflicted by way of punishment for sacrilege, and that it was still remembered what the Philistines suffered for a crime of the like nature.

Ver. 8. *They sent therefore and gathered all the lords of the Philistines unto them*, &c.] The other four lords, for there were five with this; see Josh. xiii. 3. *and said, what shall we do with the ark of the God of Israel?* they no doubt told them what they and their idol had suffered on account of it, and the resolution they were come to that it should be no longer with them; and therefore desire to know what must be done with it, whether they should return it to the people of Israel, or dispose of it somewhere else; it is probable some might be for the former, but the greater part were not, and were for keeping it in their possession somewhere or another: *and they answered, let the ark of the God of Israel be carried about unto Gath*: which was another of the five principalities of the Philistines, and not far from Ashdod; according to Jerom [x], it is included in the remnant of Ashdod, Jer. xxv. 20. and according to Bunting [y] but four miles from it. The Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions make this to be the answer of the men of Gath, the one reading it, "and they of Gath said, let the ark of God come to "us;" and the other, "they of Gath answered, let "the ark of the God of Israel be carried about;" for they suspected, as Procopius Gazæus observes, that the destruction did not come from God, but was a disease arising from some pestilential cause. They perhaps imagined it was in the air in and about Ashdod, or that though the situation of the ark was not liked, in another place it might be otherwise, and more agreeable: *and they carried the ark of the God of Israel about* thither; they seem not to carry it directly to the place, but carried it in a round-about way, as if they had a mind to give it an airing, before they fixed it any where.

Ver. 9. *And it was so, that after they had carried it about*, &c.] And at last placed it in the city of Gath; *the hand of the Lord was against the city with a very great destruction*; greater than that at Ashdod, more persons were destroyed; the distemper sent among them was more epidemical and mortal: *and he smote the men of the city, both small and great*; high and low, persons of every class, rank, and station, young and old, men, women, and children: *and they had emerods in their secret parts*; and so had the men of Ashdod; and the design of this expression is, not to point at the place where they were, which it is well known they are always in those parts, but the different nature of them; the emerods or piles of the men of Ashdod were more outward, these more inward, and so more painful, and not so easy to come at, and more difficult of cure; for the words may be rendered, *and the emerods were hidden unto them* [z]; were inward, and out of sight; and perhaps this disease as inflicted on them might be more grievous than it commonly is now. Josephus [a] wrongly makes these to be the Ascalonites, when they were the men of Gath.

Ver. 10. *Therefore they sent the ark of God to Ekron*, &c.] Another of the five principalities of the Philistines, about 10 miles from Gath, where Baal-zebub, or the god of the fly, was worshipped: *and it came to pass, that as the ark of God came to Ekron*: and had been there some little time: *that the Ekronites cried out*: when they perceived the hand of God was upon them, as upon the other cities; these were the chief

[t] De Dis. Syr. Syntagm. 1. 2. c. 3. p. 267.
[u] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 1.
[w] Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 105.
[x] Comment. in Hierem. c. 25. fol. 151. B.
[y] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 123.
[z] ויסתרו להם עפלים et absconditi erant, Montanus; so Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius.
[a] Ut supra.

magistrates of the city, with the lord of them, as appears by what follows: *saying, they have brought about the ark of the God of Israel to us;* from one city to another, and at length to us: *to slay us and our people;* not that this was their intention, but so it was eventually.

Ver. 11. *So they sent and gathered together all the lords of the Philistines,* &c.] As the men of Ashdod had done before on the same account, ver. 8. *and said, send away the ark of the God of Israel;* as these lords were united in their government, and made one common cause of it against Israel, one could not dispose of this capture without the consent of the rest; otherwise the lord of Ekron, with his princes, were clearly in it that it was right and best to send it away out of any of their principalities; *and let it go again to its own place;* to the land of Israel and Shiloh there, though to that it never returned more: *that it slay us not, and our people;* that is, all of them, for great numbers had been slain already, as follows: *for there was a deadly destruction throughout all the city;* a mortal disease went through the whole city, and swept away a multitude of people: *the hand of God was very heavy there;* it seems by the expression to have been heavier on the inhabitants of this city than upon those of Ashdod and Gath, which made them the more pressing to get rid of the ark.

Ver. 12. *And the men that died not were smitten with the emerods,* &c.] As the inhabitants of Ashdod and Gath had been; this shews that those that died did not die of that disease, but of some other; very likely the pestilence: *and the cry of the city went up to heaven;* not that it was heard and regarded there, but the phrase is used to denote the greatness of it, how exceeding loud and clamorous it was; partly on the account of the death of so many of the inhabitants, their relations and friends; and partly because of the intolerable pain they endured through the emerods. There is something of this history preserved in a story wrongly told by Herodotus[b], who relates that the Scythians returning from Egypt passed through Ascalon, a city of Syria (one of the five principalities of the Philistines), and that some of them robbed the temple of Venus there; for which the goddess sent on them and their posterity the disease of emerods, and that the Scythians themselves acknowledged that they were troubled with it on that account.

CHAP. VI.

In this chapter we are told the Philistines advised with their priests what to do with the ark, and wherewith to send it home, ver. 1, 2. whose advice was to send with it a trespass-offering, golden images of emerods and mice, and to put it on a new cart, and the images in a coffer on the side of the ark, and draw it with two milch-kine, ver. 3—8. and gave them a token whereby they might know whether they had been smitten by the God of Israel or not, ver. 9. which advice they took, and acted in all things according to it; and the lords of the Philistines accompanied the ark to the border of Beth-shemesh, ver. 10, 11, 12. where they of Beth-shemesh received it with joy, and offered the kine for a burnt-offering to the Lord, and the Levites took care of the ark and presents in it, and the lords of the Philistines returned home, ver. 13—18. but they of Beth-shemesh looking into the ark were smitten of God, upon which they sent to the men of Kirjath-jearim to fetch it from them, ver. 19, 20, 21.

Ver. 1. *And the ark of the Lord was in the country of the Philistines 7 months.*] Or *in the field*[c] of the Philistines; hence Procopius Gazæus observes, that none of the cities daring to receive the ark, they left it without under the open air, so thinking they should be delivered from their calamity. But the word is often used for country, and is generally so understood here; the Targum is, "in the cities of the Philistines;" in one or other of them, first for a while in Ashdod, and then for some time in Gath, and last in Ekron, and in all 7 months from the time of its being taken; and it being in wheat-harvest when it was returned, ver. 13. these seven months will carry us back to the beginning of winter, or towards the end of autumn, when the battles between Israel and the Philistines were fought, and the ark was taken. Josephus[d] says it was with the Philistines four months only, contrary to the text.

Ver. 2. *And the Philistines called for the priests and for the diviners,* &c.] The one were skilled in the rites and ceremonies of religion, not only of their own, but of other nations, particularly of Israel; and that they were not strangers to the history and affairs of that people is plain from ver. 6. and the other were skilled in judicial astrology, and knowledge of future events, at least as they pretended to; and therefore were both thought fit persons to advise with on the occasion of the ark, and the circumstances they were in through that: *saying, what shall we do to the ark of the Lord?* shall we send it back to its own land, or not? the Ekronites had moved it might be sent back, and the five lords sent for the priests and diviners to have their advice upon it, whether it was right or no, and what they should do to it, or with it; for if it was advisable to send it back, then another question follows: *tell us wherewith we shall send it to his place;* whether on men's shoulders, or on horses or asses, or on a carriage; and whether just as it was taken, or with some presents with it.

Ver. 3. *And they said, if ye send away the ark of the God of Israel, send it not empty,* &c.] As they perceived they had either resolved upon, or at least were inclined to do; and which they also thought advisable, and therefore would have them by no means send it away as it was, but with some presents along with it; for the meaning of this word *empty* is not that they should take care that all that were in it when taken

[b] Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 105.

[c] בשדה ἐν ἀγρῷ, Sept. in agro, Pagninus, Montanus.

[d] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 4.

should go with it, and nothing be taken out of it, or it be stripped of its contents; but that some gifts and offerings should be sent along with it: perhaps they might have some notion of, or respect unto a law in Israel, Exod. xxiii. 15. or might say this from a common principle received among Heathens, that deities were to be appeased by gifts[e]: *but in any wise return him a trespass-offering;* here again they seem to have some notion of the sorts and kinds of sacrifice among the Israelites; and advise to a trespass-offering, to make satisfaction and atonement for the offence they had committed in taking away the ark; and that they should make restoration not only by returning the ark, but by sending an expiatory offering along with it: *then ye shall be healed;* of the disease with which they were smitten; for it seems it still continued on them, at least on many: *and it shall be known to you why his hand is not removed from you;* which was because the ark was detained by them; but when that should be sent home, and they be healed upon it, then it would be a plain case that the reason why the disease was inflicted and continued was because of that.

Ver. 4. *Then said they, what* shall be *the trespass-offering which we shall return to him?* &c.] They paid a great deference to their priests and diviners, and were willing to be directed in all things by them; being ignorant of what was most proper in this case, and might be acceptable to the God of Israel: *they answered, five golden emerods, and five golden mice;* images of these made of gold, as appears from the next verse; the reason of the former is easy, from the above account of the disease they were afflicted with; but of the latter no hint is given before: indeed in the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions of ch. v. 6. is inserted a clause, that "mice sprung up in the midst of "their country;" which is not in the Hebrew text, nor in the Chaldee paraphrase; yet appears to be a fact from the following verse, that at the same time their bodies were smitten with emerods, their fields were overrun with mice, which destroyed the increase of them; wherefore five golden mice were also ordered as a part of the trespass-offering, and five of each were pitched upon: according to *the number of the lords of the Philistines;* who were five, and so the principalities under them; see Josh. xiii. 3. *for one plague was on you all, and on your lords;* the lords and common people were equally smitten with the emerods, and the several principalities were alike distressed and destroyed with the mice; and therefore the trespass-offering, which was a vicarious one for them, was to be according to the number of their princes and their principalities; five emerods for the five princes and their people smitten with emerods, and five mice on account of the five cities and fields adjacent being marred by mice.

Ver. 5. *Wherefore ye shall make images of your emerods,* &c.] Which some take to be images of the five cities; others of a man at large with the disease in his back parts; others of that part of the body of a man only, in a circular form, in which the disease was, and expressing that; but the text is plain for the disease only, as high large tumours: though Maimonides[f] says of these images, that the word is attributed to them, not because of their external form, but because of their spiritual virtue and influence; whereby the damage or disease of the emerods in the hinder parts were removed: he seems to take them to be a sort of talismans, which were images of a disease or noxious creature a country was infected with, made under some celestial influence to remove it; and Tavernier[g] relates, as Bishop Patrick observes, that it is a practice with the Indians to this day, that when any pilgrim goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality, which he offers to his god. There is a tradition among the Heathens, which seems to be borrowed from this history, and serves to establish the credit of it; the Athenians not receiving Bacchus and his rites with due honour, he was angry with them, and smote them with a disease in their private parts, which was incurable; on which they consulted the oracle, which advised them in order to be rid of the disease to receive the god with all honour and respect; which order the Athenians obeyed, and made images of the several parts, privately and publicly, and with these honoured the god in memory of the disease[h]: both the disease and cure are here plainly pointed at: *and images of your mice that mar the land;* that devoured the fruits of it, as these creatures in many instances have been known to do; and particularly in Palestine, the country of the Philistines, where in some places their fields were sometimes almost deserted because of the abundance of them; and were it not for a sort of birds that devoured them, the inhabitants could not sow their seed[i]: the Bœotians sacrificed to Apollo Pornopion (which signifies a mouse), to save their country from them[k]: Aristotle[l] reports of field-mice, that they sometimes increase to such incredible numbers, that scarce any of the corn of the field is left by them; and so soon consumed, that some husbandmen, having appointed their labourers to cut down their corn on one day, coming to it the next day, in order to cut it down, have found it all consumed; Pliny[m] speaks of field-mice destroying the harvest; Ælianus[n] relates such an incursion of field-mice into some parts of Italy, as obliged the inhabitants to leave the country, and which destroyed the corn-fields and plants, as if they had been consumed by heat or cold, or any unseasonable weather; and not only seeds were gnawn, but roots cut up; so the Abderites[o] were obliged to quit their country because of mice and frogs: *and ye shall give glory to the God of Israel;* by sending these images as monuments of their shameful and painful disease, and of the ruin of their fields; owning that it was the hand of the Lord that smote their bodies with emerods, and filled their fields with mice which de-

[e] Munera crede mihi, &c. Ovid. de arte amandi, l. 3.
[f] Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 1.
[g] Travels, p. 92.
[h] Scholia in Aristoph. Acharnen. Act ii. Scen. 1. p. 323, 324. Edit. Gener. 1607.
[i] Magini Geograph. par. 2. fol. 241.
[k] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 13.
[l] Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 37. —— sæpe exiguus mus, &c. Virgil. Georg. l. 1. v. 181, 182.
[m] Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 65.
[n] De Animal. l. 17. c. 41.
[o] Justin. l. 15. c. 2.

voured them; seeking and asking pardon of him by the trespass-offering they sent him: *peradventure he will lighten his hand from you:* abate the violence of the disease, and at length entirely remove it: *and from off your gods:* not Dagon only, but others seem to have suffered, wherever the ark came: for the Philistines had other deities; besides Dagon at Ashdod, there were Baal-zebub at Ekron, and Marnas at Gaza, and Derceto at Ascalon; and perhaps another at Gath, though unknown; and besides the gods suffered, or however their priests, by the number of men that died, and by the fruits of the earth being destroyed; which must in course lessen their revenues: *and from off your land;* the fruits of which were destroyed by mice.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?* &c.] And would not let Israel go, when their dismission was demanded by Moses and Aaron in the name of the Lord; but was refused from time to time, being given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart: and it seems by this, that though it was proposed by some to send back the ark, and which the priests and diviners approved of; yet there were some that were against it, who, notwithstanding the plagues inflicted on them, like Pharaoh and the Egyptians hardened their hearts; which story these priests were acquainted with by the tradition of their ancestors, this being a fact then generally known in the world; or by the relation of the Israelites, over whom they had ruled many years, and were conversant with them: *when he had wrought wonderfully among them;* that is, the God of Israel, though they mention not his name, who had wrought wonders in the land of Egypt; the ten plagues he inflicted on them are referred to: *did they not let the people go, and they departed?* who were convinced by these plagues that they ought to let Israel go, and by them were prevailed upon to dismiss them, and the people did go out of their land; and therefore should not we let the ark go likewise, on whom plagues have been inflicted for detaining it? and may we not expect more and greater, should we refuse to dismiss it?

Ver. 7. *Now therefore make a new cart,* &c.] For there were no Levites, nor priests of the Lord to carry it upon their shoulders, as it was wont to be when carried, and therefore they ordered a cart to be made; and they might know the Levites were allowed waggons to carry some of their sacred things on, Numb. vii. and a new one for the honour of the ark, as David afterwards did, 2 Sam. v. 3. *and take two milch-kine, on which there hath come no yoke;* which also might be designed for the honour of the ark; but there was a further view in it, at least in the providence of God; since two such creatures, who had young, would be apt, if left to themselves, as these were, to return home to them, and not to proceed on a journey; and being unaccustomed to a yoke, would draw one one way, and another another, in different ways; and not go on in a direct road, as such that are used to the yoke do: *and tie the kine to the cart;* in order to draw it: *and bring their calves home from them;* that they might not cry after them, which would cause them to turn back.

Ver. 8. *And take the ark of the Lord, and lay it upon the cart,* &c.] Which was dispensed with in these uncircumcised Philistines, there being no other to do this service: *and put the jewels of gold;* or rather *vessels of gold*[p]; the five golden emerods, and the five golden mice: *which ye return him for a trespass-offering, in a coffer by the side thereof;* in a basket, as the Syriac version: in a scrip, as the Arabic; in a purse, or bag, as Josephus[q]; which latter is probable enough: *and send it away, that it may go;* that is, set it a-going, without any driver or guide; but leave it to take its course of itself to the land of Israel. Josephus[r] says it was set in a place where three ways met, that it might take which it might; and the taking of the right way must be a strong evidence of its being under the direction of God.

Ver. 9. *And see if it goeth up by the way of its own coast to Beth-shemesh,* &c.] The nearest city to the land of the Philistines, which lay on their borders, and the borders of the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 10. see the note there. Now the lords of the Philistines are directed by their priests to observe, whether these kine, that drew the cart on which the ark was, took the direct road to the borders of the land of Israel, and to Beth-shemesh, the nearest city that lay on that coast: if so, they might conclude then, *he hath done us this great evil;* that is, the God of Israel, whose ark this was; he had inflicted the disease of the emerods on them, and sent such numbers of mice into their fields, that had destroyed the increase of them: *but if not, then we shall know that it is not his hand that hath smote us;* but that there is some other cause of it: *it was a chance* that *happened to us;* and so might have been the case if the ark had never been taken or detained, and to be imputed to fate, or to the stars, or some secret causes they know not of.

Ver. 10. *And the men did so,* &c.] Made a new cart, not the lords of the Philistines, but workmen by their orders: *and took two milch-kine, and tied them to the cart;* with the gear that horses, asses, or oxen, were usually fastened to a carriage they drew: *and shut up their calves at home;* or, *in the house*[s]; the cow-house or stable where they used to be put: this they did to restrain them from following the cows, which would disturb them in drawing the cart.

Ver. 11. *And they laid the ark of the Lord upon the cart,* &c.] Perhaps the same men that made the cart; however they were the Philistines, yet were not punished for touching it, as Uzzah was, though an Israelite, 2 Sam. v. 6, 7. *and the coffer with the mice of gold, and the images of their emerods;* which coffer was placed in a purse or bag hung at the side of the ark, with the golden mice and emerods in it.

Ver. 12. *And the kine took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh,* &c.] Though they had none to drive, lead, or guide them, yet they steered their course to the road that led to Beth-shemesh, though there were other ways they might have taken; which shews they were under the direction of God himself:

[p] כלי הזהב vasa aurea, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, &c.
[q] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 2.
[r] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 2.
[s] בבית in domo, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

and went along the highway: or, *in one highway*, or *post*[t]; though they had never been used to a yoke, they drew together in one path; and did not draw one one way, and another another, as oxen unaccustomed to a yoke do: *lowing as they went*; on account of their calves, which shewed their sense of them, and their natural affection for them; and yet went on, did not attempt to go back to them; by which it was plain they were under a supernatural influence: *and turned not aside to the right or to the left*; when other ways presented, on the right hand or on the left; they kept going straight on in the road that led to the place they were destined for; all which can be reckoned nothing less than a miracle: *and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh*; not before them to guide them, or on the side of the ark to take care of it, but behind: and not at all out of respect and reverence to it, but to see what would be the issue of things, whether it would turn out an imposture or not; and that they might be able to make a true judgment of what had befallen them, as their priests and diviners had directed them to; they followed it until it was out of their territories, and in the hands of the Israelites. This place Beth-shemesh is thought by some, as R. Isaiah observes, to be the same with Timnath-heres, where Joshua was buried, in Judg. ii. 9. which signifies the figure of the sun, as this does the house of the sun; and where, perhaps, when inhabited by the Canaanites, was a temple of the sun; and it was, according to Bunting[u], 12 miles from Ekron, from whence the ark came; and so far it was followed by the Philistines. This was a city given to the Levites, and so a proper place for the ark to come to be taken care of; hence mention is made of Levites that took it down from the cart, ver. 15. see Josh. xxi. 16. and the note there.

Ver. 13. *And they of Beth-shemesh* were *reaping their wheat-harvest in the valley*, &c.] Which began at Pentecost, in the month Sivan, about our May; so that there were many people in the fields, who were eye-witnesses of this wonderful event: *and they lifted up their eyes, and saw the ark, and rejoiced to see it*; for though the ark while in the tabernacle was only seen by the high-priest, when he went into the holy of holies; yet this having been brought out from thence, and exposed in the camp of Israel, some of this place very probably were there at that time, and had seen it, and knew it again by its form and splendour; and which gave them great pleasure to behold, which had been taken, and had been so long in the hand of the enemy, and the people of Israel deprived of it; which was the symbol of the divine Presence among them, and now restored to them again: and in this wonderful way, without seeking for it, without going to war on account of it, without paying a ransom for it; and was brought to them in a cart drawn by cattle without a driver, the lords of the Philistines with a large retinue following it. This is to be understood not of their looking *into* it, as they afterwards did, and were punished, as Kimchi; but of their looking *on* it.

Ver. 14. *And the cart came into the field of Joshua, a Beth-shemite*, &c.] In that part of the valley where they were reaping wheat which belonged to him, of whom we nowhere else read; whether a priest or Levite, which is not improbable, since this was a city of the Levites, or a common Israelite, is not certain: *and stood there where there was a great stone*; afterwards called the great stone of Abel, ver. 18. By the providence of God it was so ordered, that the kine made a stop just at this place; and proceeded no further, as if sensible they were come to their journey's end, and had brought the ark into the hands of its friends, and to a proper place for them to express their thankfulness for it; for this stone seemed designed to be, as it was, the altar on which the burnt-offering, by way of thanksgiving for the return of the ark, was to be offered; the Jews say[w] this stone was the altar built by Abraham: *and they clave the wood of the cart, and offered the kine a burnt-offering unto the Lord*: the cart they cut in pieces, and laid the wood of it in order upon the stone, and slew the two cows, and laid their pieces on the wood, and set fire to it, and burnt them with it, as expressive of joy and thankfulness that the ark was returned. This was done, not by the lords of the Philistines, as some of the ancient Jews thought, as Kimchi relates, in which they are followed by some Christian interpreters; but by the men of Beth-shemesh, as Kimchi, by the priests there; for though this was not the proper and usual place for sacrifice, nor were cows offered in sacrifice; yet this being an extraordinary case, and thank-offerings were necessary as soon as the ark was returned, these things were dispensed with; and the rather, since Shiloh, where the tabernacle was, was destroyed; and besides, the ark of the Lord was here present, which sanctified the place, as it did the tabernacle, and made it fit for such service; and as for these cows, they had been employed in sacred service, and the Lord had a right unto them, and claim upon them; and it seemed not fitting that they should be after employed to any other use and service than his own; nor were the men of Beth-shemesh blamed or punished for this, though they afterwards were for looking into the ark.

Ver. 15. *And the Levites took down the ark of the Lord*, &c.] Or, *had took it down*[x]; for this, though here related, was done as soon as the ark came into the field, or quickly after, and before the burnt-offering could be made, which was burnt with the wood of the cart; and though the persons that took it down are called Levites, they were priests, who were of the tribe of Levi; for it was the work of the priests to take it down, though the Levites then might carry it; and it is remarkable that Beth-shemesh was given to the Kohathite Levites, whose business it was to carry the ark on their shoulders; see Josh. xxi. 10. Numb. iv. 15. *and the coffer that was with it, wherein the jewels of gold* were; the purse or bag in which were the five golden mice, and the five golden emerods: *and put them on the great stone*; both the ark and the coffer, by which the cart stood, and on which the sacrifice of

[t] במסלה אחת in via strata sua, Montanus; eadem semita, Tigurine version; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[u] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 122.

[w] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. D.
[x] הורידו deposuerant, Mendoza; so Paul.

burnt-offering was probably offered: *and the men of Beth-shemesh offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed sacrifices, the same day unto the Lord;* besides the burnt-offering of the two milch-kine, they offered others to testify their thankfulness for the return of the ark; and also peace-offerings, on which they feasted with one another, to express their greater joy.

Ver. 16. *And when the five lords of the Philistines had seen it,* &c.] Observed all that was done, how the kine performed their journey, drew the cart in which the ark was straight to Beth-shemesh, stopped in a field near it, where it was received joyfully by the people, and sacrifices offered on account of it: *they returned to Ekron the same day;* as they might very well, since it was but 12 miles from Beth-shemesh.

Ver. 17. *And these are the golden emerods, which the Philistines returned for a trespass-offering unto the Lord,* &c.] Along with the ark: *for Ashdod one, for Gaza one, for Askelon, one, for Gath one, for Ekron one;* which were the five principalities of the Philistines that belonged to the five lords before mentioned; and each of these were at the expence of a golden emerod, and sent it along with the ark to make atonement for the offence they had been guilty of in taking and detaining it.

Ver. 18. *And the golden mice,* according to *the number of all the cities of the Philistines* belonging *to the five lords,* &c.] That is, as many golden mice as there were cities under the jurisdiction of the five lords, which are the same before mentioned: *both of fenced cities and of country villages;* walled and unwalled towns; it seems by this, as it was but reasonable it should be, that the several villages adjacent and belonging to the five principal cities contributed their part towards the expense of the five golden emerods, and five golden mice, since they were afflicted both in their persons, and especially in their fields, as well as those in the cities; though Kimchi and others think that the country villages sent each of them a golden emerod, and a golden mouse, fearing the presents of the five cities would not serve for them; and therefore, though the priests and diviners only ordered five of each, according to the number of the principal cities, yet they of themselves sent more: all the country villages that reached *even unto the great stone of Abel;* the Targum is, "unto the "great stone;" and so the Septuagint version, reading Eben instead of Ebal; or *lamed* is put for *nun,* as *nun* for *lamed,* Neh. xiii. 7, 8. The Vulgate Latin version is unto great Abel, taking it for a city, as does Procopius Gazæus, who calls it the great city Abel, through which they carried the ark of the Lord; so Jerom [y], who takes it to be the same with Beth-shemesh, called Abel because of the mourning in it for the men of Beth-shemesh after slain; or to distinguish it from another Abel is called *great,* 2 Sam. xx. 15, but it seems plainly to be the same with the great stone, ver. 14, 15. there called Eben Gedolah, here Abel Gedolah, by the change of a letter, having its latter name by anticipation from the great mourning hereafter made, next mentioned: *whereon they set down the ark of the Lord;* when it was taken out of the cart, as also the coffer in which were the presents, ver. 15. which stone remaineth *unto this day in the field of Joshua the Beth-shemite;* the supplement, *which stone remaineth,* seems necessary, lest it should be thought the ark remained there unto the time of the writing this book, which was not true, for it was soon after this fetched to Kirjath-jearim; but the stone remained, and might be seen; and posterity in following times were told that was the stone on which the ark was put when it returned to Israel.

Ver. 19. *And he smote the men of Beth-shemesh,* &c.] That is, God smote them, though they had received the ark with such expressions of joy, and had offered sacrifices on account of it; yet sinning in one particular after mentioned, which was highly resented, they were smitten by him with a thunderbolt, as Josephus says [z]; *because they had looked into the ark of the Lord;* which was forbidden the Levites, Numb. iv. 20. out of curiosity these men opened the ark, to see whether the Philistines had taken any thing out of it, or put any thing into it; and this, when in the tabernacle, being only to be seen by the high-priest; and supposing they should never have the like opportunity again, to look upon the tables of the law which were in it, took it; and the rather they might be emboldened to this action, since it had been in the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, who had profaned it; and as yet not restored to its pristine purity, holiness, and place: *even he smote of the people* 50,000 *and* 70 *men;* but as Beth-shemesh was but a small place, a village, as Josephus [a] calls it, and it seems not likely that there should be such a number of persons in it, and especially that should look into the ark; or that God, who is good and merciful, should destroy so large a number for this offence, however he might think fit to make an example of some, it is thought that the case was not as our version represents it. Some who think there were so many slain, yet distinguish them, 70 of the elders of the people, and 50,000 of the congregation, or common people, as the Targum; which accounts not for the difficulty at all: others think that only 70 of the men of Beth-shemesh died, and that 50,000 were such as flocked out of the country on this occasion; but as this was on the same day the ark came into those parts, it can hardly be thought that so great a number should be got together so soon; and still less that they should all of them open the ark, and look into it. Abarbinel is of opinion that only 70 men of Beth-shemesh were slain, and that the other 50,000 were the Philistines that died on account of the ark while it was among them; and reads the words, *with the men of Beth-shemesh he smote—even he smote of the people* 70; that is, of the men of Beth-shemesh; 50,000, that is, of the Philistines, and so this gives the sum of all that died on account of the ark, both whilst it was in the hands of the Philistines, and when returned to Beth-shemesh, which is not an improbable sense: but others, and perhaps more truly, think that only 70 persons were smitten with death; for the order in which this account is given is different from all others in the Hebrew text, the lesser number being put first with a con-

[y] Trad. Heb. ut supra.
[z] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 4.

[a] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 3.

siderable distinguishing accent upon it, whereas the greater number is always expressed first; it stands thus, *of the people* 70 *men*; 50,000 *men*: 5,000, according to the Syriac and Arabic versions. Josephus[b] is express for it that only 70 men were slain, and so some of the ancient Jews[c]; who say that these 70 were equal to 50,000, because of their superior excellency and dignity, as Ben Gersom observes, being the priests of the Lord, or the sanhedrim; but Bochart's[d] sense seems to be preferable to all others, that there is a defect of the particle מ, *out of*; and so to be read, either *seventy men out of fifty thousand*; that out of the 50,000 that flocked on this occasion from divers parts, 70 were smitten for the reason before given; or rather 70 *men*, 50 *out of* 1,000 *men*; that is, a 20th part of the number of them, so that, out of 1,400, 70 men were struck with death for their curiosity[e]. Something of this story seems to be retained by tradition among the Heathens; we are told[f], that when Troy was taken an ark was found, in which was the image of Bacchus; which being opened by Eurypylus, he was struck with madness as soon as he saw the image: *and the people lamented, because the Lord had smitten* many *of the people with a great slaughter*; I see no occasion for the supplement *many*: it was a great slaughter, if we consider the awful manner in which it was made, by thunder and lightning, as may be supposed; however, by an immediate stroke from heaven; and the persons on whom it was made, men of a sacred character, priests and Levites; and a great number, considering it was but a small city. Hence the place was called Abel, which signifies weeping, mourning, lamentation, ver. 18.

Ver. 20. *And the men of Beth-shemesh said, who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?* &c.] The Targum is, "before the ark of this holy Lord God;" which is said either by way of complaint of the severity of God, and the strictness of his justice; or in reverence of his holiness, acknowledging their imperfection, sin, and guilt, by reason of which they could not stand before him; nor can any, but on account of the mercy-seat over the ark, or through Christ, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice: *and to whom shall he go up from us?* that is, the ark, the symbol of God's presence, which they seem to be desirous of parting with; being unworthy of it, and conscious of their impurity in comparison of God that dwelt in it; and of their weakness to give the honour and reverence that was due unto it; and yet they knew not who were fit for it, or would choose to receive it, because of the danger they were liable to through every inadvertency in them, and irreverence of that.

Ver. 21. *And they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim*, &c.] Which was a city further on in the tribe of Judah, and lay among some woods, from whence it had its name, and was formerly called Kirjath-baal, from Baal's being worshipped there; of which see Josh. xv. 9. they might choose to send hither to fetch the ark from them, because it was at a greater distance from the Philistines, their city Beth-shemesh being on the borders of them; and because it might be a place of greater eminence and strength, and besides lay in the way to Shiloh, whereby they might suppose it was intended to be had; unless Shiloh was before this time destroyed: *saying, the Philistines have brought again the ark of the Lord*; which they doubted not would be good news to them: *come ye down, and fetch it up to you*; but say not one word of the reason of this request, lest it should discourage them; but rather represent it as a favour to them, and an honour done them, as indeed it was. Kirjath-jearim seems to have stood on an eminence in comparison of Beth-shemesh, and therefore it is said to come down from the one, and go up to the other. That Beth-shemesh was in a valley, see ver. 13. and this on a hill, ch. vii. 1.

CHAP. VII.

THIS chapter gives an account of the ark being brought to Kirjath-jearim, where it continued 20 years, ver. 1, 2. of the exhortation of Samuel to the people of Israel to reform from idolatry, and which had its desired effect, ver. 3, 4. of Samuel's praying for the people, and offering sacrifices for them, and of the success thereof, victory over their enemies, ver. 5—14. and of his administration of justice to them, and constancy in it, ver. 15, 16, 17.

Ver. 1. *And the men of Kirjath-jearim came and fetched up the ark of the Lord*, &c.] From Beth-shemesh, which was near unto them, as Josephus[g] says; they made no difficulty of fetching it, but gladly received it; for if they knew of what happened to the men of Beth-shemesh, they knew it was not owing to the presence of the ark among them, but to their irreverent behaviour to it; and though Kirjath-jearim was not a Levite city, and so the men of it could not bear the ark themselves, yet they might have proper persons from Beth-shemesh to do this service: *and brought it into the house of Abinadab in the hill*; which hill was within the city of Kirjath-jearim, and is mentioned either to distinguish this Abinadab that dwelt on it from another of the same name in the city, as Kimchi observes; or else to remark the propriety of the place, and the reason of the choice of it for the ark to be placed in; hills and high places being in those times accounted fittest for sacred services to be performed in, as well as places of safety; who this man was is not certain. Josephus[h] says he was a Levite, but if so he could only be a sojourner in this place; however he might be, as he suggests he was, a man of great esteem for religion and righteousness: *and sanctified Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord*; not only

[b] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 3.
[c] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 35. 2. T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 20. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 5. fol. 186. 2.
[d] Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 26. col. 370.
[e] So Noldius, No. 779.
[f] Pausan. Achaica, sive, l. 7. p. 435.
[g] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 1. sect. 4.
[h] Ibid.

to watch it that it might not be taken away, but to keep persons from it, from touching it, or using it irreverently; and such as were not allowed to come nigh it; as well as to keep the place clean where it was put; and for this he was appointed by the priests, or the elders of the city; and was set apart for this service, and prepared for it by washings and sacrifices; and the rather he and not his father was invested with this office, because he was a young man, and his father might be old and decrepit; and this his son also a holy good man, wise and prudent, and active and zealous for God, and true religion; and on all accounts a fit person for this post.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass, while the ark abode in Kirjath-jearim, that the time was long,* &c.] It could not be less than between 40 and 50 years, for it remained here until the times of David, who removed it from hence after he was made king over all Israel, and when he had reigned over Judah 7 years; and from the death of Eli to that time, which included the government of Samuel and Saul, it could not be less than what has been hinted: *for it was twenty years;* not that this was all the time the ark was at Kirjath-jearim, but it was so long there before it was much taken notice of, and sought unto, and the Lord by it; there was a great neglect of God, and his worship, which through the means of Samuel began to revive about this time, as it follows: *and all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord;* became sensible of their evil doings, and repented of them, and sought the Lord with fasting, and prayer, and tears; bewailed their backslidings and revoltings from him, and cried after a departing God.

Ver. 3. *And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel,* &c.] When they assembled at one of their three yearly feasts, or as he went from place to place, exhorting them to repentance and reformation; and perceiving they began to be awakened to a sense of their sins, and seemed desirous of returning to God, and restoring his worship: *saying, if ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts;* truly and sincerely; for he might fear there was hypocrisy and dissimulation at least in some of them: then *put away the strange gods;* as all but the true God are; or the gods of another people, as the Philistines, Canaanites, &c. Baalim seem chiefly intended, as appears from the following verse: *and Ashtaroth from among you;* she-deities, such as with other nations went by the name of Juno, Venus, &c. so the Arabic version, "the "idols of the women ye secretly worship." Aquila renders it, *the images of Astarte;* so they call Venus, as Procopius Gazæus observes, from *aster,* a star; but the word signifies flocks of sheep, and these deities are supposed by some to be in the form of them; but be they what they may, they were to be put away out of their houses, and out of their hearts: *and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only;* that is, direct your hearts to him while in his service; let it proceed from the heart, and let it be done to him only, and not to another with him; or to him in and by another, as may be pretended, and commonly is by idolaters: *and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines;* under whose dominion they had been for many years; for though their power over them was weakened by Samson, yet they were not completely delivered by him; so all the time of Eli they were not wholly free from them; and especially since their last defeat by them; when the ark was taken, they had been under oppression by them; now Samuel promises them deliverance from it, in case they relinquish their idols, and served the Lord solely and heartily.

Ver. 4. *Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroth,* &c.] Both their he and she deities, of which see Judg. ii. 13. and iii. 7. *and served the Lord only;* Dr. Lightfoot[i] observes, that a spirit of repentance and conversion came generally upon all the people; a matter and a time as remarkable as almost any we read of in Scripture, one only parallel to it; and that is in Acts ii. and iii. at the great conversion there.

Ver. 5. *And Samuel said, gather all Israel to Mizpeh,* &c.] Not Mizpeh in Gilead, on the other side Jordan, but a city which lay on the borders of Judah and Benjamin, where the tribes met on the account of the Levite's concubine, Judg. xx. 1. This order Samuel gave by messengers sent to the several tribes, or the heads of them, to meet him at this place: *and I will pray for you unto the Lord;* no doubt he prayed for them privately, that the reformation begun might be carried on, and appear to be sincere, and hearty, and general, and universal; but he was desirous that they might appear in a body, and join with him in public prayer for their spiritual and temporal welfare; that they might have true repentance for their sins, reform from them, and have remission of them, and be delivered out of the hands of their enemies.

Ver. 6. *And they gathered together to Mizpeh,* &c.] Even all Israel, at least the heads of the people, and representatives of them: *and drew water, and poured it out before the Lord;* drew it from some fountain near at hand, and poured it out as in the presence of God, who was where his people were met together. Jerom[k] relates it as a tradition of the Jews, that curses were cast into this water, as in the water of jealousy, and that idolaters were tried by it; and that whatever idolater, who denied he worshipped idols, and tasted of it, his lips so stuck together that they could not be separated, and by this means was known and put to death; and therefore it is said Samuel judged now at this place: but it should be observed, this water was not drank, but poured out; and that as a token of their humiliation, as Jarchi, that they were before the Lord, as water poured out; and of the sincerity of their repentance, as the Targum, which is, "they poured out "their heart in repentance, as water;" and of the atonement and expiation of their sins, which passed away as water to be remembered no more, as Kimchi, or rather signifying hereby that they thoroughly renounced idolatry, that nothing of it should remain; as water entirely poured out, there remains not so much as any smell of it in the cask, as does of honey or oil, or such kind of liquor; for what a learned writer[l] says, that this was in token of joy, like that at the feast of tabernacles, when they drew water out of the

[i] Works, vol. 1. p. 54.
[k] Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. F.
[l] L'Empereur, annot. in Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 5. No. 7.

fountain of Siloah, seems not so agreeable, since this was a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, as follows: *and fasted on that day, and said there, we have sinned against the Lord;* Samuel prayed in public for them, with whom they joined; and they fasted in a literal sense, abstaining from food, and made a confession of their sins; this was the work of that day: *and Samuel judged the children of Israel in Mizpeh;* not that he now began to judge them, but went on in a more public and vigorous manner to judge them; he sat, and heard, and tried causes that came before him; explained the laws of God to them, and enforced the obedience of them; reformed abuses that were among them, and punished idolaters.

Ver. 7. *And when the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered together to Mizpeh,* &c.] Not knowing it was upon a religious account; but supposing they met to concert schemes and measures to cast off their yoke, and deliver themselves out of their hands; and were preparing to take up arms, and fall upon them: *the lords of the Philistines went up against Israel;* with forces out of their several principalities united to fight with them; judging it advisable to lose no time, but attack them before they were well prepared and provided to defend themselves: *and when the children of Israel heard it, they were afraid of the Philistines;* because they were unarmed, and not at all prepared for war, and having no expectation of it.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Israel said to Samuel,* &c.] To whom they applied, not as the general of their forces, but as the prophet of the Lord; believing his prayers for them would be of more avail to them than an army of men ever so numerous, or so well accoutred: *cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us;* he had been praying for them that day, and they desired he would continue praying for them, well knowing that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much; they knew their salvation was of the Lord, and that he only could save them, and that he must be sought unto for it; and as Samuel had an interest in him, they beg he would continue to make use of it on their behalf; in which they expressed their trust in God, their regard to means, the duty of prayer, and the high esteem they had of the prophet of the Lord, whom they entreat to pray for them: *that he will save us out of the hands of the Philistines;* who were now coming up against them, and who had for a long time tyrannised over them.

Ver. 9. *And Samuel took a sucking lamb,* &c.] Which it might be, and yet more than eight days old, for under that it might not be sacrificed, Exod. xxii. 30. *and offered it for a burnt-offering wholly unto the Lord;* the whole of it was burnt, skin and all, whereas the skin was the priest's in other burnt-offerings; and this is remarked [m] as one of the three things in which it differed from other offerings; the word being feminine, the Jews gather from hence, as Jarchi notes, that females might be offered at a private altar: *and Samuel cried unto the Lord for Israel;* not only offered a sacrifice for them, but prayed for them: *and the Lord heard him;* and answered him, either by causing fire to come down on the sacrifice, by which it was consumed, or by the voice of thunder, which frighted and discomfited the Philistines; and the event of things manifestly shewed it.

Ver. 10. *And as Samuel was offering up the burnt-offering,* &c.] Which he might do by a priest, as Ben Gersom suggests, he being only a Levite; though he being a prophet, and an extraordinary person, and this an extraordinary case, he might do it himself, as Gideon and others, as well as offer it in another place than where the tabernacle was; Shiloh being now destroyed; persons and places for sacrifice were now dispensed with: and before Samuel had made an end of offering the sacrifice, the *Philistines drew near to battle against Israel;* and were come as far almost as Mizpeh, where Israel were, and Samuel was sacrificing: *but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines;* which fulfilled Hannah's prophecy, ch. ii. 10. and this, as Josephus [n] says, was attended with lightning, which flashed in their faces, and shook their weapons out of their hands, so that they fled disarmed; and also with an earthquake, which caused gaps in the earth, into which they fell: *and discomfited them;* disturbed, affrighted them, and threw them into confusion and disorder, as well as destroyed many of them: *and they were smitten before Israel;* the meaning of which is not that they fled before them, and were killed by them; but that before Israel could come out against them, and fight with them, they were smitten and destroyed, many of them by the thunder and lightning, and by the earth opening upon them, and devouring them; for this phrase, *before Israel,* denotes time, as Abarbinel observes, and not place.

Ver. 11. *And the men of Israel went out of Mizpeh,* &c.] To which they were encouraged by hearing or perceiving that the army of the Philistines was discomfited by the thunder, and lightning, and earthquake: *and pursued the Philistines;* who, when they came out, were fleeing from the opening earth, and affrighted with thunder and lightning, and many were killed, and all put in disorder; so that they stayed not to engage in battle with Israel, and who had nothing to do but to pursue their enemy: *and smote them;* with what weapons of war they could get at Mizpeh, and with what some might have with them for private use, and in common wear; but more especially with the weapons of the Philistines, which they in their confusion and fright had thrown away: *until they came under Beth-car;* a place so called; *car* signifies a lamb; here might be formerly a temple dedicated to the lamb, unless it had its name in memory of the lamb Samuel now offered, which was followed with such success. Josephus [o] calls this place Corrsea; and in the Targum it is Beth-saron, which signifies a fruitful field or champaign country.

Ver. 12. *And Samuel took a stone, and set it,* &c.] Not for worship, but as a monument of the victory obtained by the help of God: and this he placed *between Mizpeh and Shen;* which latter signifies a *tooth,* and designs the precipice of a rock which jets out, and hangs over in the form of one: *and called the name of*

[m] Midrash Schemuel apud Abarbinel in loc.
[n] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 2. sect. 2.
[o] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 2. sect. 2.

it Eben-ezer; which signifies *the stone of help;* and is the same place which by anticipation has this name, ch. iv. 1. so that in the self-same place where the Israelites were twice beaten by the Philistines, and the ark taken, was this salvation wrought for them: *saying, hitherto hath the Lord helped us;* this was but the beginning of their deliverance from the Philistines, and which was owing to the help of the Lord; and as he had begun to help them, they might hope and encourage themselves that he would go on to help them until their deliverance was completed: however, they with Samuel thought it their duty, which was right, to acknowledge what the Lord had done for them, and perpetuate the memory of it, though they could not be sure what he would do for them hereafter; yet as they were sensible of, and thankful for this instance of his goodness, they hoped for more, and had their dependence on him for future success against their enemies.

Ver. 13. *So the Philistines were subdued,* &c.] Not that their country was conquered, or they made subject and become tributaries to Israel; but they were so humbled, as not to attempt to give the people of Israel any further trouble and distress, who were now delivered from their oppression and tyranny: *and came no more into the coast of Israel;* at this time they did not gather together their forces dispersed, nor raise and bring a new army into the land of Israel; they contented themselves with placing garrisons on the coast, but did not attempt to enter and invade them any more; that is, for a long time, even until Samuel was grown old, and the people would have a king, and had one, which offended the Lord, and then he suffered them to be distressed by them again; but whilst Samuel was alone governor they came no more, though they did quickly after Saul was made king, as it follows: *the hand of the Lord was against the Philistines all the days of Samuel;* not all the days of his life, but all the days of his sole government, which restrained them from making incursions into the land of Israel; and indeed in after-times, when they did come forth to make war with them, the battle was against them during the times of Samuel.

Ver. 14. *And the cities which the Philistines had taken from Israel were restored to Israel,* &c.] We nowhere read that the Israelites went out to war with them, and took these cities from them by besieging and assaulting them; but they made a demand of them after the above victory obtained, by which the Philistines were so intimidated, that they quietly surrendered them to them: *from Ekron even unto Gath, and the coasts thereof, did Israel deliver out of the hands of the Philistines;* not by dint of sword, but by demand, to which they submitted; and though Ekron, if not Gath, fell to the tribe of Judah by lot, yet were never in their possession; and so are to be understood exclusively here, that not they, but the cities and towns that lay between them and the coasts thereof, which the Philistines had seized upon, these they were obliged to deliver up again to Israel; and if Ekron and Gath were delivered, they were not long held by them, for we soon read of them as in the hands of others: *and there was peace between Israel and the Amorites;* who were a principal nation of the Canaanites, and are put for the whole of them that remained; and so Josephus[p] calls them the remnant of the Canaanites; these, finding the Philistines were subdued, were quiet and peaceable, and gave Israel no more trouble.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.*] Not only before Saul was made king, but afterwards; for though he had not the exercise of the supreme government of the nation, yet he might act as a judge under Saul, and hear and try causes brought before him, and execute justice and judgment; and as a prophet he taught and instructed the people, and reformed abuses among them; and besides, he held and exercised his extraordinary office, to which he was raised up of God, and even took upon him to reprove Saul himself, and to kill Agag. The Jews say[q] he judged Israel 13 years only, 11 by himself, and two with Saul; but his government must be much larger, his with Saul is reckoned 40 years, Acts xiii. 21.

Ver. 16. *And he went from year to year in circuit,* &c.] As judges do; or *from the year in the year*[r], from the time of the year in the year, as the Targum, from the middle of it, that is, every half-year; and so Josephus says[s], that he went twice a year in circuit: and the places he went to, and where he held his courts of judicature, were *Beth-el, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh;* by Beth-el is not meant Shiloh, as Abarbinel, for that was now destroyed; nor Kirjath-jearim, where the ark was, for it would have been called by its name; but the same Beth-el that was near to Ai, and not far from Shiloh, and was in the tribe of Benjamin, as all those places were. Gilgal was where the tabernacle, ark, and camp of Israel were first pitched, when they came over Jordan, and Mizpeh where the people used to be assembled on occasion, see ver. 5, 6. *and judged Israel in all those places;* who came from all parts hither with their causes, and for advice and counsel in all cases, at the returning periods.

Ver. 17. *And his return was to Ramah,* &c.] When he had gone his circuit, he came back to this city, which was his native place, and where his father and mother had dwelt, see ch. i. *for there was his house;* and his father's house before him, and perhaps the same, ch. i. 19. *and there he judged Israel;* here was his fixed residence, and here he was always to be met with, except when on his circuit; and hither the people of Israel might repair from all parts, to have justice done them between man and man, or receive information in matters of difficulty and importance: *and there he built an altar unto the Lord;* to offer his own sacrifices, and the sacrifices of the people, either by himself, or by a priest, when the people came to have justice administered to them; or to desire him to pray for them, teach and instruct them, or to give them advice. Shiloh being destroyed, and no place appointed for the tabernacle and altar, the Jews say, high places for a private altar were lawful, and even

[p] Ut supra.

[q] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 35. Midrash Tillim, apud Abarbinel in loc. Kimchi in loc.

[r] מדי שנה בשנה ex anno in anno.

[s] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 3. sect. 1.

for one that was not a priest to offer; these things, though settled by law, yet were for a time dispensed with, until things could be fixed in their proper place and order.

CHAP. VIII.

THIS chapter relates, how that Samuel being old, and his sons behaving ill, the people desired to have a king set over them, ver. 1—5. which case Samuel laid before the Lord, and he was directed by him to yield to the people's desire, but at the same time to set before them all the disadvantages and ill consequences that would arise from thence, which he did, ver. 6—18. but they insisting upon it, nevertheless, he gave them reason to expect that their request would be granted, ver. 19—22.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when Samuel was old*, &c.] The common notion of the Jews is, that he lived but 52 years [t]; when a man is not usually called an old man, unless the infirmities of old age came upon him sooner than they commonly do, through his indefatigable labours from his childhood, and the cares and burdens of government he had long bore; though some think he was about 60 years of age; and Abarbinel is of opinion that he was more than 70. It is a rule with the Jews [u], that a man is called an old man at 60, and a grey-headed man at 70: *that he made his sons judges over Israel;* under himself, not being able through old age to go the circuits he used; he sent them, and appointed them to hear and try causes in his room, or settled them in some particular places in the land, and, as it seems by what follows, at Beer-sheba; though whether that was under his direction, or was their own choice, is not certain.

Ver. 2. *Now the name of his first-born was Joel*, &c.] In 1 Chron. vi. 28. he is called Vashni; see the note there. This was not Joel the prophet, as some have thought, neither his parentage, nor his office, nor his times, will agree with this: *and the name of his second Abiah:* which two sons seem to be all he had: they were *judges in Beer-sheba;* in the utmost border of the land, to the south, as Ramah, where Samuel dwelt and judged, was more to the north; where they were placed by their father, for the greater convenience of the people of Israel that lived southward, to bring their causes to them, as those lived more northward might bring them to him: according to Josephus [w], they were placed by their father, the one in Beth-el, one of the places Samuel used to go to in his circuit and judge, and the other at Beer-sheba. But some, as Junius and others, think it should be rendered, *unto Beer-sheba:* and so takes in its opposite, Dan, which lay at the utmost border of the land northward; hence the phrase, *from Dan to Beer-sheba:* and that the one was settled at Dan for the sake of the northern part of the land, and the other at Beer-sheba, for the sake of the southern: or rather these sons of Samuel placed themselves at Beer-sheba; which was an ill-judged thing, to be both in one place, and which must give the people of Israel a great deal of trouble, and put them to a large expense to come from all quarters thither, to have their causes tried; but that is not the worst.

Ver. 3. *And his sons walked not in his ways*, &c.] The meaning of which is not that they did not go the circuit he did, which is too low a sense of the words some Jewish writers give; but they did not walk in the fear of God, in the paths of religion and righteousness, truth and holiness; they neither served God, nor did justice to men, as Samuel had done: *but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment;* indulged to covetousness, sought to get riches at any rate, took bribes, which blind the eyes of judges; and so passed wrong judgment, and gave the cause to those that gave the largest gifts, right or wrong.

Ver. 4. *Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together*, &c.] At some place of rendezvous appointed; these were the heads of the tribes, and fathers of the houses and families of Israel, the principal persons of age and authority: *and came to Samuel unto Ramah;* the place of his nativity and abode, and where he now dwelt, and judged Israel; they went in a very respectable body with an address to him.

Ver. 5. *And said unto him, behold, thou art old*, &c.] See ver. 1. his age was no reproach to him, nor was it becoming them to upbraid him with it; nor was it a reason why he should be removed from his office, for it did not disqualify him for it; but rather, having gained by age experience, was more fit for it, though he might not be able to ride his circuits as formerly: *and thy sons walk not in thy ways;* whom he had made judges; this is a better reason than the former for what is after requested; and had they only besought them to remove him from their places, and rested content with that, it would have been well enough; but what they were solicitous for, and always had an inclination to, and now thought a proper opportunity offered of obtaining it, was what follows: *now make us a king to judge us like all the nations;* to rule over them as sole monarch; to go before them in battle as their general, as well as to administer justice to them, by hearing and trying causes as their judge; which only they mention to cover their views, and make their motion more acceptable to Samuel; what they were desirous of was to have a king appearing in pomp and splendour, wearing a crown of gold, clothed in royal apparel, with a sceptre in his hand, dwelling in a stately palace, keeping a splendid court, and attended with a grand retinue, as the rest of the nations about them had had for a long time. The first kings we read of were in the times of Abraham, but after it became common for nations to have kings over them, and particularly the neighbours of Israel, as Edom, Moab, Ammon, &c.

[t] Seder Olam Rabba, ut supra.
[u] Pirke Abot, c. 5. sect. 21.
[w] Ut supra, sect. 2.

and Cicero says[x], all the ancient nations had their kings, to whom they were obedient: Israel had God for their King in a peculiar manner other nations had not, and stood in no need of any other; and happy it would have been for them if they had been content therewith, and not sought after another: however, they were so modest, and paid such deference to Samuel, as to desire him to make or appoint one for them.

Ver. 6. *But the thing displeased Samuel*, &c.] Not that they called him an old man, and suggested that he was incapacitated for his office, nor for observing the unbecoming walk of his sons, but for what follows: *when they said, give us a king to judge us;* what displeased him was, that they were for changing their form of government, not only to remove it from him, and his sons, but from the Lord himself, who was king over them; the ill consequences of which, many of them at least, he easily foresaw, and which gave him great uneasiness, both on account of the glory of God, and their own good; insomuch, as Josephus[y] says, he could neither eat nor sleep, but watched all night, and spent it in prayer, as follows: *and Samuel prayed unto the Lord;* to know his mind and will, and what answer he should return unto them.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord said unto Samuel*, &c.] He appeared to him in a vision or dream, and by an articulate voice delivered to him what follows: *hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee;* not as approving of what they said, but permitting and allowing what they asked, as a punishment of them for their disloyalty and ingratitude, and as resenting their ill behaviour to him; for it was in anger he assented to their request, Hos. xiii. 11. *for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me that I should not reign over them:* most interpreters supply the word *only*, as if the sense was, that they had not only rejected Samuel from judging them, but the Lord also from reigning over them: and which is spoken to comfort Samuel, and to alleviate the pressure on his mind for the ill treatment he had met with; for since they had served the Lord after this manner, it was no wonder he should be ill used, and might bear it with great patience: but I see no reason why the words may not be taken absolutely, that they had not rejected Samuel from all share in the government, at least from judging the people; for so he continued all the days of his life, even after they had a king over them; but they entirely rejected the sole and peculiar government of God over them.

Ver. 8. *According to all the works which they have done since the day that I brought them out of Egypt*, &c.] This was no new thing; all that they had done since they were wonderfully favoured of God, as to be brought out of Egyptian bondage, was all of a piece with this; one continued series of ingratitude, of rebellion against God, and against his servants, that he employed under him, as Moses, Aaron, &c. *even unto this day, wherewith they have forsaken me, and served other gods;* this is what this people were always addicted to, to cast off the worship and service of God, and go into idolatry: *so do they also unto thee;* acted the like ungrateful part to him for all the service he had done them, from his childhood to that time; wherefore, as the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord, if such things as before observed were done to Jehovah himself, Samuel could not expect to meet with better treatment, or other than he had, see Matt. x. 24, 25.

Ver. 9. *Now therefore hearken unto their voice*, &c.] And appoint them a king as they desire: *howbeit, yet protest solemnly unto them;* not against the thing itself, which was permitted, but against the evil of their request, as to the unseasonable time, ill manner, and unjustifiable reason, in and for which it was made; the Lord would have Samuel lay before them their evil in requesting it, and the evils that would follow upon it to them, and faithfully represent them to them, that they might be left without excuse, and have none to blame but themselves when they should come upon them: *and shew them the manner of the king that shall reign over them;* or *the right* or *judgment*[z]; not a legal right or form of government, but an assumed, arbitrary, and despotic power, such as the kings of the east exercised over their subjects, a king like whom the Israelites desired to have; namely, what unbounded liberties he would take with them, what slaves he would make of them, and what of their property he would take to himself at pleasure, as is after related. The word signifies, not a divine law, according to which the king should govern, but a custom, or a custom he would introduce, as the word is rendered, ch. ii. 13. and is different from that in ch. x. 25.

Ver. 10. *And Samuel told all the words of the Lord unto them*, &c.] How he considered this request of theirs as a rejection of him as their king, and that it was acting the same ungrateful part they had always done; and since they were so importunate to have it granted, it should be done; but that he was ordered to lay before them all the inconveniences that would attend it, and the evils that would follow upon it unto them: *that asked of him a king;* which is observed, not to distinguish a part of them from the rest; for this was an united request of the people.

Ver. 11. *And he said, this will be the manner of the king that shall reign over you*, &c.] Not in which he ought to proceed, but what he will do: and this not the manner of one king, or of the first only, but of all of them, more or less; of kings in general, who are commonly inclined to arbitrary power. So Aristotle[a], in opposition to theocracy, describes a full and absolute kingdom, as he calls it, when a king does all things according to his will: and observes, that he that would have the mind or reason preside, would have God and the laws rule; but he that would have a man to reign, adds also a lust, or one led by his own lust: so it follows, *he will take your sons, and appoint them for himself;* for his own use and service, to wait upon him, to be his pages, or grooms, or guards: *for his chariots;* to take care of them, and drive them, though not without paying them for it; yet this being but a mean and servile employment, and what they should

[x] De Legibus, l. 3.
[y] Ut supra, sect. 3.

[z] משפט המלך jus regis, V. L. Tigurine version, Munster; judicium regis, Vatablus, Drusius.
[a] In Politicis, l. 3. c. 16.

be obliged to, whether they would or no, is observed to shew the tyranny and bondage to which they would be subject, when their sons otherwise might be free men, and possessed of estates and carriages of their own: *and to be his horsemen;* or rather *for his horses,* to take care of them, and go out along with him, and attend his person, whether when going to war, or on pleasure: *and some shall run before his chariots;* be his running-footmen, being swift of foot, and trained up for that service; some are naturally swift, as Asahel was. Pliny [b] speaks of some swifter than horses; and of the swiftness of some he elsewhere gives [c] many surprising instances. It seems as if it was usual to have 50 such men to run before them, see 2 Sam. xv. 1. 1 Kings i. 6.

Ver. 12. *And he will appoint him captains over thousands, and captains over fifties,* &c.] Which though posts of honour, yet when they are not matter of choice, and especially being precarious, and depending on the arbitrary will of a prince, are not eligible, and less so to persons that choose another sort of life: *and will set them to ear his ground;* to plough it; not the same persons made captains of thousands and fifties, but others, whom he will employ in tilling and manuring his fields, and oblige them to it: *and to reap his harvest;* when it is ripe, and gather it in, and bring it home into his barns and garners: *and to make his instruments of war;* as swords, spears, bows and arrows, most commonly used in those times: *and instruments of chariots;* which seem to design chariots of war, and the iron spikes and scythes which were joined to them, to cut down the foot-soldiers, when driven among them in battle, which are commonly called chariots of iron; see Josh. xvii. 16. Judg. iv. 3.

Ver. 13. *And he will take your daughters to be confectionaries,* &c.] Such as deal in spices, and mix them, and make them up in various forms very agreeable to the taste. Men are commonly in our countries and times employed in such arts, but it seems this was the business of women in those times and places. Some versions [d] render it *unguentariæ,* makers or sellers of ointments, and such there were in some nations [e], such was Lydia in Juvenal [f]; *and to be cooks;* to dress all sorts of food, especially what were boiled, as the word signifies: *and to be bakers;* to make and bake bread, which though with us is the work of men, yet in the eastern countries was usually done by women; see the note on Lev. xxvi. 26.

Ver. 14. *And he will take your fields, and your vineyards, and your oliveyards,* &c.] Which includes the whole increase of their land, their corn, and wine, and oil; and it is these, the fruits of their fields, vineyards, and oliveyards, which are here meant; for otherwise kings might not, and did not by their absolute authority, take away those from their subjects; otherwise Ahab would have taken away Naboth's vineyard at once, nor would Jezebel have needed to have taken such a method she did, to put Ahab into the possession of it: even *the best* of them, *and give them to his servants;* for their service; and which some restrain to times of war, when necessity obliged to use such methods.

Ver. 15. *And he will take the tenth of your seed,* &c.] When grown up and ripe, as their wheat and barley: *and of your vineyards;* the tenth of the grapes they should produce: *and give to his officers, and to his servants;* for the support and maintenance of them; and to pay this, besides the tithes of the priests and Levites, would make it very burdensome to them; and this was no other than what kings of other nations usually had, the like to whom they were desirous of having, and therefore must expect that they would insist upon the privileges and revenues that others had. In Babylon, as Aristotle [g] relates, there was an ancient law which required the tenth of whatever was imported for the public revenue, which was revived in the times of Alexander by Antimenes the Rhodian. In Arabia Felix was an island abounding with frankincense and myrrh, and various spices, the tenth of the fruits of which the king always had, as Diodorus Siculus [h] reports, see 1 Maccab. xi. 35.

Ver. 16. *And he will take your man servants, and your maid-servants,* &c.] Into his own family, for his own use and service, if he wants them, or likes them better than what he has: *and your goodliest young men;* that are tall and lusty, comely and beautiful, of a proper stature and good aspect; and such in all countries used to be chosen for officers in courts, or attendants there; and so the Turks to this day pitch upon young men to attend on great personages, who are of a comely form, have admirable features, and are well-shaped, see the note on Dan. i. 4. *and your asses, and put them to his work;* employ them in ploughing his fields, drawing his carriages, or bearing his burdens; and so any other cattle that would serve the same purposes, as oxen, camels, *&c.*

Ver. 17. *He will take the tenth of your sheep,* &c.] As well as of their seed and vineyards; and not the tithe of their flocks only, but of their herds also, which are here included, as Kimchi observes: *and ye shall be his servants;* made slaves of by him, even as the Canaanitish servants were, according to Abarbinel; though others interpret it more mildly of their being obliged to pay tribute and taxes, for the support of his government.

Ver. 18. *And ye shall cry out in that day, because of your king,* &c.] His power and pride, his oppression and tyranny, his heavy exactions, and intolerable yoke, and yet not be able to free themselves from them; all that they could do would be only to cry out under them as grievously distressed, and not knowing how to help themselves; and which would be the more aggravated, because they brought all this upon themselves, as it follows: *which ye shall have chosen you;* for though the choice of a king for them, at a proper time, God had reserved to himself, yet in after-times, as is here suggested, they would choose for themselves, and did, see Hos. xiii. 4. besides, to have a king in general was at first their own choice, though the particular person was by the designation

[b] Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 2.
[c] Ibid. c. 20.
[d] So V. L. and Tigurine.
[e] Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 5.
[f] Satyr. 2. ver. 141. Vid. Turnebi Adversar. l. 13. c. 17.
[g] Œconomic. l. 2. p. 588.
[h] Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 317.

of the Lord: *and the Lord will not hear you in that day;* will not regard them, have no compassion on them, suffer them to remain under their oppressions, and not deliver them out of them; because they rejected him from being their King, and put themselves out of his protection, into the hands of another, and therefore it was just to leave them to their own choice.

Ver. 19. *Nevertheless, the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel,* &c.] The advice he gave not to think of a king, but be content with the government under which they were; but to this they would not hearken, notwithstanding all the inconveniences that would attend such a change: *and they said, nay, but we will have a king over us;* they would not believe what Samuel said concerning a king, even though they were the words of the Lord he delivered to them; and though they knew Samuel was a prophet, and spoke by a spirit of prophecy, and none of his words had ever fallen to the ground: but such was their stubbornness and obstinacy, and so set upon having a king, that one they would have, let them suffer what hardships, or be at what expenses they might; at all events, and against all remonstrances, they were determined to have one.

Ver. 20. *That we also may be like all the nations,* &c.] Even though they were slaves, like them; a king they would have, as they had, such was their stupidity. It was their greatest honour and glory, as well as happiness, not to be like other nations; as in their religion, laws, and liberties, so in their form of government; God being their King in such a peculiar sense as he was not of others, but with this they could not be content: *and that our king may judge us;* hear their causes, administer justice and judgment to them, protect their persons and properties, and rule them according to the civil laws that were given them: *and go out before us, and fight our battles;* which Samuel their present judge did not, and to which perhaps they may have some respect; but then he gained more for them by his prayers, than a king or general would by his military skill or prowess, see ch. vii. 10. and it is very remarkable, and what is observed by some, that their first king died in a battle. What made them so pressing and importunate to have a king at this time, and not defer it to another, it is very probable was, that they understood that Nahash, king of the children of Ammon, was preparing to attack them, and therefore they were desirous to have a king also to go out before them, and meet him, and give him battle, ch. xii. 12.

Ver. 21. *And Samuel heard all the words of the people,* &c.] Patiently, and without interruption; attentively heard them, took notice of them, laid them up in his memory; but gave no answer to them, but reported them to the Lord, as in the next clause: *and he rehearsed them in the ears of the Lord;* privately, in a free and familiar manner, with great exactness, as they were expressed; this he did, not before the people publicly, but in secret prayer, seeking for direction what he should further do, or what answer he should return to them.

Ver. 22. *And the Lord said to Samuel,* &c.] By an audible voice, or by an impulse upon his mind: *hearken unto their voice, and make them a king;* since they will have a king, let them have one, and let them know that they shall have one: *and Samuel said unto the men of Israel;* the elders of the people that addressed him on this occasion, ver. 4. *go ye every man unto his city;* signifying they might return in peace, and be assured their request would be granted, and a king would be appointed in a short time, and which they might report to their fellow-citizens; and they might expect to hear from him quickly, as soon as he had instructions from the Lord who should be their king, which right he had reserved to himself; and therefore in the mean while they might rest contented that they would have one in a little time.

CHAP. IX.

THIS chapter gives an account of Saul, the person the Lord had appointed to be king of Israel; it relates his descent, and describes his person, ver. 1, 2. and how seeking his father's asses, which were lost, he providentially came to the place where Samuel dwelt, ver. 3—5. and being advised by his servant, and approving of his advice, he concluded to go to him, and inquire the way he should go, ver. 6—10. and being directed by some young maidens, they found him presently in the street going to a feast, ver. 11—14. and Samuel having some previous notice from the Lord of such a person's coming to him that day, when he met him invited him to dine with him, and obliged him to stay with him that day, ver. 15—19. satisfied him about his asses, and gave him a hint of the grandeur he was to be raised to, to which Saul made a modest reply, ver. 20, 21. and Samuel treated him at the feast in a very respectable manner, ver. 22, 23, 24. and privately communed with him of things preparatory to what he was about to make known unto him, ver. 25—27.

Ver. 1. *Now there was a man of Benjamin,* &c.] Of the tribe of Benjamin, which had its name from the youngest son of Jacob, and one of this tribe was the first king of Israel: *whose name was Kish;* whom the apostle calls Cis, Acts xiii. 21. and Josephus[i] Cises; his name, according to Hillerus[k], signifies *ensnared;* for what reason it was given him is not certain: *the son of Abiel;* in 1 Chron. viii. 33. and ix. 39. he is called Ner that begat Kish; and in this book, ch. xiv. 50, 51. Ner and Kish are represented as brethren, the sons of Abiel: to reconcile this, it may be observed, that Ner being the elder brother, on the death of his father Abiel, had the care and bringing up of his younger brother Kish; and therefore when he is said to beget him, the meaning is, not that he was the parent

[i] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 1.

[k] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 405.

of him, but the bringer up of him; or rather, as Kimchi thinks, Abiel had two sons, one of which was Ner; and that he had two sons, one that was called after his own name Ner, who was the father of Abner; and the other Kish, the father of Saul: *the son of Zeror, the son of Bechorath, the son of Aphiah, a Benjamite*; of these persons we nowhere else read: *a mighty man of power*; not a man of riches, or of authority, neither a wealthy man, nor a magistrate, for his family was mean and contemptible, ver. 21. and ch. x. 27. but a man of great strength, an able-bodied man, and of great natural fortitude, and courage of mind.

Ver. 2. *And he had a son whose name was Saul*, &c.] Of this name was the great apostle of the Gentiles before his conversion, and was of the same tribe also, but very different in stature; he was a little man, this a large tall man, like his father perhaps; *a choice young man, and a goodly*; ch. ii. of a goodly aspect, a comely man, tall and well-shaped, in the prime of his age, a very agreeable person, one among a thousand: *and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he*; meaning not for the endowments of his mind, or his moral character and behaviour. There might be as good, or better men than he, on such accounts, but for his outward appearance, his bodily shape, and the dignity of his person: *from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than any of the people*; this description of him is enlarged upon and explained, to shew that he was just such a person the people were desirous of having king over them, such an one as the nations about them had; and it was usual with the eastern people, and so with the Greeks and Romans, to choose persons to the highest offices of magistracy that made a personable appearance superior to others, and is what they often take notice of, as a recommendation of them as princes. Herodotus[l] reports of the Ethiopians, that they judged the largest of the people, and him who had strength according to his bigness, most worthy to be king. And the same writer observes[m], that among the many thousands of men of the army of Xerxes, there was not one who for comeliness and largeness was so worthy of the empire as Xerxes himself; so Ulysses, because of his talness, was the more acceptable to the people of Corfu[n]; so Alexander's captains, 'tis said[o], might be thought to be kings for their beautiful form, talness of body, and greatness of strength and wisdom. Julius Cæsar is said to be of high stature; and so Domitian[p]; Virgil[q] represents Turnus as in body more excellent than others, and by the entire head above them; and Anchises as walking statelier and higher than the rest[r]; among the many encomiums Pliny[s] gives of Trajan, as to his outward form and appearance, this is one, *proceritas corporis*, talness of body, being higher than others; the Gentiles had a notion that such men came nearer to the deities, and looked more like them; so Diana is described as taller than any of the nymphs and goddesses[t]. Solomon, according to Josephus[u], chose such young men to ride horses, and attend his person, when he himself rode, who were conspicuous for their height, and greatly above others.

Ver. 3. *And the asses of Kish, Saul's father, were lost*, &c.] Had got out of the stables or fields, in which they were kept, and strayed from thence: *and Kish said to Saul his son, take now one of the servants with thee, and arise, go seek the asses*; he chose not to send his servants only, who might not be so careful and diligent in searching for them, but his son, and not him alone, but a servant with him to wait upon him, and assist him. And it was quite agreeable to the simplicity of those times for persons of equal or greater substance to be employed in such an affair; asses made a considerable part of the wealth and riches of men, were rode upon by persons of quality, and were fed and taken care of by the sons of dukes and princes; see Job i. 3. Judg. v. 10. Gen. xxxvi. 24. The Jews[w] have a tradition, that this servant was Doeg the Edomite.

Ver. 4. *And they passed through Mount Ephraim*, &c.] The mountainous part of that tribe, which lay contiguous to the tribe of Benjamin, where it might be supposed the asses had strayed to: *and passed through the land of Shalisha*; a tract in the tribe of Benjamin, so called from some illustrious person, prince, and duke of it; in it very probably was the place called Baal-shalisha; 2 Kings iv. 42. and which perhaps is the same Jerom calls[x] Beth-shalisha; and says there was a village of this name in the borders of Diospolis, almost 15 miles' distance from it to the north, in the Tamnitic country; though Bunting[y] says it was situated in Mount Ephraim, eight miles from Jerusalem to the north-west: *but they found* them *not*: the asses, neither in Mount Ephraim, nor in the land of Shalisha: *then they passed through the land of Shalim*; which some take to be the same with Salim, where John was baptizing, John iii. 23. but Jerom says[z] it was a village on the borders of Eleutheropolis, to the west, seven miles distant from it: *and* there they were *not*; the asses could not be found there: *and he passed through the land of the Benjamites*; or rather of Jemini, which was in Benjamin, so called from a famous man of that name; for it cannot be thought they should pass through the whole tribe of Benjamin in one day. And, according to Bunting[a], from Gibeah, the native place of Saul, through the mountain of Ephraim, and the land of Shalisha, to the borders of Shalim, were 16 miles; and from thence to Jemini, in the tribe of Benjamin, 16 more: *but they found* them *not*; the asses.

Ver. 5. *And when they were come to the land of Zuph*, &c.] In which was Ramathaim-zophim, the native place of Samuel, ch. i. 1. and so the Targum here, "the land in which was the prophet:" *Saul said to*

[l] Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 20.
[m] Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 187.
[n] Homer. Odyss. 8. ver. 20, 21.
[o] Justin. e Trogo, l. 13. c. 1.
[p] Sueton. Vit. Cæsar. c. 45. Domitian. c. 18.
[q] Æneid. l. 7. ver. 783, 784. & 9. ver. 29.
[r] Ib. l. 8. ver. 162.
[s] Panegyr. c. 4, 22.

[t] Tamen altior illis ipsa dea est. Ovid. Metam. l. 2. fab. 2. ver. 180, 181.
[u] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. sect. 3.
[w] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in Paralip. fol. 82. A.
[x] De loc. Heb. fol. 89. K.
[y] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 129.
[z] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. L.
[a] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 126.

the servant that was *with him, come, and let us return* home, despairing of finding the asses after so long a search in divers places: *lest my father leave* caring *for the asses, and take thought for us*: fearing some evil should have befallen his son and his servant, in comparison of whom, and especially his son, the asses would be of no account, and so give himself no concern for them, but be in great care and uneasiness for his son and servant; wherefore Saul thought it most advisable to return home as soon as possible, lest his father should be overwhelmed with grief and trouble.

Ver. 6. *And he said unto him*, &c.] That is, the servant of Saul: *behold, now*, there is *in this city a man of God*: a prophet of the Lord, as the Targum; such were called men of God, because not only partakers of the grace of God, but of extraordinary gifts, which qualified them for the office of prophets. The city near to which they now were was Ramah, the place where Samuel lived, and he is the man of God here meant: *and he is an honourable man*; of great esteem among men for his wisdom and knowledge, integrity and faithfulness, and particularly for his gift of prophecy, being a true prophet of the Lord; so the Targum, "and he is a man that prophesies truth," and that made him honourable, and gave him great credit: *all that he saith cometh surely to pass*; as his prophecies concerning Eli's family, and other things, which were well known to have had their accomplishment; and this had gained him universal esteem, see ch. iii. 19. *now let us go thither*; being very near it, within sight of it, insomuch that the servant could point at it, and say *this city*, as in the preceding part of the verse: *peradventure he can shew us our way that we should go*; to find the asses; he was not certain he could or would, but thought it possible and probable he might.

Ver. 7. *Then Saul said to his servant, but behold*, if we go, &c.] The Targum is, "if he receives money," which it seems Saul was not clear in; some sort of persons that set up for prophets, and a sort of diviners and fortune-tellers, did; but he could not tell whether so eminent and honourable a person as Samuel was did; it is much he was not better known by him, who had been so many years a judge in Israel: *what shall we bring the man?* it being usual, when persons addressed great men for a favour, to carry a present with them; or a man of God, a prophet of the Lord, to inquire of the Lord by him concerning any thing, see 1 Kings xiv. 2, 3. 2 Kings iv. 42. *for the bread is spent in our vessels*; the food they brought with them in their bags or scrips for their journey, this was all exhausted; not that he meant by it, that if they had had any quantity, they might present it to the man of God, though yet sometimes such things were done, as the instances before referred to shew; but that since their stock of bread was gone, what money they had, if they had any, must be spent in recruiting themselves, and therefore could have none to spare to give to the man: *and there is not a present to bring to the man of God*; neither bread nor money, without which he seems to intimate it would be to no purpose to go to him: *what have we?* Saul knew he had none, he had spent what he brought out with him for the journey, and he put this question to try what his servant had; unless it can be supposed it was the custom now, as afterwards among the Romans[b], for servants to carry the purse, and as it was with the Jews in Christ's time, John xii. 6. though this may have respect not to a price of divination, but to the common custom in eastern countries, and which continues to this day with the Turks, who reckon it uncivil to visit any person, whether in authority, or an inferior person, without a present; and even the latter are seldom visited without presenting a flower, or an orange, and some token of respect to the person visited[c].

Ver. 8. *And the servant answered Saul again, and said*, &c.] As he had answered him before, when Saul proposed to return home, by telling him there was an honourable man of God in the city near at hand, that might possibly be able to direct them which way they should go to find the asses: so he answers him again with respect to the present it was proper to carry with them, and what he had in his hands to make: *behold, I have here at hand the fourth part of a shekel of silver*; a zuze of silver, as the Targum, four of which made a shekel, about seven-pence halfpenny of our money, and scarce so much: that *will I give to the man of God to tell us our way*; that they should go to find the asses: which he would give him very freely for that purpose: both Saul and his servant must entertain a mean opinion of prophets, and men of God, and especially of so great a man as Samuel, that he should be employed at any time in directing persons in such cases, and take money for so doing, and so small a gratuity as this before mentioned; though it seems as if, at some times, something of this kind was done by prophets, and men of God, which might be permitted to keep the people from going to diviners and soothsayers.

Ver. 9. *(Before-time in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God*, &c.] To ask doctrine of him, as the Targum, to be taught by him, to have his mind and will in any affair of moment and importance; which was usually done by applying to some man of God, eminent for grace and piety, and a spirit of prophecy: *thus he spake, come, and let us go to the seer*; a man used to say to his friend, when he wanted some instruction or direction, let us go together to such an one, the seer, and ask counsel of him what is proper to be done in such an affair: *for he that is now called a prophet was before called a seer*: for though these names are used promiscuously of the same persons, both before and after this time; yet now the more common appellation which obtained was that of a prophet; custom, and the use of language, varied at different times, though the same was meant by the one and the other; such men were called seers, because of the vision of prophecy, because they saw or foresaw things to come; and they were called prophets, because they foretold what they saw, or delivered out their predictions by word of mouth. This verse is put in a parenthesis, and is commonly supposed to be the words of the writer of this book: hence some draw an argument against Samuel being the writer of it, as Abarbinel does, who concludes from hence that it was written by Jeremiah, or some

[b] A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 29. c. 1.

[c] Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 26, 27.

other person long after Samuel, or that this verse was added by Ezra; but as this book might be written by Samuel in the latter part of his life, he might with propriety observe this, that in his younger time, and quite down to the anointing of Saul king, both when there was no open vision, and afterwards when there was scarce any that had it but himself, he was used to be called the seer; but in his latter days, when there were many that had the vision of prophecy, and there were schools set up, it was more common to call them prophets; though perhaps these are the words of Saul's servant, spoken to encourage Saul to go to the man of God, and inquire of him, since in former times, as he could remember, being perhaps an old servant, or he had heard his parents so say, that such men used to be called seers, because they saw what others did not, and declared and made others to see what they did; and therefore there was a probability that this man of God, who was a seer, might shew them the way they should go to find the asses.

Ver. 10. *Then said Saul to his servant, well said, &c.*] Or *good is thy word*[d], thou hast well spoken; it is a good proposal thou hast made, and thou art very generous to give all thou hast to the man; and very promising it is, that since he is a seer he may inform us where the asses are, or which way we must take to find them. Things look feasible enough: *come, let us go*, to the city, and to the man of God there, and hear what he will say to us, and what information he will give us: *so they went unto the city where the man of God* was; to Ramah, where Samuel dwelt.

Ver. 11. *And as they went up the hill to the city, &c.*] For the city was built upon an hill, from whence it had the name of Ramah, which signifies high and lifted up: *they found young maidens going out to draw water*, going out of the city, to a fountain which was at the bottom of the hill; and this was the usual business of maidens in those countries to fetch water for the service of the family, see Gen. xxiv. 11, 15, 16. and the notes there. R. Akiba[e] makes this observation, that whenever a man meets maidens coming out of a city before he goes into it, it is a token of prosperity to him; and instances in the cases of Abraham's servant, of Jacob, and of Moses, and here of Saul, who was informed of a kingdom, and anointed for it, see Gen. xxiv. 14, 21. and xxix. 10, 11. Exod. ii. 16. *and said unto them, is the seer here?* meaning, is he in the city? or is he at home? or is he in the country?

Ver. 12. *And they answered them, and said, he is, &c.*] That is, he is in the city; at home, and to be spoken with: *behold, he is before you*: his house is straight before you as you go along, you can't miss of it. Some Jewish writers say[f] they gave a token to know it by, that there was a cloud at the door, and when they saw that, they might know it was the seer's house: *haste now, for he came to-day to the city*; from the suburbs to it, or from his country-house, or from the other Ramah, for there were two of them, one over-against the other, see ch. i. 1. for that he was just now come off a circuit, is not so probable, since he was now old, and past riding his circuits; and indeed the meaning may be no more than as it may be rendered, *to-day he comes into the city*[g]; that is, he comes out of his own house into the city, and was then just coming out; so that, if they made haste, they might meet him in the street before he got to the place of sacrifice and feasting: *for there is a sacrifice of the people to-day in the high place*: whether it was the new moon, or some festival they observed, though the tabernacle was not there, is not certain; at which, besides the offerings required, free-will offerings and peace-offerings were brought by the people, on part of which they feasted with their friends; and very probably, as Samuel was acquainted by the Lord that he who was to be king of Israel would be with him that day, he might add to the sacrifices of the people, to make the entertainment the more grand and liberal; since he had a principal concern in ordering the guests, and dividing the portions, as well as blessing the food, which indeed he might take upon him, as being judge, priest, and prophet: this was an high place where this sacrifice or feast was; for Shiloh being destroyed, and the tabernacle removed elsewhere, and that being in one place, and the ark in another, and they not together, no distinction of places was made, none being yet chosen, all were fit; and particularly high places, which were always reckoned the most proper for divine service and sacrifice.

Ver. 13. *As soon as ye come into the city, ye shall straightway find him, &c.*] By which it seems that the house of Samuel was at that end of it at which they entered; and with which agrees what is observed in the preceding verse, that *he* was *before* them, his house was in sight of them: *before he go up to the high place to eat*; intimating they would, if they made haste, come up to him before he got thither to sit down and eat with the people; for if they did not, they would not be able to see him and speak with him for some time, if on that day: *for the people will not eat until he come*; partly out of affection and veneration for him, being their chief magistrate, as well as seer or prophet, and partly for the reason following: *because he doth bless the sacrifice*; ask a blessing upon it, upon the meat of the peace-offerings before it was eaten; for as this was usually done at every common meal, then much more at such a solemn festival as this. Jarchi gives us the form of blessing used on such an occasion, "blessed art thou, O Lord our God, the "King of the world, who hath sanctified us by his "commandments, and hath commanded us to eat the "sacrifice:" and *afterwards they eat that be bidden*; for when a man offered his peace-offerings, he not only had his family with him, but invited his friends, and the poor, and the fatherless, the strangers, and the Levites, to partake with him, see Deut. xii. 18. and xiv. 29. and xvi. 11. the number of the guests at this time, see in ver. 22. *Now therefore get ye up*; ascend the hill as fast as ye can; *for about this time ye shall find him*; that is, by the time they could get up the hill into the city they would find him coming out of his house to go to the sacrifice: or *as this day*[h]; so sure as the day is, so sure shall ye find him.

[d] טוב דברך Bonum verbum tuum, Pagninus, Montanus.
[e] In Pirke Eliezer, c. 36. fol. 39. 1. 2.
[f] Midrash Schemuel & Pesikta apud Abarbinel in loc.
[g] בא venit, Pagninus, Montanus.
[h] כהיום invenietis eum tam certo quam certum est hunc diem esse, Drusius; so Jarchi.

Ver. 14. *And they went up into the city*, &c.] Saul and his servant went up the hill to the city of Ramah: and *when they were come into the city*; were within it, within the walls of it; *behold, Samuel came out against them*; came out of a door of his house upon them, just as they came up: or *to meet them*[i]; his way to the high place lay where they were coming; unless it can be thought he went out purposely to meet them, having, as in the following verse, an intimation, that about that time one from the tribe of Benjamin, who should be king, would come to him, and so made this his way, knowing that one coming from that tribe must come that way; but it seems most likely that this was his readiest way: *for to go up to the high place*; or place of sitting down, or feasting, as the Targum, and so on ver. 12. see the note there.

Ver. 15. *Now the Lord had told Samuel in his ear*, &c.] In a private manner, whispering in his ear, telling him in a free, familiar, friendly way, as a secret: *a day before Saul came*; that he might prepare for the entertainment of him, and not be surprised at his coming, as well as hereby be assured he was the person designed to be king of Israel, when he should come: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 16. *To-morrow about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin*, &c.] Who without any thought or design of his own, but merely directed by the providence of God, should come to him, not expecting a kingdom; at most only to hear of his father's asses, and which way he should take to find them; missing the finding of which would and did bring him thither: *and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel*; the leader, ruler, and governor of them; to which high office he was to be appointed by pouring oil upon him, and was the first king on whom this ceremony was performed, and from whence he was called the Lord's anointed: *that he may save my people out of the hands of the Philistines*; who, since Samuel was grown old, made encroachments upon them, built garrisons on their borders, and made, it is very probable, incursions upon them, and ravages and oppressions of them: *for I have looked upon my people*; with an eye of pity and compassion: *because their cry is come unto me*: by reason of the oppressions of the Philistines, and the war they were threatened with by the Ammonites; though Abarbinel thinks this refers to their importunate cry, supplication, and request to have a king set over them.

Ver. 17. *And when Samuel saw Saul*, &c.] Who could not but take notice of him for his height, and which might give him a suspicion he was the man the Lord had spoken of to him; and the rather, because this was the exact time in which he was to be sent to him, and therefore he fixed his eyes upon him: and that he might be assured it was he, and be left at no uncertainty about it, *the Lord said unto him*; by a still small voice, or by an impulse upon his mind: *behold the man whom I spake to thee of*: yesterday, this is he: *this same shall reign over my people*; be their king, as they have desired: or *shall restrain*[k] them, keep them in due bounds, in the discharge of their duty to God and man; and keep them from doing that which is evil, or walking in evil ways, which is the business of a good king; or who shall restrain them from having their own will, but shall rule over them in an absolute manner, according to his own arbitrary will and pleasuse.

Ver. 18. *Then Saul drew near to Samuel in the gate*, &c.] Either at the door of his own house, just as he was coming out of it, or within the gate of the city; as Saul entered that, Samuel came to it, in order to go through it to the high place, which it is probable was without the city; wherefore it is very properly said that Samuel came out to meet them, ver. 14. *and said, tell me, I pray thee, where the seer's house is*; one knows not which to wonder at most, the simplicity and humility of Samuel to be in so plain an habit, unattended by servants, and yet going to a public festival, so that he seemed to be no other than a common man, to be inquired of whereabout his house was; or the ignorance of Saul, who had lived so long in the world, and so near Samuel, and yet had never seen and knew not the chief magistrate in the nation, so famous both for his civil and religious character.

Ver. 19. *And Samuel answered Saul, and said, I am the seer*, &c.] For he supposed, by inquiring for his house, that his business was with him; wherefore this he said, not as boasting of his character and office, or in the pride and vanity of his mind, but merely for information-sake: *go up before me unto the high place*; instead of returning home with him, he invited him to go to the place of feasting, as the Targum, whither he was going to partake of the entertainment there; and he bids him go before him, either because he was an old man, and could not go his pace, or he had business to do by the way, or this was in honour to Saul, whom he knew was to be king of Israel: *for ye shall eat with me to-day*; he and his servant, at the public feast: he insisted upon his dining, or it may be rather supping with him: *and to-morrow I will let thee go*; for it being in the evening when this feast was, he could not depart that night, but must stay till morning, and then he promised to dismiss him: *and will tell thee all that is in thine heart*; answer all questions he had in his mind to ask him, for which he came into the city, and inquired for his house. The Jews[l] have a tradition that it was in the heart of Saul that he should be a king, having in a vision seen himself placed on the top of a palm-tree, which was a sign of royalty, and this Samuel told him.

Ver. 20. *And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago*, &c.] Which, according to Kimchi, is to be understood not of the time from whence they were lost, but to be reckoned from the time that Saul had been seeking of them; so the Targum, "as to the business of the asses, which are lost to thee, and thou art "come to seek them to-day, these three days:" though it is probable enough that the same day they were lost Saul set out to seek them. Now Samuel telling him of the asses that were lost, and of the time of their

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[i] לקראתם in occursam eorum, Pagninus, Montanus; eis obviam, V. L. Tigurine version.

[k] יעצר cohibebit, Montanus; continebit, Tigurine version; retinebit, Drusius; i. e. coercebit, Piscator.

[l] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. G.

being lost, or of his seeking them, so exactly, before ever he said a word to him about them, must at once convince him that he was a true prophet, and which must prepare him to give credit to all that he should hereafter say to him: *set not thy mind on them, for they are found*: of the truth of which he could not doubt, after he had said the above words; and which he said to make his mind easy, that he might the more cheerfully attend the feast, and be the more willing to stay all night: *and on whom is all the desire of Israel?* which was to have a king; in this they were unanimous, and who so fit and proper as Saul, it is intimated, whom Samuel knew God had chosen and appointed to be king over them? is it *not on thee, and on all thy father's house?* not that the Israelites had their eye on Saul, and their desire after him to be their king, though he was such an one as they wished for; but that as this desire of theirs was granted, it would issue and terminate in him and his family; he should be advanced to the throne, which would be attended with the promotion of his father's house, as Abner particularly, who was his uncle's son, and was made the general of the army.

Ver. 21. *And Saul answered and said, am not I a Benjamite*, &c.] Or the son of Jemini, the name of one of his ancestors, see ver. 1. or rather, as the Targum, a son of the tribe of Benjamin: *of the smallest of the tribes of Israel?* having been greatly reduced, even to the number of 600 men, by the fatal war between that tribe and the rest, on account of the Levite's concubine, and is called little Benjamin, Psal. lxviii. 27. *and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?* the smallest in number, had the least share of authority in the tribe, and of land and cattle, wealth and substance: *wherefore then speakest thou so to me?* Saul presently understood Samuel's meaning, that he should be chosen king of Israel, the affair of a king being at this time in every one's mind and mouth; but could not believe that one of so small a tribe, and which sprung from the youngest son of Jacob, and of so mean a family, would be raised to such dignity, but that a person of great figure and character would be pitched upon; and therefore he took Samuel to be in joke, as Josephus[m] says, and not in earnest.

Ver. 22. *And Samuel took Saul and his servant, and brought them into the parlour*, &c.] The dining-room of the house, which belonged to the high place: *and made them sit in the chiefest place among them that were bidden*: and who very probably were the principal persons in the city; and yet Saul was placed at the head of them by Samuel, to convince him that what he had said to him was in earnest, and to do him honour before all the people; and for the sake of him, and to shew his respect to him, he placed his servant, his minister, also in the chief place with him; what was reckoned the highest and most honourable places at table, see the note on Matt. xxiii. 6. The guests were placed by the master of the feast according to their rank; and the dignity of the person, as Jarchi observes, was known by his manners and place of sitting: *which were about* 30 *persons*; more or less; Josephus[n] says 70, disagreeing with the text, the Targum, Syriac and Arabic versions, but agreeing with the Septuagint.

Ver. 23. *And Samuel said unto the cook*, &c.] That dressed and prepared the food for the entertainment of the guests: *bring the portion which I gave thee*: to dress; for part of the provisions of the feast was Samuel's, and the other part the people's that brought the peace-offerings: *of which I said unto thee, set it by thee*: don't bring it in with the rest, but keep it in the cook-room till called for.

Ver. 24. *And the cook took up the shoulder, and that which was upon it*, &c.] Meaning either, as some think, some sauce that was poured on it, or garnish about it; or the thigh, as the Targum, and so Jarchi, Kimchi, and others; or rather the breast, as a more ancient Jew[o]; since this joined to the shoulder before separated, and in sacrifices went along with it; though most think this was the left shoulder and breast, because the right shoulder and breast of the peace-offerings were given to the priest, to be eaten by him and his sons, Lev. vii. 34. but in those unsettled times, with respect to sacrifices, many things were dispensed with; and Samuel, though a Levite, might officiate as a priest, and so the right shoulder and breast belonged to him as such; and this best accounts for his having the disposal of it; and upon this extraordinary occasion, Saul, though not the son of a priest, might be admitted to eat of it, it being the choicest part, and fit to be set before one designed to be king; and to shew that he was to live in friendship with the priests of the Lord, and to take care of and protect the ministerial function: *and set it before Saul*; by the direction of Samuel no doubt, as a token of honour and respect unto him; it being usual in other countries to commend the best dishes, or best pieces of flesh, to the more excellent and worthy persons at table[p]; and this was, as Josephus[q] calls it, a royal portion: the arm or shoulder, especially the right arm, being a symbol of strength, may denote that strength which was necessary for him to bear the burden of government, to protect his people, and fight in defence of them; and the breast being the seat of wisdom and prudence, of affection and love, may signify how necessary such qualities were for kingly government, to know how to go in and out before the people, and be heartily concerned for their good: *and* Samuel *said, behold that which is left*; not by the guests, and what they could not eat; for till Samuel came they did not begin to eat; and as for this part, it was but just brought in, and was never set before the guests, but it was left by Samuel in the hands of the cook, and reserved for the use of Saul: *set it before thee*, and *eat*; it was already set before him, but he would have him keep it by him, and eat of it, and make his meal of it, it being the best dish at the table: *for unto this time* hath it *been kept for thee*; by which he gave him to understand that he knew of his coming before-hand, and therefore had made this provision for him; and which might serve to persuade him of the truth and certainty of what he had

[m] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 1.
[n] Ibid.
[o] R. Eliezer in T. Bab. Avodah Zara, fol. 25. 1.

[p] Vid. Diodor. Sicul. l. 5. p. 306.
[q] Ut supra.

hinted to him: since *I said I have invited the people*; not the thirty persons before mentioned, for it does not appear that they were invited by Samuel, but rather by those who brought the peace-offerings, who had a right to invite any of their friends they thought fit; but by *the people* are meant Saul and his servant; for in the eastern languages two or three persons, and even one, are called a people; and this Samuel had said to his cook, when he bid him set by the shoulder, and what was on it, because he had invited some, for whom he had designed it: *so Saul did eat with Samuel that day*: they dined together.

Ver. 25. *And when they came down from the high place into the city*, &c.] After the feast was ended; and though Ramah itself was situated on an eminence, yet it seems this high place was higher than that, being without the city upon an hill, and therefore they are said to come down from the one to the other; or they came down from the high place, and then ascended the hill to the city: Samuel *communed with Saul upon the top of the house*, of Samuel's house; when they were come thither, Samuel took Saul up to the roof of his house, which was flat,as the roofs of houses in this country were; see Deut. xxii. 8. on which they could walk to and fro, and converse together; hence you read of preaching and praying on house-tops, Matt. x. 27. Acts x. 9. what they communed about is not said, but may be guessed at, that it was about Saul's being made king; of the certainty of it, by divine designation; of the manner of executing that office wisely and justly; about the objections Saul had made of the smallness of his tribe and family; and of Samuel's willingness to resign the government to him, with other things of the like kind.

Ver. 26. *And they arose early*, &c.] Neither of them being able to sleep, as Abarbinel supposes; not Samuel for thinking what he was to do the next morning, anoint Saul king over Israel; nor Saul for what Samuel had hinted to him about the desire of all Israel being upon him, and for the honour done him at the feast, and because of the conversation they had together afterwards: *and it came to pass about the spring of the day*; or the *ascents of the morning*[x], when day was about to break, before the sun was up: *that Samuel called Saul to the top of the house*; where they had conversed together the evening before: *saying, up, that I may send thee away*; meaning not rise from his bed, for he was risen; but that he would prepare to set out on his journey, that Samuel might take his leave of him for the present, when he had accompanied him some part of his way, as he intended; and he was the more urgent upon him, because there was something to be done before people were stirring: *and Saul arose, and they went out both of them, he and Samuel, abroad*; out of Samuel's house, without-doors, into the street.

Ver. 27. And *as they were going down to the end of the city*, &c.] That end of it that led the way to the place where Saul was going. As this city was built on an hill, going to the end of it was a declivity, a descent: *Samuel said to Saul, bid the servant pass on before us*; being another man's servant, he did not choose of himself to bid him go on, but desired his master to order him to go before them, that he might not hear what Samuel had to say to Saul, or see what he did unto him; for as the choice of Saul to be king was to be declared by lot, as coming from the Lord, all those precautions were taken of rising early, and going abroad, and sending the servant before them, that it might not be thought that Samuel did this of himself: *and he passed on*; his master bidding him: *but stand thou still a while*; that he might hear the better, and more attentively than in walking; such a posture was most fitting also for what was to be done, anointing him with oil: *that I may shew thee the word of God*; tell him more of the mind of God concerning his being king, and declare more fully the word, will, and decree of God about that matter, by an action which would put it out of all doubt that he was the man God designed to be king, as in the following chapter.

CHAP. X.

IN this chapter we read of Saul's being anointed king by Samuel, ver. 1. and of certain signs given as confirming the same, which should come to pass, and did, before Saul got to his father's house, ver. 2—13. of his arrival at his father's house, and of what passed between him and his uncle there, ver. 14—16. of Samuel's calling all Israel together at Mizpeh, and of the election of Saul by lot to be king, and of his being declared such, ver. 17—25. and of his return to his city, being respected by some, and despised by others, ver. 26, 27.

Ver. 1. *Then Samuel took a phial of oil*, &c.] Out of his pocket very probably, which he brought along with him on purpose for the use he made of it: this, as the Jews[y] say, was not the anointing oil that was in the tabernacle, which was at another and distant place, and with which only the kings of the house of David were anointed; but common oil, or, as they say, oil of balsam; and this was not an horn, but a phial, which held a small quantity, and was brittle; and they observe that Saul and Jehu, who were anointed with a phial, their reigns were short, whereas David and Solomon, who were anointed with a horn, their reigns were long; and as oil is a symbol of the gifts and graces of the spirit, it may denote a smaller measure conferred on Saul than on David and Solomon: *and kissed him*; congratulating him on the dignity he was raised to, and in reverence and respect to him, because of the high office he was arrived to; and as a token of subjection and homage, and to testify his well-pleasedness in his being king, and that he readily, willingly, and with pleasure resigned the government to him: *and said, is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be*

[x] כעלות השחר circa ascendere auroram, Montanus; quum ascenderet aurora, Junius & Tremellius.

[y] T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 11. 2. & 12. 1.

captain over his inheritance? the people of Israel, so called, Deut. xxxii. 9. and which is observed here to shew, that though Saul was anointed king over them, they were the Lord's possession still, and he was accountable to him for his government and usage of them, over whom he was to be a captain, leader, and commander, to go before them, and fight their battles for them, of which his being anointed with oil was a token; and therefore it is said, *is it not?* or dost thou not see by this? or knowest thou not, as R. Isaiah supplies it, that this is of the Lord? for it was the Lord that anointed him, or Samuel by his orders; and such questions as these, as Kimchi observes, are for the greater confirmation of what is spoken; and if Saul had any doubt upon his mind, as perhaps he might because of his meanness, and the high honour designed hereby, not only this question is put, but three following signs are given him, whereby he might be assured of the truth of it.

Ver. 2. *When thou art departed from me to-day*, &c.] Not as soon as he was departed, for he had some few miles to go from Ramah to Rachel's grave near Bethlehem: *thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulchre, in the border of Benjamin, at Zelzah:* the Jews move a difficulty here, that Rachel's sepulchre should be said to be in the border of Benjamin, when it was by Bethlehem-ephrath, in the tribe of Judah, Gen. xxxv. 19. Mic. v. 2. and which they solve by observing, that these men were now, at the time Samuel was speaking, by the grave of Rachel, but as they were coming on he would meet them at Zelzah, in the border of Benjamin[a]; but there is no need of this, Rachel's grave was not at Beth-lehem, but in the way to it; and besides, as these two tribes were contiguous, and this city being on the borders of both, it might be said at one time to be in the border of Benjamin, and at another in the border of Judah, or in Judah, without any contradiction. Of Zelzah we nowhere else read, but it is plain it was near the sepulchre of Rachel, and perhaps nearer than Beth-lehem. The Arabic geographer[a] speaks of Rachel's grave as in the midway between Jerusalem and Beth-lehem; and says there were 12 stones upon it, and a stone arched vault over it; and the same is affirmed by Benjamin of Tudela[b], who makes it to be but half a mile from Beth-lehem. Jarchi would have Zelzah to be the same with Jerusalem, which is not probable: *and they will say unto thee, the asses which thou wentest to seek are found;* as Samuel had before told Saul they were, ch. ix. 20. *and, lo, thy father hath left the care of the asses;* or had left all thoughts about them, and concern for them, not minding whether he heard of them or no, and this before they were found; or otherwise it would have been no strange thing to drop all thoughts about them, when they were found: *and sorroweth for you;* for Saul, and his servant; such was the anxiety and distress of his mind lest any evil should befall them, having been gone so long in quest of the asses, that he had as it were forgot them, and lost all care and concern about them, in comparison of his son and servant; but especially his sorrow rose high for his son, as follows: *saying, what shall I do for my son?* though he was concerned for his servant, yet most for his son; he might have another servant, and not another son, and Saul seems to be his only one, which made his grief for him the greater, see 1 Chron. viii. 33. and ix. 39. Now as these were contingent events here foretold, as meeting with two men at a certain place described, the words related expressly they should say to him when he met them, and these exactly coming to pass, would most clearly prove Samuel to be a true prophet, and confirm Saul in the belief of what he had said and done to him concerning the kingdom. Another sign follows.

Ver. 3. *Then shalt thou go on forward from thence*, &c.] From Zelzah and Rachel's sepulchre there: *and thou shalt come to the plain of Tabor;* not that which lay at the bottom of the famous and well-known mountain Tabor; for that was in the tribe of Zebulun, at a great distance from hence: but a plain, so called perhaps from the name of the owner of it: *and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Beth-el;* the same with Luz, where Jacob built an altar, and called upon God; and so Elohim-beth-el here is the same with El-beth-el, Gen. xxxv. 6, 7. Here was an high place as at Ramah, whither in those times, when there was no fixed place for worship, the tabernacle at one place, and the ark at another, the people went up to worship; and they might the rather choose this, because it was a place devoted to the worship and service of God by their father Jacob; so the Targum paraphrases it, "going up to worship God in Beth-el;" so Josephus[c], they were going thither to pray, and, as it seems by what follows, to sacrifice: *one carrying three kids;* which were used in sacrifice, and were a pretty heavy load if carried far; though, according to Josephus[d], it was but one *kid: and another carrying three loaves of bread;* for the minchah, the meat-offering, or rather bread-offering, Lev. ii. 4. *and another carrying a bottle of wine;* for the drink-offering, the fourth part of an hin of wine being required for each kid, Numb. xv. 5, 11. This bottle, Ben Melech says, was a bottle made of skin, a leathern bottle or bag, or a potter's vessel or pitcher; the Targum renders it, a flagon of wine.

Ver. 4. *And they will salute thee*, &c.] Not as king, of which they knew nothing, but in a common way; and though a stranger and unknown to them, yet finding their hearts disposed and affected towards him, would inquire of his welfare, and wish him all happiness, peace, and prosperity: *and give thee two loaves of bread;* which was pretty much that they should give him two out of three, and leave but one for themselves, and especially if they were going to sacrifice; but perhaps they knew they could buy more bread at Beth-el, and so were disposed to give two of their loaves to Saul, one for himself and another for his servant; though Kimchi thinks that these are not the same before called loaves; and indeed the word *loaves* is not in the text, but cakes of bread, which were lesser

[a] Bereshit Rabba, sect. 82. fol. 71. 4. R. Isaiah, Jarchi, Kimchi, Abarbinel, & Abendana in loc.
[a] Climat. 3. par. 5.

[b] Itinerar. p. 47.
[c] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 2.
[d] Ibid.

than loaves, and which they carried for their own use, besides three loaves of bread: *which thou shalt receive of their hands*: being sent out by Samuel early that morning without eating any food, and having travelled some miles, might become weary and faint, and which the three men might discern, and so had compassion on them, and relieved them; and Saul was not to refuse the offer of them, but take them at their hands, though he was anointed to be king; and this was to teach him humility, and to be kind to the poor and needy, and relieve them when he was in more elevated circumstances. All these actions also were contingent, and when they came to pass, as they did, must be still more confirming than the former sign.

Ver. 5. *After that thou shalt come to the hill of God*, &c.] The Targum is, the hill in which was the ark of the Lord, and that was in the house of Abinadab, on a hill in the city of Kirjath-jearim, ch. vii. 1. and so the Jewish commentators generally interpret this hill of God of Kirjath-jearim; but rather it was Geba, a city of Benjamin, partly because by this time he must have got out of the tribe of Judah into the tribe of Benjamin, and even almost to the end of his journey, and among those that were his relations, ver. 11, 14. and partly because it is certain there was a garrison of the Philistines at Geba, ch. xiii. 3. as there was at this place, as follows: *where is the garrison of the Philistines*: which they were allowed by the terms of peace made between Israel and them; or which through their growing power over them in the latter days of Samuel they placed there, and which yet they kept, without giving the people any molestation in their worship and service: *and it shall come to pass, when thou art come thither to the city*: to the city Geba, or near it: *that thou shalt meet a company of prophets*: of Scribes, as the Targum; which were, as Kimchi observes, disciples; for the disciples of the wise men were called Scribes, and these were the disciples of prophets, the same with the sons of the prophets; and the prophets that were at this time, as he says, from Eli to David, were Elkanah, Samuel, Gad, Nathan, Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun; here was a school or college of young prophets, where they were trained up, under the care and tuition of one or other of the above prophets, in the knowledge of the word of God, in psalmody, and other religious exercises; for though the word of the Lord was scarce and precious in the beginning of Samuel's time, yet through his industry, influence, and encouragement, divine knowledge was greatly promoted, and many were trained up and qualified to instruct the people; who, though they had not the gift of foretelling future events, or of the vision of prophecy, yet had gifts qualifying for the edification of the people; and out of these schools and colleges God sometimes raised up prophets in the highest sense, who foretold things to come, and to whom the Lord appeared in dreams and visions. And this company Saul would meet *coming down from the high place*; where they had been to worship, to sacrifice, or to pray, for here was an high place for such service, as well as at Ramah: *with a psaltery, and a tabret, and a pipe, and a harp, before them*: which were several instruments of *music* used in singing praises to God in those times: *and they shall prophesy*; or praise, as the Targum, sing praises at the same time they played on their instruments of music; and singing praises is one sort of prophesying, see 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2, 3. and in which sense it seems to be used in 1 Cor. xi. 4, 5.

Ver. 6. *And the spirit of the Lord will come upon thee*, &c.] As a spirit of prophecy, so the Targum; whereby he would be enabled at once to compose psalms and hymns of praise, and sing them in a proper manner, though he had not been trained up in this exercise in the school of the prophets; which made it more wonderful to those that knew him: *and thou shalt prophesy with them*: or *praise* with them, as the same Targum; join with them in singing praises, and perform this service in an orderly manner, as if he had been instructed in it, and used to it: *and shalt be turned into another man*; for the spirit of God would not only operate on him in that way, as to fit him for composing and singing psalms and hymns, but inspire him with wisdom, and prudence, and greatness of mind, and with every qualification necessary for a king; so that he would appear quite another man than he was before, in his outward behaviour, as well as in the endowments of his mind; and from a rustic, an husbandman, a farmer's son, would appear with the air of a prince, and in the majesty of a king; and, as Procopius Gazæus, have a royal mind or heart given him.

Ver. 7. *And let it be, when these signs are come unto thee*, &c.] And are all fulfilled, especially the last: *that thou do as occasion shall serve thee*; as his circumstances would require, and as he in his great wisdom and prudence, with which he should now be furnished, would see necessary to prepare for his taking upon him the kingdom he was anointed to, and would be in a little time openly chosen to, and invested with. Some understand this of royal ornaments befitting a king, or of preparing arms for the defence of the kingdom: *for God is with thee*; or the Word of the Lord is thy help, as the Targum, and therefore he need not fear engaging in any enterprise that might be for the glory of God, and good of the kingdom.

Ver. 8. *And thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal*, &c.] Not immediately; for the first summons of the people, and of Saul, and the first meeting of them by Samuel, were at Mizpeh, where Saul was chosen by lot; nor the first time of Saul's being at Gilgal, when the kingdom was renewed; for Saul had no need to wait seven days there, since he and Samuel went together, ch. xi. 14. rather at the second time of his being there, where not staying the time quite up, was reproved for it, which was two years after this, ch. xiii. 1, 8, 13. though it may be this was a general rule to be observed by Saul, that whenever any thing turned up of importance to the children of Israel, and was a difficulty with him, he should go to Gilgal, and there wait seven days for Samuel, from the time he gave him notice of it, who would come at the appointed time, and would give him what advice and instructions were necessary; and this place was the rather appointed, because it was the place where the Israelites first pitched their camp when they came over Jordan, and where the tabernacle first was; and where prayer and sacrifices were wont to be made; and where the king-

dom of Saul was renewed; and which lay convenient for all the tribes, both on the one and the other side of Jordan: *and, behold, I will come down to thee to offer burnt-offerings*, and *to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings*; so he did when the kingdom was renewed, and Saul was confirmed in it, ch. xi. 15. but two years after, Saul not staying the full time, he offered them himself by another, for which he was reproved, ch. xiii. 9—13. *seven days shalt thou tarry till I come to thee*; either from the time of the notice he should give to Samuel of his going thither, or from the time of his arrival there; for it can by no means be understood as from the time of his present departure from him, for the reasons before given: *and shew thee what thou shalt do*; in the then present emergency or difficulty on his hands; and this he said to encourage him under the weight and burden of government laid upon him.

Ver. 9. *And it was so, that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel*, &c.] When he had taken his leave of him, and set forward on his journey: *God gave him another heart*; not in a moral or spiritual sense, not a new heart, and a new spirit, as in conversion, but in a civil sense, a right heart, a heart fit for government; filled with wisdom and prudence to rule a people; with courage and magnanimity to protect and defend them against their enemies, and fight for them; a heart not taken up with the affairs of husbandry, with care for his father's asses, and looking after his herds, but filled with concern for the civil welfare of Israel, and with schemes and contrivances for their good, and with warm resolutions to deliver them out of the hands of their enemies: *and all these signs came to pass that day*; the two first, which are not particularly mentioned as fulfilled, being more private, as finding two men at Rachel's sepulchre, and meeting with three others going to Beth-el, which came to pass just as they were described; and the third, which was more public, and gave Saul more reverence and respect among the people, is next particularly observed.

Ver. 10. *When they came thither to the hill*, &c.] Or to Gibeah, as the Targum, and so Josephus [e]: *behold, a company of prophets met him*; as foretold, ver. 5. *and the spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he prophesied among them*; the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum, and he sung praises among them; he joined with them in their psalmody, and performed it as regularly as if he had been brought up with them. The Jews say [f] he prophesied of the world to come, of Gog and Magog, and of the rewards of the righteous, and of the punishment of the wicked.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, that when all that knew him before-time*, &c.] As there must be many that personally knew him, and were acquainted with him, since Gibeah, the place he was near to, was his native place: *saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets*; or praised among them, as the Targum, sung psalms and hymns with them: *what is this that is come unto the son of Kish?* a rustic, a plebeian, that never was in the school of the prophets, or learned music, and yet is as dexterous at it as any of them: *is Saul also among the prophets?* an husbandman, an herdsman that looked after his father's farms, fields, and cattle, and now among the prophets of the Lord, bearing his part with them, and performing it as well as any of them: this was matter of wonder to those who knew his person, family, and education; and so it was equally matter of admiration that Saul the persecutor, one of the same tribe, should be among the preachers of the Gospel, Acts ix. 21.

Ver. 12. *And one of the same place answered, and said*, &c.] One of the same city, and in the same company, that expressed their admiration at what was come to Saul, and at what he did, and wondering how he came into such company, and to have such a gift, who was of so mean an education: *but who is their father?* the father of the prophets; their fathers were not prophets, no more than Saul's was; their father that taught them is the Lord, and he was able to teach Saul, and bestow on him the gift of prophecy, as well as on them; and so the Targum, *who is their master?* or teacher; for though they might have an under-master or teacher, as Samuel, or another prophet, yet their chief teacher was God; who could and did give men the gift of prophecy, and even in the highest sense, who had neither prophets for their fathers, nor were indeed trained up in any of the schools of the prophets, which was the case of Amos: *therefore it became a proverb, is Saul also among the prophets?* that when a person of a mean parentage, and of a low life and education, was raised up to any degree of dignity in sacred and civil things, they used to apply this proverbial expression to him, or speak of him in this manner, *is Saul among the prophets?*

Ver. 13. *And when he had made an end of prophesying*, &c.] For, as Procopius Gazæus observes, he had not the gift of prophecy always; it did not continue with him, but, like that of the seventy elders in the times of Moses, it was designed to make him respectable among the people, and to be taken notice of as a person that God had honoured with a peculiar gift, that so, when he should be chosen king, they would the more readily receive him: *he came to the high place*; to return thanks to God for the gift bestowed on him, and for that high honour and dignity he was raised unto, of which he had private knowledge; and to pray to God to fit him more and more for government, and to assist him in it, and help him to discharge his office in a wise and faithful manner.

Ver. 14. *And Saul's uncle said unto him, and to his servant, whither went ye?* &c.] Since they had been absent so long a time. This was his father's brother, as the Targum, and so Aquila; whose name was Ner, the father of Abner, ch. xiv. 50, 51. who met with him at the high place, or found him in the city, in his father's house it may be. Josephus [g] says, Saul went into the house of his kinsman Abner, whom he loved above all his relations, and that it was he that discoursed with Saul, and asked him the questions before and after related: *and he said, to seek the asses*; he first observes the end of their going, the business they went upon, in which not succeeding, then he answers

[e] Ut supra.
[f] Hieron. Trad Heb. fol. 75. H.

[g] Ut supra, sect. 3.

more directly to the question: *and when we saw that they were nowhere;* could not see them, nor find them any where, or hear of them where they went: *we came to Samuel;* at Ramah, to inquire of him, if he could direct us which way to go, and what methods to take, to find the asses.

Ver. 15. *And Saul's uncle said,* &c.] On hearing he had been with Samuel, and perceiving so great an alteration in Saul, perhaps he began to suspect something about the kingdom; it being what every one was talking of, and expecting every day to hear from Samuel who should be king, according to the Lord's appointment: *tell me, I pray thee, what Samuel said unto you:* the earnestness with which he put this question seems to confirm the above conjecture.

Ver. 16. *And Saul said unto his uncle,* &c.] In answer to his question: *he told us plainly the asses were found;* or *in telling told us*[a]; not only plainly in so many words, but he affirmed it with the greatest certainty that the asses were found, and we need not give ourselves further trouble about them: *but of the matter of the kingdom, whereof Samuel spake, he told him not;* he said not one word about that, which is commonly ascribed to his modesty; or he might conceal it, as Josephus[l] observes, because he thought it would not be believed by his relations, or might create in them envy to him; and besides, he knew it was the pleasure of Samuel that it should be kept a secret until the election by lot was over, lest it should be thought to proceed from Samuel himself; and Saul chose it should remain so, that it might not be thought to be of his own seeking; and by keeping it from his relations and friends, it would be a clear case that he did not make interest for it.

Ver. 17. *And Samuel called the people together unto the Lord at Mizpeh.*] Not that in Gilead, but in the tribe of Benjamin, where the people had been before convened on a certain occasion, ch. vii. 5. and the people called together could not be every individual of the nation, but the heads and elders of the people, their representatives, and who were summoned by the orders of Samuel; perhaps by an herald making proclamation and cry of the same, as the word signifies; and these were gathered together to the Lord, to have the following affair transacted before him, and under his guidance and direction; the priest perhaps being here with the Urim and Thummim, as Kimchi thinks, and who also conjectures that the ark might be brought hither at this time, the symbol of the divine Presence; though wherever the church and people of God were gathered together in his name, in a solemn manner, there the Lord was.

Ver. 18. *And said unto the children of Israel,* &c.] In the name of the Lord, using the phrase which the prophets used when they spoke in the name of the Lord: *thus saith the Lord God of Israel;* the great Jehovah, the Being of beings, the covenant-God of his people Israel: *I brought up Israel out of Egypt;* when in bondage there, with a mighty hand and stretched-out arm, by means of signs and wonders done by the hands of Moses and Aaron; the Lord working mightily with them, and thereby inclining Pharaoh and his people to let them go: *and delivered you out of the hand of the Egyptians;* at the Red sea, drowning them in it, when they threatened Israel with an utter destruction: *and out of the hand of all kingdoms, and of them that oppressed you;* as the Arabic writers, the kingdoms of Og and Bashan in their way to Canaan, and the Mesopotamians, Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, Ammonites, and Philistines, in the times of the judges; all which is observed to shew their ingratitude, and aggravate their guilt.

Ver. 19. *And ye have this day rejected your God,* &c.] As their king, by desiring another to be set over them: *who himself saved you out of all your adversities and your tribulations;* that they had been in at any time in Egypt, in their passage through the wilderness to Canaan, and after they were settled there: *ye have said unto him,* nay, *but set a king over us;* they did as good as say God should not be their King, but they would have one set over them like the kings of the nations about them; Samuel reminds them of this their request and resolution to have a king, which they had expressed some time ago, that it might appear to them that this was wholly of their own seeking; the motion came from themselves, and not from the Lord, nor from Samuel, and therefore, whatever ill consequences might follow upon it, they had none to blame but themselves: *now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes, and by your thousands;* by the heads of their tribes, and by the rulers of the thousands into which their tribes were divided, that it might be known either by Urim and Thummim, or rather by casting lots, out of which tribe, and out of which thousand, house, and family in it, their king was to be chosen; which method, as it would clearly appear to be a choice directed by the Lord, so it would prevent all contention and discord among themselves.

Ver. 20. *And when Samuel had caused all the tribes to come near,* &c.] The heads and representatives of them, to the place where the lots were cast: *the tribe of Benjamin was taken;* the lot fell upon that tribe for the choice of a king out of it; not the tribe of Reuben, who was the first-born, nor the tribe of Judah, to whom the kingdom was promised, but the tribe of Benjamin, the least of all the tribes, and which sprung from the youngest son of Jacob, contrary, as it were probable, to the expectation of all.

Ver. 21. *And when he had caused the tribe of Benjamin to come near by their families,* &c.] By the heads of them, to have lots cast for them, out of which of the families the king should be chosen: *the family of Matri was taken;* that is, by lot; the lot fell upon that family for the choice of a king out of them: in the account of the families of the tribe of Benjamin, 1 Chron. viii. no mention is made of this family, nor any where else, and yet no doubt there was such a family, and Saul was of it; it seems to have its name from the butt or mark arrows were shot at; some of the Benjaminites being famous for their skill in darting and slinging, and perhaps this family might be so: *and Saul the son of Kish was taken;* the lot being cast upon the men in the family of Matri, though it is not expressed, fell upon Saul; for though he was not there,

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[a] הגד הגיד indicando indicavit, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

[l] Ut supra.

as Jarchi observes, the lot fell upon him; for their names were written on a piece of paper, and put into a box, and the prophet put in his hand and took out one, and on that was the name of Saul, and this was the manner of the lot: *and when they sought him, he could not be found*; because he had hid himself, as in the next verse; it is very probable, and indeed plain, that he was in this assembly at the first opening of it; and knowing what Samuel had said and done to him, and perceiving in what way the lot was going concerning the same, the tribe of Benjamin being taken, he concluded how it would issue, and therefore left the assembly, and hid himself, as follows.

Ver. 22. *Therefore they inquired of the Lord further*, &c.] Or again, by lot, by which they knew who the person was that was chosen king, but they did not know where he was, and therefore inquire further how they must come at him; and this inquiry was made either before the high-priest by Urim and Thummim, or by Samuel the prophet of the Lord: and the inquiry was, *if the man should yet come thither*; whether he was already come, or would come there, and if not, what methods they must take to find him: *and the Lord answered, behold, he hath hid himself among the stuff*: the word signifies household stuff, vessels, utensils, arms, *&c.* which the people had brought along with them for their use, and were laid up in some one place; and among these baggages Saul hid himself, hoping that if he was not found they would proceed to another choice, so free from ambition was he, and such was his modesty; nor does this seem to be affected and dissembled, but real; though afterwards, when he was settled in the kingdom, he did not care to part with it, and sought to kill David, whom he looked upon as his rival: there were many things which now concurred, that made him uneasy and unwilling to assume the government of the people; partly the envy and ill will of some of them, which he must expect; chiefly the sense he had of his own unfitness for such an office, being of a mean family, and having had so mean an education, and so little knowledge of the maxims of government; and besides, must at once, as soon as on the throne, enter into a war with the Ammonites; but what might most of all distress him, he perceived by Samuel's speech to the people, that the affair of a king was displeasing to the Lord, though he condescended to grant the people's request; and therefore what comfort and happiness could he expect in such a situation?

Ver. 23. *And they ran and fetched him thence*, &c.] Being in haste to see their king elect, and proclaim him: *and when he stood among the people*; being brought among them, and presented to them: *he was higher than any of the people, from the shoulders, and upwards*; which made him look very graceful and majestic; height of stature, and a comely form, as Kimchi observes, recommend to royal dignity; and make the people stand more in awe of a prince, and have always been reckoned among all other nations to make a prince venerable, see the note on ch. ix. 2.

Ver. 24. *And Samuel said to all the people, see ye him whom the Lord hath chosen*, &c.] For the choice being made by lot, the disposal of which is of the Lord, it is properly attributed to him, and the people could not object to it, but must allow it was the Lord's doing. Eupolemus[k], an Heathen writer, says, that Saul was made king by Samuel by the counsel or will of God; and Samuel appeals to their eyes for the goodness of the choice, a better could not have been made: *that there is none like him among the people?* so graceful, so stately, so prince-like and majestic; they wanted to have a king like such the nations had; and Saul was such an one, had all the outward appearance of grandeur that could be wished for, and which in other nations recommended persons to the imperial dignity: *and all the people shouted*; made a general huzza: *and said, God save the king*; or *let the king live*[l]; they owned and saluted him as their king, and prayed he might live long to reign over them; the Targum is, "let the king prosper;" let his reign be prosperous and glorious, and let him enjoy all health and happiness, peace and prosperity.

Ver. 25. *Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom*, &c.] According to Ben Gersom, he laid before them the power a king had over his people, and the punishment he might inflict upon them, if they rebelled against him; and some think this is the same he delivered in ch. viii. concerning the arbitrary power of their kings, and how they would be used by them; and which he here repeated, and then wrote it, that it might be a testimony against them hereafter; with which what Josephus[m] says pretty much agrees, that in the hearing of the king he foretold what would befall them, and then wrote it, and laid it up, that it might be a witness of his predictions; but that in ch. viii. Samuel said, was the manner of their king, or how he would use them, but this the manner of the kingdom, and how the government of it was to be managed and submitted to, what was the office of a king, and what the duties of the subject; and yet was different from, at least not the same with that in Deut. xvii. 15, 16, 17. for that had been written and laid up already: *and wrote it in a book, and laid it up before the Lord*; in the ark of the Lord, as Kimchi; or rather by the ark of the Lord, on one side of it, as Ben Gersom; or best of all, as Josephus[n], in the tabernacle of the Lord, where recourse might be had to it, at any time, at least by a priest, and where it would be safe, and be preserved to future times: *and Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house*; for though Saul was chosen king, he did not take upon him the exercise of government directly, but left it to Samuel to dismiss the people, who had been for many years their chief magistrate.

Ver. 26. *And Saul also went home to Gibeah*, &c.] His native place, where was his father's house, to which he retired; where were no royal palace, or princely court, nor any of the ensigns of kingly majesty; and whither it does not appear that he was followed by the nobility or princes of the tribes, only accompanied by a few men, as next observed: *and there went with him a band of men*; an army, or part of one; they seem to be military men, at least men of strength,

[k] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.
[l] יחי המלך vivat rex, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.
[m] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 6.
[n] Ibid.

valour, and courage; gallant men, who, in honour to their king elect, freely offered themselves to be his body-guard, however, until he was come to his house at Gibeah; the Targum is only, "some of the people:" *whose heart God had touched;* and inclined to shew honour and respect to their king; the Targum describes them, "men that feared to sin, and in whose "hearts the fear of God was put."

Ver. 27. *But the children of Belial said*, &c.] Wicked, dissolute, lawless persons; men without a yoke, as the word signifies, who did not care to be under the yoke of government, at least not under the yoke of Saul; and these might be men of wealth, and of larger tribes, and better families than Saul was of, and therefore envied him, and thought themselves fitter for government than he was; and in a jeering scornful manner said, *how shall this man save us?* whose family is so mean, and whose tribe is so small, that they can give but little assistance to deliver us out of the hands of our enemies, the Philistines and Ammonites; intimating, that a king ought to have been of a rich family, and a large tribe, and a prince in it, whose interest and influence were great, not only in his own tribe, but in others, which would enable him to engage in war with an enemy, and protect the people; but what, as if they should say, can be expected from *this man?* this mean contemptible man, of no birth nor fortune, brought up in an obscure manner, and altogether inexpert in things civil and military? *and they despised him;* on account of the above things, not only in their hearts, but spared not to speak out, and use opprobrious language, and with which their actions and conduct agreed: *and brought him no presents;* as others did, and as it was usual when a king came to the throne; nor were any visits made unto him, in token of their subjection to him, and complacency in him, and by way of congratulation of him, see 1 Kings iv. 21. 2 Chron. xvii. 5. the Targum is, they did not salute him, or ask of his welfare: *but he held his peace,* or *was as one that is deaf and dumb*[o]; took no notice of what they said, as if he was deaf and heard it not, and was as silent as if he had been a dumb man, which shewed his wisdom and prudence; for had he taken notice of them, he must have punished them, and he judged it more advisable to use lenity and mildness, and not begin his reign with contention and bloodshed.

CHAP. XI.

THIS chapter relates the distress the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead were in on account of the Ammonites, ver. 1—3. upon which they sent messengers to Saul, whose spirit was immediately stirred up to help them, ver. 4—6. and prepared for it, and came up soon enough for their relief, and slew their enemies, ver. 7—11. which gained him much honour and reputation among the people, and occasioned the renewal of the kingdom to him, ver. 12—15.

Ver. 1. *Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabesh-gilead,* &c.] A month after, as in the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, that is, a month after Saul was chosen king; so Josephus[p]: this prince was preparing for war against Israel before, which they hearing of, requested they might have a king to go before them in battle, ch. xii. 12. but now he actually marched from his own country, and besieged Jabesh-gilead, a city in the land of Gilead, from whence it had its name, and lay in the half-tribe of Manasseh, on the other side Jordan, see Judg. xxi. 8. It lay near to the Ammonites, and was part of the country they laid claim to in the times of Jephthah, which they now renewed, and attempted to gain it by force. This Nahash was king of the Ammonites, as he is called in the Targum, and by Josephus[q], and so in the Arabic version, see ch. xii. 12. *and all the men of Jabesh-gilead said unto Nahash, make a covenant with us;* they desired to be his allies and confederates, live in peace and friendship with him, and enjoy their religion and liberties on certain conditions they were willing to come into; and this was the sense of them all, or at least the greatest part, which shewed a mean and abject spirit in them, to make no defence of themselves, but as soon as besieged to move for a capitulation. This doubtless arose from a sense of their weakness, not being able to hold it out long, and from an apprehension that their brethren the Israelites, on the other side Jordan, could give them no assistance, being in an unsettled condition, having chosen a king, and he scarce on the throne, and the Philistines having great power over them: *and we will serve thee:* not as slaves, but as tributaries; they were willing to pay a yearly tax to him.

Ver. 2. *And Nahash the Ammonite answered them,* &c.] In a very haughty and scornful manner: *on this condition will I make a covenant with you, that I may thrust out all your right eyes;* some Jewish writers go into a mystical and allegorical sense of these words, as that Nahash ordered the book of the law to be brought, which was their right eye, that he might erase out of it these words, *an Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord;* others understand it of the sanhedrim, which were the eyes of Israel; and others, which come a little nearer to the sense, of the slingers and archers, the desire of the eyes of Israel; and who, by having their right eyes thrust out, would be in a great measure spoiled for taking aim; for the words are to be understood literally; the intention of Nahash was to disable them for war, and that they might become quite unfit for it, as Josephus observes[r]; the left eye being under the shield, as it usually was in war, and the right eye plucked out, they would be as blind men: he did not choose to have both their eyes thrust out, for then they could have been of no use

[o] ויהי כמחריש & fuit veluti surdus, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; fuit quasi obmutescens, Drusius; veluti tacens aut silens, so some in Vatablus; so the Targum.

[p] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 1.
[q] Ibid.
[r] Ibid.

and service to him as slaves or tributaries: *and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel*; that they did not come up to the relief of their brethren, and defend them, and signifying that they must all expect the same treatment from him.

Ver. 3. *And the elders of Jabesh said*, &c.] The magistrates and principal men of the city: *give us seven days' respite, that we may send messengers to all the coasts of Israel*; that is, cease from besieging them, from throwing in darts into the city, or any other missive weapons, and from attempting to break open the gates, or break down the walls of it, and storm it; such a space of time they desire, which was as little as could be granted, to go and return in, and without this it would not be a reproach to all Israel, if they were ill used by them, since they had no knowledge of their case, nor time to come up to their assistance: *and then, if there be no man to save us, we will come out to thee*; and submit to be used at thy pleasure. And it seems that this was granted by Nahash out of a bravado, and to reproach and insult all Israel, and bid them defiance; with whom he sought to quarrel, having a design upon their land, and knowing very well their condition, being awed by the Philistines; and having just chosen a king, and he an inexperienced man in the affairs of war, and had no army; nor was it likely that one could be assembled in so short a time, and come to the relief of this people, and therefore he thought himself safe enough in granting their request.

Ver. 4. *Then came the messengers to Gibeah of Saul*, &c.] Where he was born, and brought up, and now dwelt; and he being elected king, it brought an honour to the place; and from hence had this name, to distinguish it from the others, and this is the first time it was so called. Now the messengers from Jabesh came hither directly, because they knew that Saul, the chosen king, dwelt here, and the Benjaminites, of all the tribes, had great reason to shew regard to them, since it was from thence they had 400 wives, when they were reduced to 600 men only, in order to raise up their tribe: *and told the tidings in the ears of the people*; Saul being not at home in the city, but in the fields, they reported to them the hardships their city was under, being besieged by the Ammonites, and threatened that if not relieved in such a time, all their right eyes would be plucked out: *and all the people lifted up their voices, and wept*; moved with sympathy to their brethren, and who by their intermarriage with them were nearly related to them; and who might fear they would not stop there, but having taken that place would march forward, and come to them, and use them in like manner; the thought of which was very distressing to them.

Ver. 5. *And, behold, Saul came after the herd out of the field*, &c.] Where he had been to look after them, and take care of them, and see what condition they were in, and followed them on their return home; for though he was elected king, he was not inaugurated, and did not take upon him any state; and being despised by some, and no provision as yet made for his support and maintenance as a king, and no business as such for him to do, Samuel still acting in his office, he returned to his father's house, and employed himself in rustic affairs, as he used to do: though some think this was casual, that he had been in the field to recreate himself, or to meditate on the affairs of government, and happened to return just as the herd came out of the field, and so followed them; thus Jarchi interprets it not of his coming after the herd, but of his coming after the fixed and usual time of the herd's coming out of the field; but Josephus[r] is clear for it, that he had been about some rustic business, some part of husbandry in the field, and returned to the city; nor has it been unusual for emperors and kings, and persons in high offices among Greeks and Romans, and other nations, in times of peace, to employ themselves in husbandry; so did the judges of Israel, as Shamgar, and Gideon, and Boaz, Judg. iii. 31. and vi. 11. Ruth iii. 2. so Quinctius Cincinnatus being taken from the plough and made dictator, after he had conquered his enemies, returned to his husbandry[s]: *and Saul said, what aileth the people, that they weep?* he supposed some evil had befallen them, and desired to know what it was, that, if it lay in his power to help them, he might: *and they told him the tidings of the men of Jabesh*; the message they brought, and the account they gave of the distressed case of their city.

Ver. 6. *And the spirit of God came upon Saul when he heard those tidings*, &c.] And filled him with pity and compassion to the inhabitants of Jabesh, and with wisdom and prudence, and set his thoughts at work to contrive ways and means for their relief, and with fortitude, courage, and resolution, to attempt their deliverance; so the Targum, "the spirit of fortitude "from the Lord dwelt on Saul:" *and his anger was kindled greatly*; against Nahash the Ammonite for insulting Israel, and threatening to use the inhabitants of Jabesh in such a cruel manner.

Ver. 7. *And he took a yoke of oxen*, &c.] Of his own or his father's, which he had just followed out of the field, and for which chiefly that circumstance is mentioned: *and hewed them in pieces*; as the Levite did his concubine, Judg. xix. 29. *and sent them throughout all the coasts of Israel by the hands of messengers*; some carrying a piece one way, and some another, throughout all the tribes; for to them all the government of Saul extended, and which by this he let them know it did: *saying, whosoever cometh not after Saul and after Samuel*; he names both, because he himself, though chosen king, was not inaugurated into his office, nor was Samuel put out of his; and because he knew he was despised by some, who would not object to and refuse the authority of Samuel, and therefore if they would not follow him, they would follow Samuel; and he mentions himself first, because of his superior dignity: *so shall it be done unto his oxen*; he cut to pieces as these were; he does not threaten to cut them in pieces, but their oxen, lest he should seem to exercise too much severity at his first coming to the throne: *and the fear of the Lord fell on the people*: they feared, should they be disobedient, the Lord would

[r] Ut supra, sect. 2.

[s] Flor. Hist. Roman. l. 1. c. 11. Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 20. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 11.

cut them to pieces, or in some way destroy them, as well as Saul would cut their oxen to pieces; for their minds were impressed with a sense of this affair being of the Lord: *and they came out with one consent:* or *as one man*[t], as if they had consulted together; being under a divine impulse, they set out from different parts about much the same time, and met at a place of rendezvous next mentioned.

Ver. 8. *And when he numbered them at Bezek,* &c.] Which was the place appointed to meet at, the same with that in Judg. i. 4. see the note there; though some take the word to be an appellative, and not the proper name of a place, and render it, *with a stone:* with which he numbered, taking a stone from each, and laying them on a heap, and then telling them[u]; so Bizakion signifies little stones[w] with the Greeks: or *with a fragment:* either of an earthen vessel, or of a stone, or of the branch of a tree they carried in their hands, and so the king's servants numbered not the men, but the branches[x]: *and the children of Israel were* 300,000 *men;* who came together on this occasion; these were of the eight tribes and a half on this side Jordan: *and the men of Judah* 30,000: which tribe is mentioned distinctly, because a noble and warlike tribe, which usually first went up to battle; and though the number of them at this time assembled may seem comparatively small, yet this may easily be accounted for; because they bordered upon the Philistines, who watched every opportunity to take an advantage of them, and therefore could not leave their tribe destitute, but reserved a sufficient number to guard their coasts, and yet were desirous to testify their obedience to Saul, though chosen king out of another tribe, when they might have expected from prophecy that the dominion belonged to them. Josephus[y] has made a gross mistake in the numbers here, he makes the men of Israel to be 700,000, and the men of Judah 70,000, contrary to the text, the Targum, Syriac and Arabic versions; but the Septuagint comes pretty near him, which has 600,000 of the men of Israel, 70,000 of the men of Judah.

Ver. 9. *And they said unto the messengers that came,* &c.] From Jabesh-gilead, that is, Saul and Samuel said to them, as follows: *thus shall ye say unto the men of Jabesh-gilead:* when they returned unto them, as they were now upon the departure: *to-morrow, by that time the sun be hot:* when it smites with the greatest heat, as at noon: this morrow seems not to be the next from their return home, or going from Saul, but the morrow after they were got home, and should deliver the message to those that sent them, ver. 10. and so Josephus[z] says, it was on the third day the assistance was promised them: *ye shall have help:* Saul with his army by that time would come and raise the siege: *and the messengers came and shewed it to the men of Jabesh:* what Saul had promised, and what a numerous army he had raised, and had now upon the march for their relief, and to-morrow would be with them: *and they were glad;* it was good news and glad tidings to them; it cheered their hearts, and gave them spirit.

Ver. 10. *Therefore the men of Jabesh said,* &c.] To Nahash the Ammonite: *to-morrow we will come out unto you:* meaning if they had no help, which they were well assured they should have; but this condition they expressed not, which they were not obliged to, but left him to conclude they had no hope of any, the messengers being returned, and the next being the last of the seven-days' respite; and by this artifice the Ammonites were secure, and not at all upon their guard against an approaching enemy: *and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you;* make shews of them, pluck out their eyes, or put them to death, or do what they would with them.

Ver. 11. *And it was so on the morrow,* &c.] After the messengers were returned, and delivered their message, and the men of Jabesh-gilead had given the Ammonites reason to expect that they would come out to them according to their agreement: *that Saul put the people into three companies:* or *heads*[a], under so many commanders, assigning to each their number, if equally, 110,000 in each, as Gideon divided his 300 into three companies, 100 in each, Judg. vii. 16. and Abimelech, Judg. ix. 43. it seems to have been their way of fighting in those days: *and they came unto the midst of the host;* that is, of the Ammonites: *in the morning watch;* the third and last watch of the night, by break of day, or before, however before the sun was up; so quick was Saul and his men in their march, though on foot. Bunting[b] computes the distance from Gibeah to Bezek 40 miles, and from thence to Jabesh 16; it is commonly reckoned that it was about 60 miles from Gibeah to Jabesh. Josephus[c] says it was 10 *schœni*, each of which contained five or six miles: *and slew the Ammonites until the heat of the day;* that is, till noon, so that from the morning watch till noon he was making slaughter of them: *and it came to pass, that they which remained were scattered;* those that were not cut off by the sword of Saul were broken and dispersed, they could not stand their ground against him: *so that two of them were not left together;* to flee together, but every one shifted for himself, and fled alone.

Ver. 12. *And the people said unto Samuel,* &c.] By which it seems that Samuel accompanied Saul in this expedition; though it is somewhat difficult to account for it, that a man of his years should be able to attend so quick a march that Saul made; it may be, therefore, that he might follow after him gently, and meet him quickly after the battle was fought, when the people made the following speech to him: *who is he that said, shall Saul reign over us?* is such a mean inexperienced man fit to rule over us? who can bear his government, and submit to it? what can be expected from him, that he should deliver and save us out of the hands of our enemies? in this they had respect to the sons of Belial, and what they said, ch. x. 27. but now it appeared he was sufficiently qualified, and God had made him an instrument of salvation, and was a proper person to

[t] כאיש אחד tanquam vir unus, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.
[u] Vid. T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 22. 2. & Gloss. in ib.
[w] Suidas in voce Βιζακιων.
[x] Vid. Sheringham. in Misn. Yoma, c. 2. sect. 1. p. 14.
[y] Ut supra, sect. 3.

[z] Ut supra, sect. 3.
[a] ראשים capita, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.
[b] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 126.
[c] Ut supra.

be king over them: *bring the men, that we may put them to death*; so transported were they with affection to Saul, and indignation against those men.

Ver. 13. *And Saul said*, &c.] Preventing Samuel from giving an answer, being ready to forgive injuries; as it was in his power as a king, and him only, to pardon those persons that treated him in so ill a manner, and it was policy so to do, especially in the beginning of his reign; and it plainly appears that this temper did not always continue with him; though there is no reason to believe otherwise, that this was now owing to his lenity as well as his prudence: *there shall not be a man put to death this day*; who by their appearance to his summons had testified their obedience, and by their courage and valour had shewed their attachment to him, and to the interest of their country. Ben Gersom takes the sense to be, that it might be right after, but not on this day to put them to death; or that this was an artifice of Saul to deliver those men out of the hands of the Israelites, suggesting as if it was his intention hereafter to put them to death, though not now, for the following reason: *for to-day the Lord hath wrought salvation in Israel*: he does not ascribe the victory to the quick dispatch he made, to his wisdom and prudence in forming the scheme he did, and to his valour and courage, and that of his troops, but to the power and goodness of God.

Ver. 14. *Then said Samuel to the people*, &c.] Agreeing to what Saul had said, and in order to put them off from demanding the lives of the offenders, and willing to take them whilst they were in a good disposition: *come, and let us go to Gilgal*; which was the nearest place to them, on the other side Jordan, from which they now were, and where the children of Israel first encamped when they passed over Jordan, where the tabernacle and ark first were, and an altar was built, and where meetings used to be held on certain occasions; all which might be reasons why Samuel proposed to go to this place. According to Bunting[d], this place was 36 miles from Jabesh-gilead: *and renew the kingdom there*; that is, recognize Saul, own and declare him king of Israel.

Ver. 15. *And all the people went to Gilgal*, &c.] Agreed to the motion, and marched along with Saul and Samuel thither: *and there they made Saul king before the Lord in Gilgal*; that is, they declared him to be king there; he was inaugurated into, and invested with his office, otherwise it was God only that made him king, who only had the power of making one, see Acts ii. 36. Josephus says[e], that Samuel anointed him with the holy oil; and so the Septuagint version here renders it, "and Samuel anointed Saul there to be "king;" and it is not improbable, that as he privately anointed him, he did it publicly also; if not at the election of him, then at this time; and it is observable, that in the next chapter, and not before, he is called the Lord's anointed. Now this was *before the Lord*; in this place; this being, as Abarbinel observes, a sanctified place, where the tabernacle and ark of God had been; and he supposes it probable that the ark was brought hither; but it was enough that the people and congregation of the Lord were here, and who, when assembled in his name, his presence was with them: *and there they sacrificed sacrifices of peace-offerings before the Lord*: where an altar was built, and on which they offered these peace-offerings by way of thanksgiving, partly for the victory obtained over the Ammonites, and partly for the renewal of the kingdom to Saul, and their unanimity in it, as well as to implore and obtain future peace and prosperity: *and there Saul, and all the people of Israel, rejoiced greatly*; they in their king, and he in the good will of his people, and both in the great salvation God had wrought for them.

CHAP. XII.

IN this chapter Samuel, resigning the government to Saul, asserts the integrity with which he had performed his office, and calls upon the people of Israel to attest it, who did, ver. 1—5. he then reminds them of the great and good things the Lord had done for them in times past, ver. 6—11. and whereas they had desired a king, and one was given them, it was their interest to fear and serve the Lord; if not, his hand would be against them, ver. 12—15. he terrifies them by calling for thunder in an unusual time, ver. 16—19. and then comforts and encourages them, that in doing their duty God would be with them, and not forsake them, otherwise they might expect nothing but ruin and destruction, ver. 20—25.

Ver. 1. *And Samuel said unto all Israel*, &c.] When assembled at Gilgal, after they had recognized Saul as their king, and he was established in the kingdom, and while in the midst of their mirth and joy: *behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye have said unto me*; respecting the affair of a king, to which it must be limited, as appears by what follows; otherwise it is possible, in some things they might apply to him about, he did not think fit to hearken to them, and grant their request, or speak for them: *and have made a king over you*; that is, had by the direction and appointment of God chosen one by lot, anointed and declared him king; for it was the Lord alone, that, properly speaking, made him a king.

Ver. 2. *And now, behold, the king walketh before you*, &c.] He is invested with his office, and in the exercise of it, and goes in and out as the captain, commander, and leader of the people; it is expressive of his being in the full possession of regal power and authority, and therefore Samuel might speak the more freely, as he could not be thought to have any hope and expectation of being reinstated in his government, or to have parted with it with any regret; and he wisely took this opportunity of reproving the people for their sin of desiring a king, when Saul was settled and established in his kingdom, and when they were in the

[d] Ut supra.

[e] Ut supra, sect. 4.

midst of all their mirth and jollity, who might, from the success that had attended this first adventure of their king, conclude that they had done a right and good thing in requesting to have one: *and I am old, and grey-headed*; and so unfit for government, and very willing to be eased of the burden of it: he must surely be more than 52 years of age, as the Jews generally say he was, since it is not usual at such an age to be grey-headed, see the note on ch. viii. 1. however, on this account he merited reverence and respect, and demanded attention: *and, behold, my sons are with you*; as private persons in the condition of subjects, making no pretension to government; and if they had committed any thing criminal, they were open to the law, and might be charged, and tried, and treated according to their deserts; and there they were, and might be asked what questions they thought proper with respect to what they knew of his conduct; and to be hostages or bail for him, if they could prove any thing against him; or to be taken to make satisfaction for any injuries committed by him: *and I have walked before you from my childhood unto this day*; his manner of life and conversation from his infancy to this time was well known to them, and he had spent all his days in the service of God, and for the good of Israel.

Ver. 3. *Behold, here I am, &c.*] No longer the supreme governor, but a subject, and accountable for any misdemeanor charged upon me, and to which I am ready to give answer, being now at your bar to be tried and judged before you: *witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed*: signifying, that if they had any thing to lay to his charge, that they would produce it, and give proof and evidence of it in the presence of God, in whose name they met, and of Saul, anointed king, and supreme judge and ruler of the nation: *whose ox have I taken?* by force, to employ in his own service in ploughing his ground, or treading out his corn: *or whose ass have I taken?* to ride about on in his circuit, or to carry any burden for him: *or whom have I defrauded?* of their money or goods, by any artifice circumventing and cheating them: *whom have I oppressed?* struck, beaten, broken, or caused to be so used wrongfully; to whose person have I been injurious any more than to their property? Some derive the word from a root which signifies favour and good will, and interpret it as some of the Rabbins do, of his not taking money of persons with their good will; or rather, that he had done nothing as a judge for favour and affection, but had acted the upright part, without regard to rich or poor, friends or foes: *or of whose hand have I received* any *bribe to blind mine eyes therewith?* his meaning is, that he had never taken a gift or present from any person to favour his cause, that was to be brought before him, and give it for him right or wrong; to connive at any injury he had done, or to turn away his eyes from seeing where the justice of the cause lay; or that he had not received money to spare the life of a criminal that deserved to die; for the word used for a bribe signifies a ransom-price, see Deut. xvi. 19. *and I will restore it to you*: the ox or ass, money or goods, gifts and presents, or bribes taken, or make compensation for any injury done to the persons or estates of men. Some render it, *I will answer you* [r], or give in an answer to any such charges when exhibited.

Ver. 4. *And they said, &c.*] One in the name of the rest, or they all cried out as one man: *thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us*; had done them no wrong, neither privately nor publicly, by fraud or by force: *neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand*; as a gift, present, or bribe, to favour his cause. Some would infer hence that he took nothing of them for his support and maintenance, and that he lived upon his own substance; but that is not likely or reasonable; it was but just that they should support him and his family suitably to his character as a judge, whose whole life was spent in their service.

Ver. 5. *And he said unto them, the Lord is witness against you, and his anointed is witness this day, &c.*] Should they hereafter reproach and vilify him, and charge him with any acts of corruption, injustice, and violence: *that ye have not found ought in my hand*; that they had nothing to accuse him of and charge him with throughout his whole administration, but had asserted his innocence and integrity, had honourably acquitted him, and given him a fair character: *and they answered*, he is *witness*; the omniscient God is a witness against us, should we depart from this testimony, and Saul, the Lord's anointed, is a witness that we have fully cleared thee from any imputations of mal-administration. The word is singular, he *said* or *answered* [s], that is, Israel said, the whole body of the people, they all replied as one man: the reason why Samuel made such a speech at this time, when he resigned his government to Saul, was not only to secure his own character, but to suggest to Saul how he should rule and govern according to his example; and that having established his own character, he could the more freely, and with the better grace, reprove the people for their sin, as in some following verses.

Ver. 6. *And Samuel said unto the people, &c.*] Having cleared and established his own character, he proceeds to lay before the people some of the great things God had done for them formerly, and quite down to the present time, the more to aggravate their ingratitude in rejecting God as their King: it is *the Lord that advanced Moses and Aaron*; raised them from a low estate, the one in a foreign country in Midian, the other in bondage in Egypt, to be deliverers, guides, and governors of his people Israel. Kimchi thinks this refers to what goes before, and that the sense is, that God, that raised Moses and Aaron to great honour and dignity, was a witness between him and the people; in which he is followed by some Christian interpreters. Ben Gersom makes mention of the same, but rather approves of the connexion of the words with what follows, as does Abarbinel, and is doubtless rightest: the Targum is, "who hath done mighty things by the "hands of Moses and Aaron:" *and that brought your fathers up out of the land of Egypt*: when they were in bondage there, and that by the means of Moses and Aaron, by whose hands he wrought signs and wonders, and inflicted plagues on the Egyptians, which made them willing at last to let Israel go.

[r] אשיב לכם respondebo vobis, Munster.

[s] ויאמר & dixit, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, Drusius.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore stand still,* &c.] Keep your place, and don't as yet break up the assembly, but wait a little longer patiently, and with reverence and attention hearken to what I have further to say: *that I may reason with you before the Lord;* as in his presence; and which he observes to command the greater awe upon their mind, and the greater regard to the subject of his discourse and resolutions; which would be, *of all the righteous acts of the Lord, which he did to you and to your fathers;* not only in a way of judgment delivering them into the hands of their enemies, when they sinned against him, but rather in a way of mercy and kindness in delivering them out of their hands.

Ver. 8. *When Jacob was come into Egypt,* &c.] With his family to see his son Joseph, and dwelt there; or rather the posterity of Jacob are meant, who settled in Egypt, and continued there many years, and at length were oppressed by the Egyptians, and brought into hard bondage: *and your fathers cried unto the Lord;* by reason of their bondage, for help and deliverance: *then the Lord sent Moses and Aaron, which brought forth your fathers out of Egypt;* after various messages carried by them from the Lord to Pharaoh king of Egypt, and after many signs and wonders wrought by them, by which the heart of that king was at last brought to consent to their dismission: *and made them dwell in this place;* the land of Canaan; they conducted them through the Red sea, guided them through the wilderness, and accompanied them; especially Moses, to the borders of the land of Canaan; for neither of them went into it, but died before the people's entrance there. Joshua, the successor of Moses, of whom Samuel makes no mention, introduced Israel into it, conquered the land for them, and settled them in it; though Moses and Aaron, as they were the instruments of bringing them out of Egypt, were the cause, by conducting them through the wilderness, and by their prayers, counsels, and instructions, of their entrance into and settlement in it: besides, Moses appointed Joshua in his stead, and ordered him to lead the people there, and directed to the division of the land among them, yea, two tribes and an half were settled by him on the other side Jordan; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, read in the singular number, *he made them dwell, that is, the Lord.*

Ver. 9. *And when they forgat the Lord their God,* &c.] The worship of the Lord their God, as the Targum; that is, they fell into idolatry, which is a plain instance and proof of forgetfulness of God; for such that neglect his worship, and serve idols, may be truly said to forget him: *he sold them into the hand of Sisera, captain of the host of Hazor;* who was general of the army of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor, Judg. iv. 2. where they are said to be sold into the hands of Jabin, here into the hands of Sisera; because it is highly probable he was sent against them by Jabin, and subdued them, as he afterwards was sent by him, when they rebelled against him, and were delivered out of his hand: *and into the hand of the Philistines;* as they were in and before the times of Samson, Judg. xiii. 1. *and into the hand of the king of Moab;* as in the times of Ehud, Judg. iii. 14, 15. the exact order of these things is not observed: *and they fought against them;* the king of Moab, Sisera, and the Philistines, and overcame them, and so they fell into their hands.

Ver. 10. *And they cried unto the Lord,* &c.] When in the hands of their enemies, and in bondage to them, and cruelly oppressed by them: *and said, we have sinned;* the word for *said* is in the Cetib, or written text, singular, and in the Keri, or marginal reading, plural; and may signify, that every one of them had a sense of their sin, and made acknowledgment of it; their confession was universal, as their sin was: *because we have forsaken the Lord;* the Word of the Lord, as the Targum: *and have served Baalim and Ashtaroth;* see the notes on Judg. ii. 11, 13. *but now deliver us out of the hand of our enemies, and we will serve thee;* they did not ask for a king to go before them, and fight their battles, as they did now, but applied to the Lord for deliverance, promising to serve him as their King and their God.

Ver. 11. *And the Lord sent Jerubbaal,* &c.] Or Gideon, as the Targum, for Jerubbaal was the name given to Gideon, when he first became a judge, Judg. vi. 32. *and Bedan;* if this was one of the judges, he must have two names, or is one that is not mentioned in the book of Judges; the Targum interprets it of Samson; so Jerom [h], for the word may be rendered *in Dan;* one in Dan, who was of the tribe of Dan, as Samson was; and it was in the camp of Dan the spirit of God first came upon him; and Kimchi observes that it is the same as Ben-dan, the son of Dan, that is, a Danite; and though he was after Jephthah, yet is set before him, because he was a greater man than he; and this way go the generality of Jewish writers [i]; but a man of this name being among the posterity of Manasseh, 1 Chron. vii. 17. Junius, and who is followed by others, thinks that Jair is meant, and is so called to distinguish him from a more ancient Jair, the son of Manasseh, and with whom the order of the judges better agrees, see Numb. xxxii. 41. Judg. x. 3, 4. but the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions read Barac; and he may rather be thought to be meant, because he was the instrument of delivering Israel out of the hand of Sisera, the captain of the host of Hazor before mentioned, ver. 9. and agrees with the words of the apostle, Heb. xi. 32. who mentions those judges much in the same order: *and Jephthah, and Samuel;* meaning himself, who was the last of the judges, and who speaks of himself as of a third person, as Lamech does, Gen. iv. 23. and this he did not out of ostentation, but to observe that God had made him an instrument of delivering them out of the hand of the Philistines, which must be fresh in their memory, as he had made use of others before him, when he sent judges, and not kings, and therefore they had no need to ask a king. The Syriac and Arabic versions read Samson instead of Samuel, and which also agrees best with Heb. xi. 32. *and delivered you out of the hands of your enemies on every side;* not the judges, but the Lord; for the word for *delivered* is of the singular number: *and ye dwelled safe;* in the greatest security and confidence, without any fear of

[h] Heb. Trad. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. K.

[i] So in T. Bab. Roshhashanah, fol. 25. 1.

enemies, having God their King in the midst of them, and stood in no need of any other king to protect and defend them.

Ver. 12. *And when ye saw that Nahash the king of the children of Ammon came against you*, &c.] Or *but yet* [k]; however, notwithstanding though the Lord had been so kind and gracious to them, as to raise up judges one after another to deliver them, when they cried unto him, yet when they perceived that Nahash the Ammonite was preparing to make war with them, instead of applying to the Lord for his protection, they desired to have a king to go before them, and fight their battles, as follows: *nay, but a king shall reign over us;* though Samuel told them they had no need of one: *when the Lord your God* was *your King:* and would protect and defend them, if they applied to him, and would put their trust in him; and he himself Samuel was their judge, and would be their general and commander, and they had experience of success under him to the utter destruction of their enemies, ch. vii. 10. and yet, notwithstanding all this, they insisted upon it to have a king. According to Abarbinel, this preparation of Nahash to war with them was after they had asked for a king, and was a punishment of them for their request; and yet they repented not of it, but in effect said, though Nahash, and all the enemies in the world come against us, we'll not go back from our request, but insist on it, that we have a king to reign over us; such was their obstinacy and perverseness.

Ver. 13. *Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen*, and *whom ye have desired*, &c.] For though God chose their king for them, it was at their request; they chose to have a king, and desired one, and they approved of and consented to, and confirmed the choice he had made, and so it was in effect their own: *and, behold, the Lord hath set a king over you;* he gratified them in their desires; though he did not suffer them to make themselves a king, he suffered them to have one, and he gave them one; this power he reserved to himself of setting up and pulling down kings at his pleasure.

Ver. 14. *If ye will fear the Lord, and serve him, and obey his voice*, &c.] All worship and service of God, and obedience to his word and ordinances, should spring from fear and reverence of him; and therefore the whole of worship, both external and internal, is sometimes expressed by the fear of the Lord: *and not rebel against the commandment of the Lord;* break it, and thereby exasperate him, and provoke him to wrath and bitterness: *then shall both ye, and also the king that reigneth over you, continue following the Lord your God;* the Targum is, "after the worship of the Lord "your God;" which was their duty to do, and is expressed in the preceding clauses; and this therefore is rather a promise of some benefit and privilege to their duty, and to encourage them to it, since it stands opposed to the threatening of punishment in the next verse; and the words in the original are, *then shall ye*, &c. *be after the Lord your God* [l]: that is, though they had in effect rejected the Lord from being their King, by asking and having one; yet notwithstanding, if they and their king were obedient to the commands of the Lord, he would not cast them off, but they should follow him as their guide, leader, and director, and he would protect and defend them as a shepherd does his sheep that follow after him; so Jarchi takes it to be a promise of long life and happiness to them and their king, "ye shall be established to length of days, both "ye and the king."

Ver. 15. *But if ye will not obey the voice of the Lord, but rebel against the commandment of the Lord*, &c.] They and their king, by sinning, disregarding his precepts, both affirmative and negative: *then shall the hand of the Lord be against you;* by sending some judgments upon them, as famine, sword, or pestilence, particularly captivity and subjection to their enemies: *as it* was *against your fathers;* who had no king; and it is suggested that their case, who had one, would be no better than theirs; their king would not be able to save them from the hand of God: the words in the original are, *and against your fathers* [m]; which is interpreted in the Talmud [n] of their fathers dead, and in their graves, and of their enemies digging them up, and taking them out in contempt; but much better, by Kimchi, of their kings, who are, or should be, fathers of their subjects, as Augustus Cæsar was called the father of his; and so the Septuagint version renders it, *and upon their king;* signifying that both they and their king should feel the weight of the hand of the Lord, if they rebelled against him.

Ver. 16. *Now therefore stand*, &c.] Which does not so much respect the position of their bodies as the fixed attention of their minds: *and see this great thing which the Lord will do before your eyes;* meaning the storm of thunder and rain which presently followed; which coming at a time when such things were not usual, and on a day when there was no appearance or likelihood of any thing of this kind, and suddenly, at once, upon the prayer of Samuel, it was no less than a miracle, and might be called a *great thing*, new and unheard-of, and the pure effect of almighty power.

Ver. 17. Is it *not wheat-harvest to-day?* &c.] Of the time of wheat-harvest, see ch. vi. 13. Rain usually fell in Judea only twice a year, called the former and the latter rain; and from the 17th of Nisan or March, to the 16th of Marchesvan or October, it was not usual for rain to fall, and so not in harvest, at that time especially, see Prov. xxvi. 1. Amos iv. 7. R. Joseph Kimchi says, in the land of Israel rain never fell all the days of harvest; and this is confirmed by Jerom, who lived long in those parts; who says [o], at the end of the month of June, and in the month of July, we never saw rain in those provinces, especially in Judea. And Samuel not only by putting this question would have them observe that it was the time of wheat-harvest in general, but on that day in particular the men were at work in the fields reaping the wheat, &c. and so was not cloudy, and inclining to rain, but all serene and clear, or otherwise they would not have been em-

[k] ותראו videntes autem, V. L. sed, Tigurine version; & tamen, Vatablus, Piscator.

[l] והיתם־אתם אחר יהוה eritis post Dominum, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.

[m] ובאבתיכם & contra patres vestros, Pagninus, Tigurine version.

[n] T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 63. 2.

[o] Comment. in Amos iv. 7.

ployed in cutting down the corn; all which made the following case the more remarkable: *I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain;* in a miraculous and preternatural way, there being nothing in nature preparatory thereunto, and this purely at the prayer of Samuel: *that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king;* was attended with aggravated circumstances, and highly offensive to God, though he had gratified them in it, of which this violent storm would be an indication, and might serve to convince them of their folly, as well as of their wickedness, and that they had no need of a king, since Samuel their judge could do as much or more by his prayers than a king could do by his sword; and of which they had had sufficient proof before this, and that in the same way, ch. vii. 10.

Ver. 18. *So Samuel called unto the Lord,* &c.] Not in an authoritative way, or by way of command, but by prayer; so the Targum renders the clause in the preceding verse, "I will pray before the Lord:" *and the Lord sent thunder and rain that day;* immediately, though there was no appearance of it; it was harvest-time, and a fine harvest-day. Josephus says[p] he sent thunder, lightning, and hail, a terrible storm and tempest it was: *and all the people greatly feared the Lord and Samuel;* the Lord that sent this tempest, and Samuel who had such power with God in prayer. Clement of Alexandria[q] thinks that from hence the Greeks borrowed their fable concerning Æacus invoking God, when there was a drought in Greece; and as soon as he prayed, immediately there was thunder, and the whole air was covered with clouds; but perhaps they rather framed it from the instance of Elijah praying for rain[r], at whose request it came, 1 Kings xviii. 42.

Ver. 19. *And all the people said unto Samuel,* &c.] During the tempest, and in the midst of it; it was the general cry of the people, they were unanimous in it: *pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not;* though they had rejected him as their judge and supreme governor in desiring a king, now they were his humble servants, at least feignedly; and knowing what interest he had with God in prayer, they entreat him to make use of it on their behalf, who having sinned so greatly, had not the assurance to call the Lord their God, though they had no doubt of his being the God of Samuel, whose prayers he had heard, of which this tempest was a full proof; and was so violent, that if it continued, they were afraid they should be destroyed by the thunder and lightning, or they and their cattle, with the fruits of the earth, be washed away with the prodigious rain: *for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king;* though Samuel had laid before them the evils and inconveniences of having a king, and had in the name of the Lord charged them with rejecting God as their King; yet nothing convinced them of their evil till this storm came, and then all their sins came fresh to their minds; and this added to the weight of them, and lay heaviest on them, that they had rejected the Lord, and slighted his prophets, and, notwithstanding all remonstrances, resolved on having a king.

Ver. 20. *And Samuel said unto the people, fear not,* &c.] Being destroyed by the tempest: *ye have done all this wickedness;* in asking a king; that is, though they were guilty of so heinous a sin, yet there were grace and mercy with God, and they should not despair of it, so be it that they did not depart from him, but cordially served him; the Targum is, "ye "have been the cause of all this evil;" the storm of thunder and rain; and though they had, he would not have them despond or indulge slavish fear: *yet turn not aside from following the Lord;* the worship of the Lord, as the Targum; provided they did not depart from the Lord, and forsake his worship, word, and ordinances, they need not fear utter ruin and destruction, though they had been guilty of this sin: *but serve the Lord with all your heart:* if their service of God was kept up, and was hearty and sincere, they might still expect things would go well with them.

Ver. 21. *And turn ye not aside,* &c.] From his worship: *for then;* if they turned aside from that: should *ye go after vain things;* idols, which are vanity, and less than vanity: *which cannot profit nor deliver;* neither bestow good things on their votaries, nor deliver them from evils, or from the hands of their enemies: *for they are vain;* empty, useless, and unprofitable; an idol is nothing in the world, 1 Cor. viii. 4.

Ver. 22. *For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake.*] For the sake of himself, his honour and glory; should he forsake his people, and suffer them to come to ruin, his name would be blasphemed among the Heathens; he would be charged either with want of power to help them, or with want of faithfulness to his promise to them, and with inconstancy to himself, or want of kindness and affection for them; all which would reflect upon his honour and glory: *because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people;* it was not owing to any worth or worthiness in them that they became his people, but to his own sovereign good will and pleasure; and therefore, as it was nothing in them that was the cause of their being taken by him for his people, so nothing in them could be the cause of their being rejected by him as such: it was of free grace and favour that they were taken into covenant with him, and by the same would be retained: the Vulgate Latin version is, "the "Lord hath sworn to make you a people for him-"self;" so Jarchi interprets it, he swore, and takes it to have the same sense as in ch. xiv. 24.

Ver. 23. *Moreover, as for me,* &c.] As he had given them reason to believe that God would forgive their sin, by which they had offended him, in rejecting him as their King, so he likewise forgave their offence against him in rejecting him as their governor under him, and so neither need fear the Lord nor him with a servile fear; and as God would still be gracious to them, if they abode by his service, so he, Samuel, would do all the good offices for them that lay in his power: *God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you:* for since they had returned

[p] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 5. sect. 6.
[q] Stromat. l. 6. p. 630.
[r] Vid. Schmid. in Pindar. Nemea, Ode 5. p. 119.

to the Lord, and acknowledged their sin, it would have been an evil in him not to pray for them, that they might share in the pardoning grace and mercy of God, and have all good things bestowed upon them they stood in need of; this he judged to be his duty to do, and therefore abhorred the thought of being indifferent to it, negligent of it, or of dropping it: *but I will teach you the good and the right way*: would not only pray for them, but instruct them in the way of their duty; a way that was a good one, agreeable to the will and word of God, and in walking in which good things were enjoyed, and which being a good way, must needs be a right way; though Samuel ceased to be a judge and chief magistrate among them, he should not cease to act the part of a prophet to them, both by his prayers and by his instructions.

Ver. 24. *Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart*, &c.] Fear him not with a servile fear, which is before dehorted from, but with a filial fear, a reverential affection for God; and includes the whole of religious worship, internal and external; explained further by serving him according to the truth of his word, and in a cordial, sincere, and affectionate manner; and if this was wanting in them, he suggests that his prayers and instructions would be of little avail, and not to be depended on: *for consider how great things he hath done for you*; in bringing them out of Egypt: settling them in the land of Canaan; giving them his laws, statutes, commands, and ordinances; sending prophets unto them, and raising up judges for them, and bestowing all good things on them, in nature, providence, and grace; though some restrain this to the great thing he had done that day, to convince them of their sin, and by which they were returned to the Lord, namely, the violent storm of thunder; which wonderful instance of the power of God, and token of his displeasure against them, they were to lay up in their minds, and not forget, that it might be a means of preserving them from sin for the future.

Ver. 25. *But if ye shall still do wickedly*, &c.] Continue to rebel against God, revolt from him, and depart from his worship, and despise his prophets, and serve idols: *ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king*; their king would be so far from protecting, that he should perish with them, be killed by the sword, as Saul their first king was, or go into captivity, as others of their kings did.

CHAP. XIII.

THIS chapter relates how Saul disposed of his army, ver. 1, 2. that Jonathan his son smote a garrison of Philistines, which provoked them to come out with a large army against them, to the great terror of the Israelites, many of whom fled to secret places, and to distant parts, ver. 3—7. that Saul tarried at Gilgal waiting for Samuel, but he not coming so soon as expected, offered sacrifice himself, ver. 8—10. for which Samuel, when he came, reproved him, and told him the kingdom should not continue with him, but be given to another man, ver. 11—14. on which Saul departed to Gibeah, where he continued, the Philistines being encamped at Michmash, ver. 15, 16. from whence went out spoilers, in three companies, into the land of Israel, where they met with no opposition; for there were no weapons in the hands of any but Saul and Jonathan, the Philistines having taken care that there should be no smith in the land of Israel to make them any, so that they were defenceless, ver. 17—23.

Ver. 1. *Saul reigned one year*, &c.] Or *the son of a year in his reigning*[s]; various are the senses given of these words: some interpret them, Saul had a son of a year old when he began to reign, Ishbosheth, and who was forty years of age when his father died, 2 Sam. ii. 10. others, who understand the words of Saul himself, think there is an *ellipsis* or defect of the number, and that it may be supplied, that Saul was the son of thirty or forty years, or whatsoever age he may be supposed to be at when he began his reign; others take the words in a figurative sense, that he was like a child of a year old, for purity and innocence; so the Targum, "as the son of a year, in whom there are no faults, so "was Saul when he reigned;" or he was but a year old, reckoning from the time he was turned into another man, and had another heart, which was immediately after he was anointed king at Ramah by Samuel; or he was but a year old with respect to his kingdom: the inauguration of a king is *natalis imperii*, the birth-day of his kingdom, and therefore the words are well enough rendered by us, *Saul reigned one year*; which is to be reckoned either from his unction at Ramah, or rather from his election at Mizpeh, to the renewal of the kingdom at Gilgal: and when he *had reigned two years over Israel*; which the Jewish chronologers[t] make to be the whole of his reign, which is not probable, considering the many things done in his reign, the many battles he fought with all his enemies on every side of him, and his long persecution of David; and there were no less than three high-priests in his reign; Josephus says[u] he reigned 18 years in the life-time of Samuel, and 22 years after his death, in all 40; which agrees with Acts xiii. 21. Some interpret it he reigned two years well, and the rest in a tyrannical way; or that at the end of two years, when David was anointed, the kingdom was not reckoned to him, but to David; and to this purpose Dr. Lightfoot writes, that he had been king one year from his first anointing by Samuel at Ramah, to his second anointing by him at Gibeah (Gilgal I suppose he means); and he reigned after this two years more, before the Lord cast him off, and anointed David; and the time he ruled after that was not a rule, but a tyranny and persecution[w]; but the sense Ben Gersom gives is best of all, that one year had

[s] בן שנה שאול במלכו filius anni Saul in regnando ipsum, Montanus.

[t] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 35. Juchasin, fol 11. 1.

[u] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 9.

[w] Works, vol. 1. p. 55.

passed from the time of his being anointed, to the time of the renewal of the kingdom at Gilgal; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, then he did what follows, chose 3,000 men, *&c.* In the first year of his reign was done all that is recorded in the preceding chapter; and when he had reigned two years, not two years more, but two years in all, then he did what is related in this chapter.

Ver. 2. *Saul chose him* 3,000 *men of Israel,* &c.] Out of the 300,000 that went with him to fight the Ammonites, and returned with him to Gilgal, where he now was, and had stayed as may be supposed about a year, since now he had reigned two years. These 3,000 men some of them doubtless were appointed as a guard about his person, and the rest were a standing army to preserve the peace of the nation, to protect them from their enemies, to watch the motions of the Philistines, and to be ready on any sudden invasion: whereof 2,000 *were with Saul in Michmash, and in Mount Beth-el: Michmash*, according to Bunting[t], was 4 miles from Gilgal. Jerom[u] says, in his time it was shewn a large village on the borders of Ælia, or Jerusalem, retaining its ancient name, 9 miles distant from it, near the village Rama. Adrichomius[w] says it is now called Byra, and Mr. Maundrell[x] observes, that it is supposed by some to be the same with Beer, whither Jotham fled after he had delivered his parable, Judg. ix. 21. Michmash is in the Misnah[y] celebrated for the best wheat being brought from it; and near to it, as appears from hence, was Beth-el, and the mount of that name; and so Jerom[z] speaks of Beth-el as over-against Michmash; and this mount very probably is the same said to be on the east of Beth-el, where Abraham built an altar, Gen. xii. 8. for Michmash lay to the east of Beth-el: *and* 1,000 *were with Jonathan in Gibeah of Benjamin*: the native place of Saul, and this Jonathan was the son of Saul, ver. 16. According to Bunting[a], Gibeah, where Jonathan was stationed, was 8 miles from Michmash: *and the rest of the people he sent every man to his tent*: to their own houses; or, as the Targum, to their cities; these were they that came at his summons, and were numbered at Bezek, and went with him to the relief of Jabesh-gilead, and had been with him ever since, and now dismissed.

Ver. 3. *And Jonathan smote the garrison of the Philistines* that was *in Geba*, &c.] Not the same with Gibeah of Benjamin, as Jarchi; for it can hardly be thought that Jonathan should place himself with his thousand men where the Philistines had a garrison; or that if this was the same with that in the preceding verse, that it should be called by another name in this; but Gibeah and Geba were two places, as Kimchi observes, both indeed in the tribe of Benjamin, and it is very probable not far from one another; see Josh. xviii. 24, 28. This seems to be the same with the hill of God, where was a garrison of the Philistines, ch. x. 5. who after their defeat by Samuel contented themselves with some strong holds and garrisons in some parts of the land to keep Israel in awe; the Targum understands this of a single person, a governor of the Philistines in this place, whom Jonathan slew, and so Jarchi; and according to R. Isaiah he was one that was appointed to gather the tax for them: *and the Philistines heard of it*; which alarmed them, and made them prepare for war: *and Saul blew the trumpet throughout all the land*: not he in person, for he was at Gilgal, as the next verse shews; but he ordered it to be blown, being aware of the preparations the Philistines were making to attack him: *saying, let the Hebrews hear*: both what his son had done, and what the Philistines were doing.

Ver. 4. *And all Israel heard say that Saul had smitten a garrison of the Philistines,* &c.] For though it was smitten by Jonathan, yet it was by the order of Saul, and so ascribed to him; it seems to be a concerted thing to fall upon the garrisons of the Philistines, and get them out of their hands, and so deliver Israel entirely from them; but it was impolitic in Saul, if he had such a scheme in his head, to disband his large army, as he had lately done: *and that Israel also was had in abomination with the Philistines*: who were highly incensed against them by this action, and vowed revenge; the name of an Israelite was abhorred by them; and perhaps this action might be attended with much craft and cruelty; and if these garrisons were held by agreement, they might charge them with perfidy, with breach of articles, and so their name was made to stink among them, as the word signifies: *and the people were called together after Saul to Gilgal*; by sound of trumpet.

Ver. 5. *And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel,* &c.] To prevent their further encroachments on them, and designs against them; for they perceived they intended to cast off their yoke, and free themselves entirely from them: 30,000 *chariots, and* 6,000 *horsemen;* it may seem incredible that so small a people as the Philistines were, who only were possessed of five cities, or lordships, with the villages belonging to them, except what they had taken from Israel; and even if assisted by the Tyrians, as the author of Ecclesiasticus says, ch. xlvi. 20. though he seems to have respect not to this time, but when Samuel discomfited them, ch. vii. 10. I say it may seem incredible that they should bring such a number of chariots into the field; wherefore this must either be understood of 30,000 men that fought in chariots, as Lyra interprets it, and in which sense it is plain and certain the word *chariots* is sometimes used, as in 2 Sam. x. 18. 1 Kings xx. 21. 1 Chron. xix. 18. or else of some sort of carriages, not chariots of war, at least not all of them; but what were brought to carry the baggage of their infantry, which was very large, and to carry away the goods and substance of the Israelites; some have thought that there is a mistake of the copier, who instead of שלש, *three*, read שלשים, *thirty*: so Capellus; and the rather because in the Arabic and Syriac versions it is only *three thousand*; but even this is too great a number, understood of chariots of war; for never any people in the world was known to have so many chariots of war; Pharaoh in his large host had but 600, Exod. xiv. 7. Jabin king of

[t] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 126.
[u] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. F.
[w] Theatrum Terræ S. p. 28.
[x] Journey from Aleppo, p. 64.

[y] Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1.
[z] Ut supra, fol. 89. G.
[a] Ut supra, p. 127.

Canaan had indeed 900, Judg. iv. 3. and David took from the king of Zobah 1,000 chariots; but whether they were all chariots of war is not certain, 2 Sam. viii. 4. Solomon indeed had 1,400 chariots, but they don't appear to be chariots of war, but some for use, and some for state and grandeur. Wherefore, if a mistake in the copy is admitted of, and this can be confirmed by some MSS. yet we must recur to one or other of the above senses; some of them must be understood of other sort of carriages, or of men that fought in these chariots; and allowing ten men to a chariot, which seems to be the usual number by comparing 2 Sam. x. 18. with 1 Chron. xix. 18. then 3,000 men would fill 300 chariots, which are as many as it can well be thought the Philistines had. Zerah the Ethiopian, who brought into the field an army of 1,000,000 men, had no more than 300 chariots, 2 Chron. xiv. 9. and no more had Antiochus Eupator in his army, 2 Maccab. xiii. 2. Darius in his vast army had but 200[a], and in the very large one which Mithridates brought against the Romans there was but 100; and now 3,000 men in 300 chariots were but a proportion to 6,000 horsemen, which in those times and countries was a large cavalry: *and the people as the sand which is on the sea-shore in multitude*: the infantry was so large as not to be numbered; however, the phrase denotes a great multitude of them; Josephus says[b] there were 300,000 foot: *and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Beth-aven*; where Saul, before he went to Gilgal, had his quarters, ver. 2. Beth-aven was a place near Beth-el, on the east of it, Josh. vii. 2. though Beth-el itself was afterwards so called when Jeroboam had set up the worship of the calves there, Hos. iv. 15. it signifying the house of vanity or iniquity.

Ver. 6. *When the men of Israel saw they were in a strait, for the people were distressed*, &c.] By reason of the vast army that the Philistines brought into the field, greatly superior to theirs, and were likely to be encompassed by them on every side; so that nothing but destruction was expected, which gave them the utmost anxiety and uneasiness; though Abarbinel refers this last clause, not to the people of Israel, but to the people of the Philistines, and takes it in this sense, *for the people drew nigh*; the army of the Philistines was approaching, and got near to them; and so they were in great danger of being quickly attacked by them, and destroyed, their numbers being so great: *then the people did hide themselves in caves*; of which there were many in the land of Judea, capable of receiving a large number, as the cave of Adullam, the cave of En-gedi, *&c.* and such as the Israelites made to hide themselves when oppressed by the Midianites, Judg. vi. 2. *and in thickets*; woods and forests, or among thorns, as Jarchi; where there was a very great number of brambles and thorn-bushes; some, as Kimchi, interpret the word of munitions, garrisons, and fortified places, to which they betook themselves: *in rocks, and in high places, and in pits*; in the holes of rocks and mountains, particularly in Mount Ephraim; see ch. xiv. 22. and where there were any pits or ditches, high or deep places, where they might be out of sight, and be sheltered from their enemies.

Ver. 7. *And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead*, &c.] As far off as they could from the Philistines, who lay on the west of the land of Israel, and these countries were to the east. Kimchi observes, that the land of Reuben is not mentioned, which was on the other side Jordan also; because that was nearer to it than what was inhabited by Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; and therefore they chose to go further, thinking themselves there safer: *as for Saul, he was yet in Gilgal*; where he stayed till Samuel should come to him, as directed, ch. x. 8. to have his advice and counsel: *and all the people followed him trembling*; all that were with him, the army as distinct from the common people; they abode by him, and were at his command, and were ready to go where he should direct them; but with trembling hearts when they saw the panic of the people, fleeing into holes and corners, and considered what a huge host the Philistines were coming upon them with, and Samuel their prophet not with them to encourage and counsel them.

Ver. 8. *And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel had appointed, &c.*] He tarried to the seventh day, but not to the end of it, or towards the close of it, as he should have done: *but Samuel came not to Gilgal*; so soon as Saul expected: *and the people were scattered from him*; many deserted him, the Philistines drawing nigh, and Samuel not coming, as Saul expected, and had given the people reason to expect.

Ver. 9. *And Saul said*, &c.] Being impatient, and seeing the people deserting him apace, and unwilling to engage in a battle without first sacrificing to God, and imploring his help and assistance: *bring hither a burnt-offering to me*; that is, a creature for a burnt-offering, a bullock, sheep, goat, or lamb: *and peace-offerings*; which also were either of the herd, or of the flock: *and he offered the burnt-offering*; either he himself, or by a priest. In this unsettled time, while the tabernacle, altar, and ark, were at different places, and not yet fixed, it is thought that such who were not priests might offer, and that in high places, and where the tabernacle and altar were not.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering*, &c.] And before he could offer the peace-offerings: *behold, Samuel came*; and it was told Saul that he was come: *and Saul went out to meet him*; left off sacrificing, and would proceed no further, leaving the rest for Samuel; and out of respect to him, and to prevent a chiding of him, he went forth to meet him: *that he might salute him*, or *bless him*[c]; congratulate him on his coming, ask of his health and welfare, and wish him all peace and prosperity.

Ver. 11. *And Samuel said, what hast thou done?* &c.] This question he put to bring him to a confession of what he had done, otherwise he guessed at it by his countenance; or rather, by the prophetic spirit he was endowed with, he knew it certainly that he had offered

[a] Curtius, l. 4. c. 9.
[b] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 1.
[c] לברכו ad benedicendum ei, Montanus.

the sacrifices without waiting for him: *and Saul said, because I saw the people were scattered from me:* they were deserting, and he feared, if he stayed any longer, they would all leave him; this was one reason of doing what he did: *and that thou camest not within the days appointed;* seven days were appointed, and because the seventh day was come, though it was not gone, he concluded Samuel would not come at all; and that was another reason why he did what he did; and by this would have laid the blame on Samuel, as if he did not keep his time; whereas it was Saul's impatience that hurried him to this action: *and that the Philistines gathered themselves together to Michmash:* where his station before was, and from thence he might quickly expect them at Gilgal; and this was another reason why he hastened the sacrifice.

Ver. 12. *Therefore said I,* &c.] That is, within himself: *the Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal;* on a sudden, unprepared for them, especially in a religious way: *and I have not made supplication to the Lord;* for his direction and assistance, and for success in the war; which it seems went along with sacrifices, or was implied in them: *I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt-offering;* it was reluctant to him, it was against his will as well as the command of Samuel, to offer before he came, he suggests; but such were the circumstances he was in, that he was obliged to it; these are the reasons or excuses he made, and some of them have a specious appearance in them.

Ver. 13. *And Samuel said to Saul, thou hast done foolishly,* &c.] Not by intruding himself into the priest's office, with that he is not charged, but not waiting the full time till Samuel came; which shewed his impatience, disregard to Samuel, and distrust of God; and though he thought he had acted wisely, and taken the proper precautions in his circumstances, yet he acted foolishly; and though a king, Samuel being a prophet of the Lord, and in his name, spared not to tell him so: *thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee;* by his prophet, that he should wait seven days for his coming, who would then offer sacrifices, and tell him what he should do; and not to keep the commandment of God was acting a foolish part: *for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever;* that is, for a long time, on his son, and son's son; and then, according to promise and prophecy, it would come to one of the tribe of Judah; but now seeing he had acted such a part, it should not continue long in his family, no longer than his own life, and quickly come into other hands.

Ver. 14. *But now thy kingdom shall not continue,* &c.] That is, in his family, nor in his tribe, but be removed to another: *the Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart;* who was David; though as yet Samuel knew him not, he knew by divine revelation that there was one pitched upon, to whom the kingdom would be given; a man every way agreeable to the will of God, and who would fulfil his will, though he knew not particularly who he was: *and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people;* that is, had appointed him to be king over Israel. God's decrees have the force of a law in them, and must be fulfilled; and can't be resisted so as to be frustrated: *because thou hast not kept that which the Lord hath commanded thee:* it matters not whether the thing commanded is greater or less, it is disobedience to the command that is the sin, and is resented: this might seem a small thing, since to offer the sacrifice was not criminal; but doing it before the time, a little before it should have been done, not waiting long enough for the prophet; yet it being against the command of God, or in neglect of it, it was sinful, and severely chastised; and the rather, that it might be an example to all succeeding kings how they offended, or broke the least of God's commandments; and this being the first king of Israel, he was made an example of to the rest.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel arose,* &c.] Seemingly in wrath and displeasure, not staying to offer up the peace-offerings which remained; and though no mention is made of Saul's going with him, yet it seems as if he did, or at least quickly followed him, as appears from the next verse: *and gat him up from Gilgal unto Gibeah of Benjamin:* the native place of Saul, thereby directing Saul where he should go, and which might be a stronger place than Gilgal; or however where he might expect to be joined by more persons of his own tribe, as well as in the first place protect and defend that; and it looks by Samuel's going thither, though he was displeased with Saul, yet that he did not intend to forsake him directly and entirely: *and Saul numbered the people that were present with him, about 600 men;* which was done either before he left Gilgal, or as soon as he came to Gibeah; so great a desertion was there from him, that of the 3,000 first chosen by him, and of the people after called and gathered to him at Gilgal, only 600 remained with him; a small number indeed to encounter so large an army the Philistines had brought into the field, and which therefore Saul could not face.

Ver. 16. *And Saul, and Jonathan his son,* &c.] Who were now joined to their men, on Saul's coming to Gibeah: *and the people that were present with them;* the 600 men before numbered: *abode in Gibeah of Benjamin;* being perhaps a strong fortified place, not choosing to go forth to meet the army of the Philistines, so vastly superior to them: *but the Philistines encamped at Michmash;* the old quarters of Saul before he went to Gilgal, ver. 2.

Ver. 17. *And the spoilers came out of the camp of the Philistines in three companies,* &c.] Saul not daring to come out to fight them, and there being none throughout the land to oppose them, they sent out three companies of soldiers to ravage and spoil the country; of so little use and service was a king to Israel, they were so extremely desirous of; and this was suffered, to convince them of their vain confidence in him, and that their trust ought to be in the Lord their God; never was their country more exposed to rapine and violence than now: *one company turned unto the way that leadeth to Ophrah;* a city in the land of Benjamin, of which see Josh. xviii. 23. and lay south-west from Michmash, where the army of the Philistines were: *unto the land of Shual;* which the Targum paraphrases, "the land "of the south;" it seems to have had its name from the multitude of foxes in it, Shual signifying a fox.

Ver. 18. *And another company turned the way to Bethhoron,* &c.] Of which name there were two cities, the

upper and nether, and both in the tribe of Ephraim, of which see Josh. xvi. 3, 5. this lay north-west from the camp of the Philistines at Michmash; 8 miles from it, according to Bunting: *and another company turned to the way of the border, that looketh towards the valley of Zeboim, toward the wilderness:* some take this to be the Zeboim which was destroyed with Sodom and Gomorrah; and the wilderness, the wilderness of Jordan; but as that, so the valley in which it stood, was turned into a bituminous lake; this seems to be a city in the land of Benjamin, Neh. xi. 34. near to which was a valley, and this towards the wilderness of Jericho, and so lay eastward; the Targum calls it the valley of vipers, perhaps from its being infested with many; and so David de Pomis[e] says it is the name of a place where plenty of serpents were found, and which he says were called so because of the variety of colours in them; with which agrees Kimchi's note on the place; they seem to mean serpents spotted[f], as if they were painted and died of various colours, as the Hebrew word which is thus paraphrased signifies: according to Bunting[g], it was eight miles from Michmash.

Ver. 19. *Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel,* &c.] The Philistines, when they ruled over them, having removed them into their own country, and forbid any to learn or exercise that trade in Israel; *for the Philistines said, lest the Hebrews make swords or spears;* this they did to prevent their having arms, and the use of them, that they might not rebel against them, and fight with them, and overcome them; it was a piece of policy to keep them subject to them; so Nebuchadnezzar, when he conquered the Jews and carried them captive, took care particularly to carry away their smiths, and left none but the poorest sort of people in the land, 2 Kings xxiv. 14. Jer. xxiv. 1. and Porsena, king of the Etrusci, when he made a covenant with the Romans, upon the expulsion of their kings, made this a condition of peace with them, that they should use no iron but in husbandry[h]. When this course was taken by the Philistines with the Israelites, and how long it had continued, is not certain; it is probable it might be in the space of forty years they ruled over Israel, in which Samson was born, for we never read of any sword or spear that he made use of; and though there were two battles in the times of Eli, in both which Israel were beaten, they might make use only of bows and arrows, slings, and stones, clubs, &c. as also in the battle of Saul with the Ammonites; and as for the defeat of the Philistines in the time of Samuel, it was by thunder; and though the Philistines were then subdued, yet, as Samuel grew old, they regained their power in a good measure, and the Israelites had not spirit enough to oppose them, nor diligence and industry to learn and revive the trade of smiths among them; not even for what was necessary to husbandry, as the following verse shews.

Ver. 20. *But all the Israelites went down to the Philistines,* &c.] Were obliged to go into Palestine, into some one or other of the cities of the Philistines, or to their garrisons, where the trade of a smith was exercised: *to sharpen every man his share, and his coulter;* which are the parts of the plough made of iron, with which the earth is cut and thrown up: *and his ax and his mattock;* or pick-ax; with the one wood is felled and cut, and with the other stones are dug; and each of these for their several uses needed sharpening; and when they did, they were obliged to go to the Philistines to have them done, they having no smiths among them.

Ver. 21. *Yet they had a file for the mattocks, and for the coulters, and for the forks, and for the axes,* &c.] Those that would not go to the Philistines, or were not able, or thought it too much trouble, these kept files by them to sharpen those several instruments with upon occasion; though the words are by some rendered in connexion with the preceding, to this sense, that they went to the Philistines to sharpen them, *when the mouths,* or edges, *of the mattocks, coulters,* &c. *were dull;* or *blunt*[i]; and so needed sharpening; *and* even *to sharpen the goads;* with which they pricked and pushed on the oxen in ploughing, when sluggish and remiss.

Ver. 22. *So it came to pass in the day of battle,* &c.] When that drew near, and they were called to it, and obliged to fight or flee, or surrender: *that there were neither sword nor spear found in the hand of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan;* which was not owing to their leaving them behind in the camp, or casting them away from them through fear, as they followed Saul with trembling, but to the cause now mentioned. In what manner some preceding battles were fought with the Philistines and Ammonites, notwithstanding, have been accounted for on ver. 19. but it is strange that the Israelites did not furnish themselves with the arms of the Philistines at the defeat of them in Eben-ezer, ch. vii. 10, 11. and with the arms of the Ammonites at Jabesh-gilead, ch. xi. 11. and that such a warlike prince as Saul appeared at his first setting out to be should not in the first place take care to provide armour for his men by some means or another; for that those that left him should have arms, and not those that abode with him, does not seem reasonable. It may be the Benjaminites, being expert in slinging, were indifferent to and neglected the use of any other weapon, or method of fighting: *but with Saul and with Jonathan his son was there found;* swords and spears, and with them only.

Ver. 23. *And the garrison of the Philistines went out to the passage of Michmash.*] According to Jarchi, these two places, Michmash where the Philistines were, and Gibeah where Saul and Jonathan were, lay on two hills over-against each other, and there was a valley between them; and the garrison of the Philistines drew nigh to the passage of Michmash, which led to the side of Gibeah, to the valley between them, either with an intention to besiege Gibeah, or to dare Israel

[d] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 132.
[e] Tzemach David, fol. 13. 2. & 153. 1.
[f] Αἰόλον ὄφιν, Homer. Iliad. 12. ver. 208. notis maculosus grandibus, Virgil. Georgic. l. 3. v. 427.
[g] Ut supra.
[h] Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 34. c. 14.
[i] והיתה הפצירה פים retusæ itaque erant acies vomerum, V. L. quandoquidem acies cultrorum aratri, &c. obtusæ erant, Tigurine version.

to come out and fight them: but rather it seems to be some strong pass between the rocks near Michmash, where the garrison placed themselves to guard and keep against any sudden surprise; see ch. xiv. 4. The Targum is, "the governor of the Philistines went out "to the ford or passage of Michmash;" and Kimchi interprets it of the princes or generals of the army; these might go to mark out a camp, and pitch upon a proper place to draw up in a line of battle.

CHAP. XIV.

THIS chapter gives an account of an adventure of Jonathan and his armour-bearer smiting a garrison of the Philistines, ver. 1—14. which with other circumstances struck terror into the whole army; which being observed by Saul's spies, he and his men went out against them, and being joined by others, pursued them, and obtained a complete victory, ver. 15—23. but what sullied the glory of the day was a rash oath of Saul's, adjuring the people not to eat any food till evening, which Jonathan not hearing of ignorantly broke, ver. 24—31. and which long fasting made the people so ravenous, that they slew their cattle, and ate them with the blood, contrary to the law of God, for which they were reproved by Saul, ver. 32, 33, 34. upon which he built an altar, and inquired of the Lord whether he should pursue the Philistines all that night till morning, but had no answer; which made him conclude sin was committed, and which he inquired after, declaring that if it was his own son Jonathan that had committed it he should surely die, ver. 35—39. the people being silent, he cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonathan; who had it not been for the resolution of the people that rescued him out of his hands, because of the great salvation he had wrought, must have died, ver. 40—46. and the chapter is closed with an account of Saul's battles with the neighbouring nations in general, and of his family, ver. 47—52.

Ver. 1. *Now it came to pass upon a day, &c.*] At a certain time, a little after the garrison of the Philistines had made the movement, ch. xiii. 23. and it is not to be taken strictly for the day-time; for it is probable it was in the night that the following proposal was made, and began to be carried into execution; for Josephus[k] says it was day-light when Jonathan and his armour-bearer came to the camp of the Philistines: he had formed his scheme perhaps the night before, and he and his man set out in the night-time, and by break of day came up to the garrison, as after related: *that Jonathan the son of Saul said unto the young man that bare his armour:* as was usual in those times for generals of armies to have such, and so in after-times; such were Automedon to Achilles, and Achates to Æneas, as Grotius observes: *come and let us go over to the Philistines' garrison that is on the other side:* that is, go over the valley which lay between Michmash and Gibeah, to the Philistines, that lay on the other side the valley beyond it; and so was not in it, but at a pass on the hills, at the bottom of which this valley lay, and could be seen at a distance, and pointed at with the finger, as Jarchi notes: *but he told not his father;* lest he should disapprove of his project, and hinder him from pursuing it; and had not his spirit been stirred up to this by the Lord, of which he was fully persuaded, he would have acted not only a rash part, but contrary to military discipline, in engaging in an enterprise without the knowledge and direction of his general; unless we can suppose he had an unlimited commission from his father to attack the enemy at discretion, at any time, and any where.

Ver. 2. *And Saul tarried in the uttermost part of Gibeah, &c.*] Not daring to go out against the Philistines, but remained in the furthest part of Gibeah, at the greatest distance from the camp of the Philistines, in the strongest part of the city, or deeply intrenched in the outer part of it in the field: *under a pomegranate-tree;* where were his head-quarters; his tent or pavilion was erected under a large spreading pomegranate, which protected him from the heat of the sun: or *under Rimmon;* the rock Rimmon; under the shelter of that, and in the caverns of it; where a like number of Benjaminites he now had with him formerly hid themselves, Judg. xx. 47. *which is in Migron:* a part of Gibeah, or rather of the field of Gibeah, so called; for near it it certainly was; and is also mentioned along with Michmash, and as lying in the way of the march of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, to Jerusalem, Isa. x. 28. *and the people that were with him were about* 600 *men;* which is observed to shew that no addition was made to his little army; it was the same it was when he came thither, the people did not flock to his assistance, being in fear of the army of the Philistines, which was so powerful; see ch. xiii. 15.

Ver. 3. *And Ahiah the son of Ahitub, Ichabod's brother, &c.*] Ichabod was the child that Phinehas's wife was brought-to-bed of, on hearing the news of the ark being taken, and of the death of her huband and father-in-law, which name she gave him on that account, and died; see ch. iv. 19—22. he, it seems, had an elder brother, called Ahitub, who died young, and this Ahiah was the son of him; for not he, but Ahitub, was Ichabod's brother: *the son of Phinehas:* so Ichabod was: *the son of Eli;* so Phinehas was: *the Lord's priest in Shiloh;* this refers not to Ahiah, for he was not now priest in Shiloh, which was destroyed; and besides, he was now in the camp of Saul; but to Eli, who when living exercised the priest's office in Shiloh: *wearing an ephod;* as Ahiah now did; not such as common priests wore, but the ephod the high-priest wore, which had the breast-plate of judgment, the Urim and Thummim, in it, by which inquiry was made, ver. 37.

[k] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6 sect. 2.

the meaning of all this is, that the high-priest was now with Saul, and the ark also, which and the high-priest might be sent for on this occasion, ver. 18. *and the people knew not that Jonathan was gone*: or they would have gone with him, namely, the military men that were particularly with him; he and Saul were in two different parts of Gibeah, with distinct bodies of men: whether the thousand that Jonathan first had with him all continued is not certain; it seems probable they did not; it can hardly be thought he should have more with him than were with Saul; see ch. xiii. 2. though from ver. 17. they seem now to have been together.

Ver. 4. *And between the passages by which Jonathan sought to go over unto the Philistines' garrison*, &c.] One of which is called the passage of Michmash, ch. xiii. 23. and was that by which they went from Gibeah to Michmash; the other, which might be called the passage of Gibeah, was that by which they went from Michmash to Gibeah, and in effect was but one; and this was seized by the garrison of the Philistines, on that part of it which was towards Michmash; so that there was no way of access to the camp of the Philistines, which Jonathan therefore proposed to go over to and destroy, but his difficulties were very great: there was *a sharp rock on the one side, and a sharp rock on the other side*; not that there was on each side of the passage or passages to the right and left a cragged rock, between which men passed as they went from place to place; for the position of them in the next verse shews the contrary: but there was *the tooth of a rock*[l], as it is in the original text; or a promontory or prominence on the one side towards Michmash, which stood out like a tooth; and another promontory or prominence on that towards Gibeah; so that both must be gone over to get to the camp, the only passage being guarded by the garrison; and indeed it seems to me there was but one rock, and two precipices at the opposite parts of it, and which stood between the passages, which precipices must be climbed over: *and the name of the one* was *Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh*: which, according to the Targum, the one signifies *lubrication*, being smooth and slippery, and the other *treading*, being more trodden and beaten: but Hillerus[m] derives both from clay, which seems not so agreeable to a rock; though in another place[n] he makes the former to have its name from whiteness, which is the colour of some rocks and clifts; and one should think the latter rather has its name from bushes, brambles, and thorns, that might grow upon it.

Ver. 5. *The fore-front of the one* was *situate northward, over-against Michmash*, &c.] The northern precipice of this rock was towards Michmash, where the Philistines lay encamped, and where was the passage of Michmash the garrison went into and possessed: *and the other southward, over-against Gibeah*: the southern precipice faced Gibeah, and both precipices were to be got over before he could get to the garrison, these lying between the two passages; the one at one end, called the passage of Michmash, the other at the other, which might be called the passage of Gibeah.

Ver. 6. *And Jonathan said to the young man that bare his armour*, &c.] A second time, as Abarbinel thinks; the young man giving no answer to him the first time, perhaps through fear, he repeats it, and enlarges upon it for his encouragement: *come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised*; as these Philistines were, whereas several of the other nations, though Heathen, were circumcised; as the Edomites, Arabians, and others; and this Jonathan observes to the young man, in hope that they being such the Lord would deliver them into their hand: *it may be that the Lord will work for us*; a sign, as the Targum, a miracle, as indeed he did; and of which Jonathan was persuaded in his own mind, though he did not choose to express himself in a confideve way; not knowing in what manner, and whether at this time the Lord would appear, and work salvation and deliverance; and yet had a strong impulse upon his mind it would be wrought, and therefore was encouraged to try this expedient: *for* there is *no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few*; he is not limited to numbers, and can easily work salvation by a few as by many. It is no difficult thing to him to save by few, nor can any thing hinder him, let the difficulties be what they will, when he has determined to deliver his people.

Ver. 7. *And his armour-bearer said unto him*, &c.] Very readily and cheerfully: *do all that is in thine heart*; whatever is thy pleasure, that thou hast a mind to do, that is upon thy heart, and thou art desirous of, and strongly inclined and affected to: *turn thee*; which way thou wilt, towards the garrison of the Philistines, or elsewhere: *behold*, *I* am *with thee, according to thy heart*; I'll go with thee wherever thou goest, and do whatsoever thou wouldest have me to do; I am at thy command, and according to thy wish and desire, and in all things subject to thy will; I am as thine own heart.

Ver. 8. *Then said Jonathan, behold, we will pass over to these men*, &c.] Over the precipices to them, as steep and as cragged as they are: *and we will discover ourselves to them*; present themselves to them at daylight, and let them know plainly who they were, that they were Hebrews.

Ver. 9. *If they say thus unto us*, &c.] By this and what follows he gives his man a sign by which both might know how they should conduct themselves in this expedition, and what would be the issue, whether they should succeed or no: should they say, *tarry until we come to you*; this, as it would express boldness in the men of the garrison, and shew that they were ready to come out and fight, would portend evil, and then what they had to do was to be upon the defensive: *then we will stand still in our place*; wait till they came to them, and make the best defence of themselves as they could, shewing as little fear as possible, and not attempting to retreat and flee: *and will not go up unto them*; neither go backwards nor forwards; not backward, which would shew fear: not

[l] שן הסלע dens petræ, Pagninus, Montanus; scopulus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[m] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 73, 82.
[n] Ibid. p. 43.

forward, to expose themselves to too much danger from the garrison, they appearing to be bold and intrepid.

Ver. 10. *But if they say unto us, come up unto us*, &c.] Which however spoken in contempt of them, yet would discover some fear, that they did not care to come out of their hold to them, and expose themselves to any danger; and besides being bid to come up, though it might be in a sneering ironical way, as supposing it impracticable for them; yet this would lead them on to make the attempt; and whilst the men were careless and secure, they might obtain their point: *then we will go up*: the precipice, which was supposed unpassable: *for the Lord hath delivered them into our hands*; they being afraid to come out, and scornful and self-confident in their garrison: *and this shall be a sign unto us*; a direction how to behave, what steps to take, and a confirming sign assuring of success. Bishop Patrick and others observe, from Herodotus[a], something similar to this, of the Pæonians, who went to war with the Perinthians, directed by the oracle; and were ordered that if the Perinthians provoked them to fight, calling them by name, then they should invade them; but, if not, should abstain; and so they did, and overcame; for when they met, there were three single combats; in the two first the Perinthians were conquerors, and began to triumph and insult; upon which the Pæonians said to one another, now is the oracle fulfilled, now is our business, and so fell upon them, and left few of them.

Ver. 11. *And both of them discovered themselves unto the garrison of the Philistines*, &c.] They passed over the valley that lay between Michmash and Gibeah, and presented themselves at the bottom of the hill or rock on which the garrison was, to the open view of it; and who might easily discern who they were, that they were Hebrews, as they did, as follows: *and the Philistines said, behold, the Hebrews come forth out of the holes where they had hid themselves*; being in want of provisions, and almost starved, and so obliged to come out to seek for sustenance; see ver. 6.

Ver. 12. *And the men of the garrison answered Jonathan and his armour-bearer*, &c.] The guards that were set to watch the garrison, who descrying them, called to them, and said: *come up to us, and we will shew you a thing*; we have something to say to you, a pretty thing to shew you, when you shall pay dear for your boldness and impudence, in daring to come so near; not imagining that they could come, or would dare to attempt to come any further: *and Jonathan said unto his armour-bearer, come up after me*; follow me, and never fear but we will find a way to come up to them, however difficult it may be: *for the Lord hath delivered them into the hand of Israel*; he knew by their language that God had given them a spirit of fear, that they durst not come out of their hold, and come down to them; and that he had cast them into a spirit of security and vain confidence, that they could never come at them, and give them any trouble; and from hence he concluded deliverance was at hand for the people of Israel, he seeking not his own private interest and glory, but the public good; and which he was ready to ascribe not to his own valour and courage, but to the power, kindness, and goodness of God.

Ver. 13. *And Jonathan climbed up upon his hands and upon his feet*, &c.] He did not attempt to go up the way or pass the Philistines kept, but turned aside and climbed up a precipice thought inaccessible, and came upon them unseen, and at an unawares; for had he attempted to come up in any part where he was seen, they could easily have beat him down, and prevented his ascent; but though the place he climbed was so very steep and cragged, yet going on all-four, as we say, he surmounted the difficulty; for he took this method of going on his hands and feet, not so much that he might not be seen; but because otherwise he could not have got up, not being able to stand on his feet; some think it was the precipice called Bozez he climbed, which, according to the Targum, had its name from its being lubricous and slippery: *and his armour-bearer after him*; who clambered up in the same manner, in imitation of his master, and as taught and directed by him: *and they fell before Jonathan, and his armour-bearer slew after him*; Jonathan, coming upon them at an unawares, knocked them down; or falling upon them, and laying about him, with great dispatch, wounded them, and laid them prostrate to the ground; and his armour-bearer following him, put them to death, dispatched them at once; and so between them both made quick riddance of them.

Ver. 14. *And the first slaughter which Jonathan and his armour-bearer made was about twenty men*, &c.] Or the first blow they struck, as the Targum, they killed about twenty men; that is, they did not leave off smiting, but followed their blows so quick, that in a very little time, as well as in a very small space of ground, so many were killed: even *within as it were an half-acre of land*, which a *yoke* of oxen might plough; that is, in one day; the word is used for a furrow, Psal. cxxix. 3. and is supposed by some[b] to be the length of one furrow; but if so, it must be a circular furrow; so much ground was given to Horatius Cocles as could be ploughed round about in one day, for his brave opposition to Porsena, king of the Etruscans, when he endeavoured to restore the family of the Tarquins[c]. This was a space of ground which the Romans call *actus*, a measure of land 120 feet square, which being doubled made an acre, called by them *jugerum*, being as much as a yoke of oxen could plough in one day, as Pliny says[d]; so that an acre was 240 feet long, and 120 broad, and contained an area of 28,800 four-square Roman feet; and this space here mentioned, which was half an acre, contained 14,400 Roman feet[e]; and within this space of ground, without going any further, 20 men were killed, which struck a panic into the whole garrison and host, supposing there was a large army of men behind them coming on, as follows. The Septuagint version

[a] Terpsichore, sive, l. 5. c. 1.
[b] Vid. David. de Pomis Lexic. fol. 129. 1.
[c] Aurel. Victor. de vir. illustr. c. 14. Liv. Hist. l. 2. c. 10.
[d] Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 3. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 20.
[e] Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 487.

renders these words as representing the slaughter made *with darts, and the casts of stones, and flints of the field*[t].

Ver. 15. *And there was trembling in the host in the field*, &c.] Belonging to Michmash, where the army lay encamped: *and among all the people:* the inhabitants of Michmash, or that attended the army, and furnished them with provisions, trafficking with them; the common people, as distinguished from the soldiers: *the garrison;* those that were in it, who did not sally out, but perceiving a great slaughter made of their outscouts, were seized with a panic: *and the spoilers they also trembled;* who had been about the country, ravaging and plundering it, and were returned with their booty; see ch. xiii. 17. *and the earth quaked:* the inhabitants of it thereabout, or the earth itself literally; a real earthquake was caused at the same time, which increased the terror: *so that it was a very great trembling:* both with respect to the numbers that were affected with it throughout the camp and garrison, and the causes of it; the terrible apprehension they had of a large army just ready to rush upon them; the earth quaking and opening in various places, threatening to swallow them up; and perhaps suspicions of treachery among themselves, they consisting of various nations, and some among them Hebrews; hence they fell upon and slew one another, ver. 20, 21. or *a trembling of God*[u]; either in the same sense to which we translate it, as cedars of God, flame of God, &c. that is, large and great ones; or which came from God; it was he that sent this trembling among them, struck their minds with fear and dread, so that they were in the utmost consternation, and knew not what to do, nor which way to take, and had no heart to oppose the enemy, and defend themselves.

Ver. 16. *And the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked*, &c.] The city of Gibeah was built on an hill, from whence it had its name; and these watchmen or sentinels of Saul were set by him no doubt in the highest part of it, whereby they could overlook the army of the Philistines as they lay encamped, and could observe their motions, and give notice accordingly; and it being now broad day-light, could see the condition they were in: *and, behold, the multitude melted away;* like snow gradually, and yet apace; they could discern their numbers lessening more and more, through the slaughter of many made among them by one another, and the flight of others: *and they went on beating down one another;* they could perceive they fled with great precipitation, throwing one another down in running, tumbling over one another, and trampling on each other which were in their way.

Ver. 17. *Then said Saul unto the people that were with him*, &c.] To some of the officers, particularly the muster-master: *number now, and see who is gone from us;* for he concluded that this agitation and confusion in the host of the Philistines were occasioned by an enterprise of some of his men, who by some stratagem or another had thrown them into this disorder: *and when they had numbered;* which was soon done, being but 600 men in all: *behold, Jonathan and his armour-bearer* were *not* there; from whence it might be inferred, that this commotion the Philistines were in was occasioned by an onset of theirs on the out-guards or sentinels of their garrison or army, which had alarmed them.

Ver. 18. *And Saul said unto Ahiah, bring hither the ark of the Lord*, &c.] That he, the high-priest, might put on the ephod, with the Urim and Thummim, and inquire by them of the Lord before it, concerning the affair of Jonathan, what he had done, and the agitation that was in the host of the Philistines; so the Septuagint version, *bring the ephod*, of which, with the Urim and Thummim, Kimchi interprets it; and ask, whether it was right for him to go out unto them, or continue where he was: *for the ark of God was at that time with the children of Israel;* and so it always was, except a few months it was in the hands of the Philistines; so it was at Kirjath-jearim, where it was last. Jarchi thinks a word is wanting, and to be supplied thus, "the ark of God was *there* at that "time with the children of Israel," at Gibeah; perhaps it might be removed first to Gilgal, when Saul and Samuel were there, and when they came to Gibeah it was brought along with them; but the last words may be considered as a distinct clause, and, literally rendered, are, *and the children of Israel;* which Abarbinel accounts for thus, and Saul said this, *bring hither the ark of the Lord;* and the children of Israel said so likewise, joined with him in it: though the ark had been with Saul, and the people, some time, and also the high-priest, yet we don't find that Saul in all his straits and difficulties consulted the Lord before; but perceiving something extraordinary was doing, and might turn to his advantage, he begins to inquire.

Ver. 19. *And it came to pass, while Saul talked with the priest*, &c.] With Ahiah about bringing the ark, and inquiring before it: *that the noise that was in the host of the Philistines went on, and increased;* the shrieks and cries of those that were beat down and trampled upon, and were bruised and wounded; and indeed the cry of the whole host, being alarmed with the enemy being upon them, or among them; and it seems that not only their motions could be seen, but the noise of them heard at this distance: *and Saul said unto the priest, withdraw thine hand;* from putting on the ephod, or opening the breastplate of Urim and Thummim, or placing the ark in a proper position, to inquire before it, or from lifting up both hands in prayer for direction. Saul by the noise he heard concluded the army of the Philistines was routed, and therefore there was no need to consult the Lord, and he had no leisure for it; no time was to be lost, the advantage was to be taken directly, and the enemy pursued, to complete the victory. The Jews look upon this as a piece of profaneness in Saul, as no doubt it was, and reckon it one of the sins for which his kingdom was not prolonged[w].

Ver. 20. *And Saul, and all the people that were with him, assembled themselves*, &c.] The 600 men that were with him, unless we can suppose the 1,000 that had been with Jonathan in Gibeah were here still, see

[t] See Dr. Kennicott's Dissertat. 1. p. 453.

[u] לחרדת אלהים in trepidationem Dei, Montanus, Drusius, Vatablus.

[w] Vajikra Rabba & Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel in loc.

ch. xiii. 2. *and they came to the battle;* to the field of battle, the place where the army of the Philistines had lain encamped: *and, behold, every man's sword was against his fellow;* taking one another for Hebrews, or treacherous and disaffected persons: so that, though the Israelites had neither swords nor spears, they needed none, for the Philistines destroyed one another with their own swords; and there was *a very great discomfiture;* noise, tumult, confusion, slaughter, and destruction.

Ver. 21. *Moreover, the Hebrews* that *were with the Philistines before that time,* &c.] Who either were their servants and bondsmen they brought along with them, or such in whose cities they dwelt, or had taken as they came along, and forced into their army; or it may be some of them were renegadoes from the Israelites, deserters, who for safety and subsistence betook themselves to them as the stronger party. The Greek version reads, "the servants that were with the Philistines:" *which went up with them into the camp,* from the country *round about;* either willingly or by force; the words, *from the country,* are not in the text, wherefore some observe, as Kimchi and Abarbinel, that this respects their being round about the camp, and that they were not within it, but without it, that if possible they might escape fighting against the Israelites: *even they also* turned *to be with the Israelites that were with Saul and Jonathan;* who were now joined; when they saw the dread and confusion in the camp of the Philistines, and them destroying one another, and the Israelites prevailing over them, victorious and pursuing, they took part with them, and assisted them in completing the victory.

Ver. 22. *Likewise all the men of Israel which had hid themselves in Mount Ephraim,* &c.] In the caves and rocks, thickets and pits there, see ch. xiii. 6. when *they heard that the Philistines fled;* now being delivered from their fears, and thinking themselves safe, ventured out of their lurking-places: *even they also followed hard after them in the battle;* they joined the pursuers who came their way, and stuck to them, and closely pursued the flying army of the Philistines. According to Josephus [p], the army of Saul was now increased to 10,000.

Ver. 23. *So the Lord saved Israel that day,* &c.] And a wonderful salvation it was, that two men should throw such a vast army into confusion, which issued in the utter rout and destruction of them; this only could be of the Lord, to whom it is justly ascribed, and was the effect of his sovereign good will and pleasure, and of his unmerited goodness; a free favour bestowed on an undeserving prince, who had behaved ill to his prophet at Gilgal, and now to him and his high-priest at Gibeah: *and the battle passed over unto Beth-aven;* the men of battle or war; those that made war, as the Targum, these pursued and went as far as Beth-aven, or rather *passed Beth-aven* [q]; they not only went as far as that, but *from* it, as Ben Gersom and Abarbinel interpret it; they passed that place, and went on from thence in pursuit of the Philistines: for their camp at Michmash was eastward from this place, and had it on the east, ch. xiii. 5.

Ver. 24. *And the men of Israel were distressed that day,* &c.] By reason of the following order Saul gave with an oath, forbidding any to taste meat till evening; when the people were faint and weary, which is the common sense of interpreters; but Jarchi interprets it, the men of Israel were ready, forward, and hasty, and drew nigh to fight with the Philistines, and so refers it to the persons before mentioned, who came out of their lurking-places; and this sense is approved of by Abarbinel: *for,* or *and Saul had adjured,* or *did adjure the people;* or *willed* them, signified to them his will and pleasure, which would not have been so much amiss, had he not annexed a curse to it, as follows: *saying, cursed be the man that eateth* any *food until the evening;* or *bread,* which comprehends all food, and among the rest honey; the design of which was, that no time might be lost, and that he might make the victory over the Philistines, and their destruction, as complete as possible; though it may seem a little too hard and severe upon the people, and too imperious in him, as well as imprudent; since a little refreshment would have animated and enabled them to have pursued their enemies with more ardour and vigour; and yet by the lot afterwards made, it seems to have been countenanced by the Lord: *that I may be avenged on mine enemies;* who long tyrannised over the people of Israel, more or less for many years, and lately had sadly spoiled and plundered them: *so none of the people tasted any food;* so observant were they of, and so obedient to the order of their king, and so much awed by the oath or imprecation annexed to it; though they were faint and hungry, and had an opportunity of refreshing themselves as follows, which was no small temptation to disobedience.

Ver. 25. *And all* they of *the land came to a wood,* &c.] Which lay between Beth-aven and Aijalon; by whom are meant not all the inhabitants of the land of Israel, but all that came with Saul and Jonathan, and that joined them in the pursuit: *and there was honey upon the ground;* which dropped upon it, as in the following verse, or where it was produced by bees; for Aristotle [r] reports, that bees in some places make their combs upon the ground; this was wild honey, which Diodorus Siculus [s] speaks of as common in Arabia, and which perhaps John the Baptist ate of, Mat. iii. 4. Jarchi says, this was the honey of canes, or sugar-canes, which grew in the land of Israel; and affirms from Nathan an Ishmaelite, that in the Ishmaelitish or Arabic language they call honey sugar; but neither of these can be proved.

Ver. 26. *And when the people came into the wood, behold, the honey dropped,* &c.] Either from trees, which produced it; so Diodorus Siculus [t] speaks of trees in some countries which produce honey; or from the sugar-canes, as Jarchi; or rather from the honey-combs which were framed in trees by bees; so Hesiod [u] speaks of bees making their nests or combs in trees. Ben Gersom thinks that bee-hives were placed here

[p] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 3.

[q] עברה את בית און transiit Betharen, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; vel, bellatores transierunt Bethaven, Pagninus, Vatablus, Drusius.

[r] Hist. Animal. l. 5. c. 22.

[s] Bibliothec. l. 19. p. 731.

[t] Ibid. l. 17. p. 549.

[u] Hesiod. Theogon. ver. 230. Vid. Diodor. Sic. ut supra.

in rows by the way-side, from whence the honey flowed; or *went* [w], or there was a going of it; perhaps the combs being pressed by the Philistines as they fled: the land of Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey: *but no man put his hand to his mouth*; that is, took not any of the honey and ate it, though it was so near at hand, and there was plenty of it: *for the people feared the oath*; Saul adjured them by, or the imprecation he made on the person that should eat any food that day.

Ver. 27. *But Jonathan heard not when his father charged the people with the oath*, &c.] Which charge was given, either before he came from Gibeah, before he came to Jonathan, or whilst pursuing, when Jonathan was with another party either fighting or pursuing: *wherefore he put forth the end of the rod that* was *in his hand*: the staff with which he walked, or rather the spear which he carried in his hand, and fought his enemies with: *and dipped it in an honey-comb*; or sugar-cane, as Jarchi; or in wood-honey, as the margin of our Bibles; but best, in the honey-comb, as the word is rendered, Cant. v. 1. and so the Targum, into the nest of honey [x]: *and he put his hand to his mouth*; first he took the honey off of the top of his rod, and then put it to his mouth and ate it; *and his eyes were enlightened*; which before were dim and dull through want of food, which is a common case; but became brisk and lively on eating the honey, nourishment being presently communicated, and he refreshed with it, and his spirits revived; and which quickly appeared in the briskness and sparkling of his eyes: honey being of a subtle nature, gives immediate refreshment and vigour; hence this phrase is frequently used by Jewish writers [y] for refreshment, after hunger, fatigue, and weariness; and which virtue is ascribed by them to fine bread, wine, oil, and particularly to honey.

Ver. 28. *Then answered one of the people, and said*, &c.] To Jonathan, who might direct and encourage the people to do as he had done, at least so he did by his example, if not by words; the latter is not improbable: and therefore one of the men that came along with Saul, and had now joined Jonathan, and who heard what Saul had said, replied, *thy father straitly charged the people with an oath*; gave them a strict charge, with an oath or imprecation annexed to it: *saying, cursed* be *the man that eateth* any *food this day*; that is, until the evening, as in ver. 24. *and the people were faint*; which is either the observation of the writer of the book; or it may be the words of the man, imputing the faintness of the people to this adjuration of Saul restraining them from food; or as taking notice how strictly the people observed it, though they were hungry, faint, and weary.

Ver. 29. *Then said Jonathan, my father hath troubled the land*, &c.] The people of the land, as the Targum, the soldiers in his army; afflicted and distressed them, and made them uneasy in their minds, like troubled waters; the Arabic version is, "my father hath sinned against the people;" hath done them injury by forbidding them to eat. This was not wisely said by Jonathan; how much soever his father was to be blamed, it did not become him as a son thus to reflect upon him, and it might have tended to mutiny and sedition: *see, I pray you, how mine eyes have been enlightened, because I tasted a little of this honey*; the benefit he received by it was very visible; it might easily be discerned that he was greatly refreshed with it, and his spirits invigorated by it; it was to be seen in the cheerfulness of his countenance, and the briskness of his eyes: and he suggests it would have had the same effect upon the people, had they eaten of it, as he had done.

Ver. 30. *How much more, if haply the people had eaten freely to-day of the spoil of their enemies which they found?* &c.] That is, had they been allowed to eat freely of the provisions, of bread, wine, &c. they found in the enemy's camp, they would have been much more refreshed and strengthened than it could be supposed he was with eating a little honey; if that had had such an effect upon him, of what service would a full meal have been to the people? *for had there not been now a much greater slaughter among the Philistines?* the people would have had more strength to smite them, and would have pursued them with greater ardour and swiftness, and so have made a greater slaughter among them than they had; he intimates that Saul's end would have been better answered by suffering the people to eat, than by forbidding them.

Ver. 31. *And they smote the Philistines that day from Michmash to Aijalon*, &c.] Michmash was the place where the camp of the Philistines was when Jonathan first attacked them, and from whence they fled, and they were pursued by the Israelites that day as far as Aijalon. There was a city of this name in the tribe of Dan, famous for the moon standing still in a valley adjoining to it, in the time of Joshua, ch. x. 12. and xix. 42. and another in the tribe of Zebulun, Judg. xii. 12. but they both seem to be at too great a distance to be the place here meant, which rather seems to be Aijalon in the tribe of Judah, 2 Chron. xi. 10. according to Bunting [z], it was 12 miles from Michmash: *and the people were very faint*; as they might well be, with pursuing the enemy so many miles, and doing so much execution among them, without eating any food.

Ver. 32. *And the people flew upon the spoil*, &c.] Like a swift and ravenous bird, as the eagle, and which seems to have its name in Greek from this word, see Isa. xlvi. 11. When the evening was come, and they were free from the oath of Saul, and being extremely hungry, faint, and weary, they were even ravenous for food, and with the greatest haste and eagerness laid hold on what came first to hand: *and took sheep, and oxen, and calves, and slew them on the ground*; and there they lay in their blood, which in such a position would not run out freely as when slain and hung up: *and the people did eat them with the blood*; they were so hungry they could not stay the dressing of them, but ate them raw with the blood in them, not being squeezed or drained out, at least not half boiled or roasted. Some of the Jewish Rabbins [a] are of opinion

[w] הלך רבש ambulatio mellis, Montanus; itio mellis, Drusius; so in Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. fab. 3. ——— jam flumina nectaris ibant.

[x] Progeniem nidosque fovent —— Virgil. Georgic. l. 4. ver. 56.

[y] T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 42. 1, 2. Yoma, fol. 18. 2. & 83. 1. Maimon. Hilch. Maacolot Asurot, c. 14. sect. 16.

[z] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 127.

[a] See Jarchi in loc.

that these were their peace-offerings; and that their fault was, that they ate of them before the blood was sprinkled, whilst it was in the basin; but this was common food, which, being hungry, they were eager of, and could not wait the proper dressing of it, according to the law of God. The phrase is by some rendered *by*, *upon*, or *about* the blood, and think it refers to an idolatrous custom of the Heathens, who, sacrificing to demons, sat down round about the blood, and ate their food; see the notes on Lev. xix. 26. and Ezek. xxxiii. 25. to which may be added, that Homer[b] represents the infernal spirits as gathered together at a ditch where the blood of an animal was shed, to drink of it, that they might know and foretel things to come, as particularly Tiresias the Theban.

Ver. 33. *Then they told Saul*, &c.] Some that were more conscientious and religious, were more circumspect, and strictly attended to the laws forbidding the eating of blood, and were concerned at the indecent behaviour of others, and therefore thought fit to acquaint Saul with it, to restrain it: *behold, the people sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the blood;* by breaking the laws of God respecting the eating of blood in Gen. ix. 4. Lev. iii. 17. and vii. 26, 27. and xvii. 10, 11. especially in Lev. xix. 26. *and he said, ye have transgressed;* the above laws of God; that is, Saul said to some persons who were accused of the breach of them, and were ordered to come before him, and did come: *roll a great stone unto me this day;* pointing, perhaps, at one which lay at some distance from him, and which he ordered to be rolled to him; this was done, that the creatures might be slain on it, and their blood drawn out from them, or to offer sacrifice upon, and indeed for both.

Ver. 34. *And Saul said, disperse yourselves among the people*, &c.] In the camp, some one way, and some another, and make proclamation throughout it; this he said to some of his officers, whom he sent out as heralds, to publish his will and pleasure: *and say unto them, bring me hither every man his ox, and every man his sheep, and slay* them *here;* on the great stone he had ordered to roll to the place where he was: *and eat* them; in the same place, being rightly slain, and the blood let out; all this was to be done, the slaying of the beasts, and eating them, in the presence of Saul, and under his inspection, that every thing might be done decently, and in order, and according to the law of God: *and sin not against the Lord, in eating with the blood:* as some of them had done, ver. 32. *and all the people brought every man his ox with him;* and his sheep also, though not expressed, yet to be supplied from the preceding clause: and these every man brought *with him that night:* the Jewish Rabbins[c] are divided about these creatures slain, whether for sacrifices or common food; and those that think sacrifices are meant dispute whether it was lawful to slay them in the night, which some allow to be lawful, if on a small and private altar, but not upon a large and public one; but these were slain no doubt for common food, which all agree might be slain in the night: *and slew* them *there;* before Saul, and on the great stone rolled unto him.

Ver. 35. *And Saul built an altar unto the Lord*, &c.] To offer peace-offerings upon, in thankfulness for the victory obtained over his enemies, or sin-offerings to make atonement for the sin of the people, perhaps both, however the former: *the same was the first altar that he built unto the Lord;* for though he had offered sacrifice at Gilgal, there was an altar ready-built for him: or *he began to build;* he laid the first stone of it, and the builders built upon it; so some others say, that he was the first of the kings that built an altar to the Lord[d]; others, the first of the judges that built one; though Gideon built one, it was for his own private use, not for all Israel, as this, so R. Isaiah; but Ben Gersom, and so Abarbinel, refer this to the great stone Saul ordered to be rolled to him, and take the sense to be, that that began to be built an altar to the Lord; that was the beginning of one; for he did not now stay to finish it, being eager on his pursuit of the Philistines, as follows.

Ver. 36. *And Saul said*, &c.] To his son Jonathan, or to some of the principal officers of his army: *let us go down after the Philistines by night;* or to-night, that same night; which is another hardship he laid his troops under; as he had restrained them from eating all that day until evening, now he proposed they shall take no sleep that night, but proceed on in their pursuit of the Philistines, having eaten, and drunk, and refreshed themselves. The Arabic version is, *let us go down to the Philistines;* and so Noldius[e] chooses to render the words; which I pretty much wonder at, and especially at what he observes in favour of it, and against the common rendering; that at this time the Philistines had not turned their backs, so that the Israelites could not be said to go after them, but were in a camp opposite to them; but that they had fled, and were pursued, is most certain from ver. 22, 23, 31. *and spoil them until the morning light;* or kill of them, as the Targum, and so the Arabic version; for spoiling must be meant of killing; for as for the spoil of their provisions, riches, &c. that had already fallen into their hands, ver. 30. and this is confirmed by what follows: *and let us not leave a man of them;* great numbers had been slain already, partly by their falling upon one another, and partly by the swords of Jonathan and his armour-bearer at the first onset, and by Saul and his men in the pursuit of them; and so intent was Saul in the utter destruction of them, that he was for following and cutting them off, that none of their prodigious army might return home: *and they said, do whatsoever seemeth good unto thee;* they had religiously observed his oath, in refraining from food all the day, and now they were as willing to be obedient to his command in denying themselves refreshing rest in sleep: *then said the priest, let us draw near hither unto God;* Ahiah the priest, Josephus[f] calls him Ahitob, who was present with the ark, agreed to the proposal of Saul, only moved, that before they set forward they would seek the Lord; perhaps reflecting upon the abrupt manner

[b] Odyss. 11. ver. 35, 36, 102, 103.
[c] T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 120. 1.
[d] See Kimchi in loc.
[e] Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 15. No. 92.
[f] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 4.

in which Saul departed from Gibeah, just as he was consulting the Lord, and not staying for an answer from him; which the priest might fear would be resented by him, and therefore proposes first to draw nigh to God; not to the altar Saul had built, or had just begun to build, but to the ark, with which the high-priest was, and was a symbol of the divine Presence: the Targum is, "let us draw near hither, and inquire "by the word of the Lord."

Ver. 37. *And Saul asked counsel of God, &c.*] He agreed to the motion of the high-priest, and asked counsel by Urim and Thummim; the Targum is, as before, "inquired by the Word of the Lord:" *shall I go down after the Philistines?* pursue after them in their flight to their own country, which, lying to the sea, was a descent: *wilt thou deliver them into the hand of Israel?* what remain of them, otherwise a victory over them was obtained: *but he answered him not that day;* no answer was returned by Urim and Thummim, so that he was left in suspense whether he should pursue or no; the Targum is, "he received not his prayer that day;" this was treating him in a righteous manner; since he would not stay for an answer from the Lord, ver. 19. the Lord now will not give him any; though the principal view was, that he might take the step he did.

Ver. 38. *And Saul said, draw ye near hither all the chief of the people, &c.*] Or, *the corners of the people*[*]; the princes, as Jarchi interprets it: and so the Targum, the heads of the people, in allusion to the corner-stones in buildings, which are the ornament, strength, and cement of them, see Zech. x. 4. though Abarbinel thinks the tribes themselves are meant, which lay encamped every one in a corner by themselves, separated from one another; and these he would have brought together; not the heads only, but every one, small and great, that it might be seen and known where the sin lay; but he should have observed, that the tribes of Israel were not now present with Saul, but a small number of them: *and know and see wherein this sin hath been this day;* he concluded, from having no answer from the Lord, that sin had been committed, which was the cause of it; but never thought of his own rash oath, which was the cause of the people's sinning, and had brought his son into danger; nor the sin of the people in eating the flesh with the blood; nothing ran in his mind but the breach of the oath with which he had adjured the people, and this he was determined to find out, if possible.

Ver. 39. *For as the Lord liveth, which saveth Israel, &c.*] And had saved them that day with a great salvation, and had wrought a great deliverance for them in freeing them from the Philistines, who had threatened the ruin of the whole nation. This is the form of an oath: *though it be in Jonathan my son, he shall surely die;* that is, though the sin should be found in him, or he should be found guilty of the breach of what he had charged them with an oath to observe, namely, to eat no food that day till evening: *but there was not a man among all the people that answered him;* who knew that Jonathan had tasted of honey, but they would not acquaint him with it; partly because they knew he did it ignorantly, having no knowledge of his father's charge and oath, and partly because of their great affection to him, who had been the instrument of their deliverance and salvation that day.

Ver. 40. *Then said he unto all Israel, &c.*] As many of them as were present; not the principal men only, but the common people; not the officers only, but the common soldiers in the army: *be ye on one side, and I and Jonathan my son will be on the other side:* so they divided to the right and left, one went one way, and the other the other; there were two boxes or urns, as Kimchi says, in one of which were the names of Saul and Jonathan, and in the other Israel: though Abarbinel observes, that such a partition of them on one side, and the other, is not according to the manner of lots; and he suspects that Saul knew that Jonathan had tasted of honey, being told it by the man that saw him eat it; and who said to him then, *thy father straitly charged*, &c. ver. 27. but chose this way to make it manifest to the people, and to shew what a strict regard he had to justice: *and the people said unto Saul, do what seemeth good unto thee;* they were very obsequious to him in every thing, see ver. 36.

Ver. 41. *Therefore Saul said to the Lord God of Israel, &c.*] After the division was made between him and his son on one side, and the people of Israel on the other, and every thing was ready for the drawing of the lot; Saul put up to God the following petition, as knowing that though the lot is cast into the lap, the disposing of it is of the Lord: *give a perfect lot;* or man, let it fall upon the guilty person, and let the innocent go free; the Targum is, "cause it to "come in truth;" let truth and righteousness take place; let the right man be found out, and taken; the petition seems to be too arrogant and presumptuous, and insinuates as if the Lord did not always dispose the lot aright: *and Saul and Jonathan were taken;* the lot being cast, it fell upon them: *but the people escaped;* from the lot, and appeared to be innocent, clear of any blame; so that it was not the sin they had been guilty of, in eating flesh with the blood, which was the cause that no answer was returned.

Ver. 42. *And Saul said, cast lots between me and Jonathan my son, &c.*] Which shewed his regard to strict justice, and that he had no consciousness of guilt in himself, and should not spare his own son if found guilty: *and Jonathan was taken:* the lot fell upon him, which was so directed, that his ignorance of his father's charge and oath might appear; and that the affection of the people might be discovered; and that a regard is to be had to the orders and commands of princes, and obedience to be yielded to them in all things, in which conscience is not concerned, though they may be grievous; and to bring Saul to a sense of his rashness in making such an oath, which brought his own son into so much danger.

Ver. 43. *Then Saul said to Jonathan, tell me what thou hast done, &c.*] What sin he had committed, the lot having fallen on him, and found him out: *and Jonathan told him;* the whole of the matter, all the truth, without any reserve: *and said, I did but take a little honey with the end of the rod that was in mine hand;* he speaks of the fact as a trivial thing, as if it was

[*] פנות העם anguli populi, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

not deserving of death, though he was willing to submit to it; yet it seems strange he should say nothing of his ignorance of the charge and oath of Saul, and plead that in excuse of it; though Josephus [h] makes him to take notice of it: and, *lo, I must die;* am condemned to die, as the Targum; for which he was prepared and ready, being willing to testify an entire subjection to his father's authority and will. Josephus [i] represents him speaking with a generosity and greatness of soul, after this manner, "death is most sweet "to me, which is for the sake of maintaining thy "piety and religion; and after so glorious a victory, "it is the greatest consolation to me to leave the "Hebrews conquerors of the Philistines."

Ver. 44. *And Saul answered, God do so and more also,* &c.] A form of an oath imprecating evils upon him more and greater than he chose to mention, see the like form in Ruth i. 17. though Abarbinel thinks this is not the form of an oath, but an asseveration of a curse that would befall him; as that God would not answer him when he inquired of him, and that he would add to do so again and again, if he died not: *for thou shalt surely die, Jonathan:* such words from a father must be very striking to a son, and argue a want of paternal affection in Saul, that could call his son by his name, and deliver such a speech unto him in so strong a manner.

Ver. 45. *And the people said unto Saul,* &c.] Hearing such words, and filled with grief, pity, and sympathy for Jonathan, as Josephus [k] observes: *shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great salvation in Israel?* no, he shall not; what, such a man as he die, who, under God, has been the instrument of so great deliverance, who first began it himself with one man only with him, and has proceeded in it to the finishing of it? *God forbid:* this shall not be so; they speak of it with the utmost abhorrence and detestation, as a shocking piece of cruelty and ingratitude, unheard-of, and not to be paralleled; as *the Lord liveth, there shall not one hair of his head fall to the ground:* as Saul swore he should die, they also swear he should not, expressing their firm resolution to stand by him, and preserve his life; and so far should it be from him to have his life taken away, that an hair of his head should not be touched, or the least injury done to his person; for though they had yielded a ready obedience to all the orders and commands of Saul, which were distressing to themselves, they were determined to oppose him in this case of his son: *for he hath wrought with God this day:* God has been with him, assisted him to do great things for Israel, and therefore should not die for a thing so trivial; and it being not done in disobedience to his father, nor in contempt of him, but through pure ignorance, as some of them well knew; so the Targum, "for it is known before the "Lord, that in ignorance he did *it* this day:" *so the people rescued Jonathan, that he died not:* not by force, but by their resolution and importunity; or *redeemed* him [l], by exposing their own lives to danger in opposing their king, and by their petitions to him for him; and, as Josephus says [m], by their prayers to God for him, that his fault might be forgiven.

Ver. 46. *Then Saul went up from following the Philistines,* &c.] Returned home to his own city, finding that he could get no answer from the Lord, whether he should pursue further or no, and losing the time and opportunity of doing it, by examining into the affair of his son, and casting lots to find it out: *and the Philistines went to their own place;* their country and cities, such of them as remained, who were not cut off by their own and the sword of the Israelites. Josephus [n] says, Saul killed about 60,000 of them. It seems to be the will of God that they should not now be utterly destroyed, that they might be a rod of correction in his hand, to chastise the people of Israel hereafter.

Ver. 47. *So Saul took the kingdom over Israel,* &c.] Which seemed to be almost taken from him when he was shut up in Gibeah, and the Philistines ravaged his country at pleasure; but now, having obtained a victory over them, he recovered his kingdom, and reassumed his power and authority; or he was now strengthened in it, as Kimchi interprets it; the people seeing that he succeeded in his wars with their enemies, they readily submitted to his government without any hesitation, and obeyed his commands; so the Targum, "Saul prospered in the kingdom over Israel;" and, according to Abarbinel, these words will admit of another sense, that whereas, after he was anointed and made king, he followed the herd, and attended rustic affairs; but now, after this victory over the Philistines, he took upon him the state and majesty of a king, and no more concerned himself with his farm and cattle, but betook himself wholly to regal and military affairs, as follows: *and fought against all his enemies on every side;* who invaded his kingdom from different quarters; he defended himself against them, and preserved his kingdom: *against Moab, and against the children of Ammon;* who lay to the east of him: *and against Edom;* which was on the southern border of his land: *and against the king of Zobah;* a part of Syria, which was to the north of the land of Israel, and was near Damascus, see 2 Sam. viii. 3, 5. and, according to Benjamin of Tudela [o], the same with Haleb, or Aleppo. There never were but two kings of it, Rehob and Hadadezer, who lived in the reigns of Saul and David, 2 Sam. viii. 3. *and against the Philistines;* who were on the western border of the land of Canaan: *and whithersoever he turned himself, he vexed* them: disturbed and disquieted them, and made them very uneasy; he terrified and distressed them; the Targum is, he *condemned* them, he treated them as wicked and ungodly persons, and punished them as such.

Ver. 48. *And he gathered an host,* &c.] A large army; for after the battle with the Ammonites he disbanded his army, and sent them home, retaining only 3,000 men, and these deserted him to 600, which were all the men he had with him, when he fought last with the Philistines; but now, finding he had enemies on every side of him, he gathered a numerous

[h] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 6. sect. 4.
[i] Ibid.
[k] Ibid.
[l] ויפדו redemerunt, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

[m] Ut supra, sect. 5.
[n] Ibid.
[o] Itinerar. p. 59.

host to defend his country against them, and particularly to attack the people next mentioned: *and he smote the Amalekites*; a people that Israel, by the law of God, were bound to destroy, and blot out their name; a particular account of his expedition against them is given in the following chapter: *and delivered Israel out of the hands of them that spoiled them*; the nations before mentioned, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Syrians, and Philistines.

Ver. 49. *And the sons of Saul were Jonathan*, &c.] Who seems to be his first-born, of whom, his valour and success, we read in this and the preceding chapter: *and Ishui*; the same with Abinadab, 1 Chron. viii. 33. and ix. 39. for he had two names: *and Melchi-shua*; and besides these three there was another, whose name was Ishbosheth, sometimes called Eshbaal, 2 Sam. ii. 8. 1 Chron. viii. 33. who succeeded him in the kingdom; for which reason Abarbinel thinks he is not mentioned here, because he was a king; though it is generally supposed the reason why these only are named is, because they went out to war with him, and died with him, but this did not; he had other children by a concubine, or secondary wife, whose name was Rizpah, not mentioned here, 2 Sam. xxi. 8. *and the names of his two daughters* were these, *the name of the first-born Merab*; who was afterwards married to Adriel the Meholathite, ch. xviii. 19. *and the name of the younger Michal*; who became the wife of David, ch. xviii. 27.

Ver. 50. *And the name of Saul's wife* was *Ahinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz*, &c.] Who very probably was the mother of all the above children, and therefore taken notice of; and Abarbinel conjectures that Ishbosheth was not a son of her's, but the son of Saul by another wife, and which he takes to be another reason why he is not mentioned here; but though Saul had a concubine, we nowhere read of his having another wife: *and the name of the captain of his host was Abner the son of Ner, Saul's uncle*; not Abner, but Ner, was Saul's uncle; for Kish the father of Saul, and Ner, were brothers, as Josephus[p] says, and as appears from the next verse; and Abner was cousin-german to Saul, whom he raised and advanced to be captain of his army, and a very valiant man he was: we hear of him again in this history, and in the beginning of David's reign.

Ver. 51. *And Kish* was *the father of Saul*, &c.] See ch. ix. 1. *and Ner the father of Abner* was *the son of Abiel*; this Abiel was the father both of Kish and Ner, and the grandfather of Saul, see ch. ix. 1.

Ver. 52. *And there was sore war against the Philistines all the days of Saul*, &c.] For notwithstanding the late victory over them, and slaughter made among them, they recovered themselves, and came out again to battle, and gave Saul a great deal of trouble, and he at last died in battle with them: *and when Saul saw any strong man, or any valiant man, he took him unto him*; to be his body-guard, as Josephus[q] says; or for soldiers and officers in his army, even such, as the same writer observes, that exceeded others in comeliness of person, and in largeness and talness; such as were in some measure like himself, that were strong, able-bodied men, and of courage, and valour, and fortitude of mind.

CHAP. XV.

IN this chapter are recorded the order Saul had from the Lord to destroy Amalek utterly, ver. 1, 2, 3. the preparation he made to put it in execution, and the success thereof, ver. 4—9. the offence the Lord took at his not obeying his order thoroughly, with which Samuel was made acquainted, and which grieved him, ver. 10, 11. upon which he went out to meet Saul, and reprove him; and a long discourse upon the subject passed between them, the issue of which was, that by an irrevocable decree he was rejected from being king, ver. 12—31. and the chapter is concluded with an account of Samuel's hewing in pieces Agag king of Amalek, and of his final departure from Saul, ver. 32—35.

Ver. 1. *Samuel also said unto Saul*, &c.] When and where he said to him what follows, it is not easy to determine, perhaps at Gilgal, where they after met again: *the Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over his people, over Israel*; that is, he gave him orders to anoint him king of Israel, otherwise Saul was in providence sent to Samuel to be anointed, and not Samuel to Saul: *now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord*; for so great a favour, and such high honour he had conferred on him, laid him under great obligation to obey the commands of the Lord; and whereas he had been deficient in one instance before, for which he had been reproved, he suggests, that *now* he should take care to observe and do, particularly and punctually, what should be enjoined him.

Ver. 2. *Thus saith the Lord of hosts*, &c.] Of the celestial host of angels, and of the army of Israel, yea, of all the armies of the earth: this is premised to engage the attention of Saul: *I remember that which Amalek did to Israel*; four hundred years ago: *how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt*; in the valley of Rephidim, just before they came to Mount Sinai, and fell upon the rear of them, and smote the feeble, and faint, and weary, see Exod. xvii. 8. Deut. xxv. 17, 18, 19.

Ver. 3. *Now go and smite Amalek*, &c.] This was one of the three things the Israelites were obliged to do when they came into the land of Canaan, as Kimchi observes; one was, to appoint a king over them, another, to build the house of the sanctuary, and the third, to blot out the name and memory of Amalek, see Deut. xxv. 19. and this work was reserved for Saul, their first king: *and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not*; all were to be devoted to destruction, and nothing remain to be made use of in

[p] Ut supra.

[q] Ut supra.

any way, to any profit and advantage; living creatures were to be put to death, and every thing else burnt and destroyed: *but slay both men and women, infant and suckling*: neither sex nor age were to be regarded, no mercy and pity shewn to any; they had shewn none to Israel when weak and feeble, and by the law of retaliation none was to be exercised on them: *ox and sheep, camel and ass*; though useful creatures, yet not to be spared; as not men, women, and children, through commiseration, so neither these through covetousness, and neither of them on any pretence whatsoever. Children suffered for their parents, and cattle because of their owners, and both were a punishment to their proprietors; an ox, or any other creature, might not be spared, lest it should be said, as Kimchi observes, this was the spoil of Amalek, and so the name and memory of Amalek would not be blotted out.

Ver. 4. *And Saul gathered the people together*, &c.] Or *made* them *to hear*[r], by the sound of a trumpet; or by sending heralds into all parts of the land to proclaim the above order of the Lord, and summon them to come to him, perhaps at Gilgal; so the Septuagint version, and Josephus[s]: *and numbered them in Telaim*; thought to be the same with Telem, a place in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 24. the word signifies *lambs*; hence the Vulgate Latin version is, "he numbered "them as lambs;" and the Jews[t] say, because it was forbid to number the children of Israel, which was the sin of David; therefore every man had a lamb given him, and so the lambs were numbered, by which it was known what was the number of the people; and the Targum says, this was done with the passover-lambs, it being now the time of the passover; but the numbering here made was not of the people of the land in general, and so there was no occasion of such a precaution, only a numbering and mustering of the army when got together and rendezvoused in one place: the sum of which is here given, *200,000 footmen and 10,000 men of Judah*; which last were reckoned separately, as distinct from the other tribes of Israel, to shew their obedience to Saul, who was of another tribe, though the kingdom was promised to theirs; but R. Isaiah observes, that the reason why so few of the men of Judah came, in comparison of the other tribes, was, because they envied the government being in one of the tribe of Benjamin, when they thought it should have been in one of theirs; the number is greatly increased in the Septuagint version, which makes the whole to be 400,000, and 30,000 men of Judah; and so Josephus[u].

Ver. 5. *And Saul came to a city of Amalek*, &c.] With his army, perhaps the nearest city of it to the land of Israel; though some think that Amalek was the name of the city, and was the metropolis of the nation, and had its name from thence: *and laid wait in the valley*; which was near the city, to intercept the inhabitants when they should come out against him: or *he contended*[w], as some render it, he fought with them there; the Targum, "he ordered his army," set that in battle-array, or pitched his camp there.

Ver. 6. *And Saul said unto the Kenites*, &c.] Who were of the posterity of Jethro the father-in-law of Moses, or related to him; why Josephus[x] calls them the nation of the Sicimites, who dwelt in the midst of the land of Midian, I know not: *go, depart, get ye down from among the Amalekites*; for though some of these people came with Israel into the land of Canaan, and were first at Jericho, and then came into the wilderness of Judah, Judg. i. 16. and were in other tribes also; yet as they removed from place to place, and from country to country, for the convenience of their flocks and herds, they dwelling in tents, might come into the country of Amalek and pitch there, and as they chose to dwell in rocks, and the caverns of them, to be near their flocks and herds in the valleys, they are called upon to get down from thence, see Numb. xxiv. 21. *lest I destroy you with them*; they dwelling among the Amalekites, might perish with them; and especially as the Amalekites, upon their being routed, would naturally flee to the rocks, hills, and mountains, where these people had their tents, they would be in the greater danger of being destroyed with them, unless they removed: *for ye shewed kindness to all the children of Israel when they came up out of Egypt*; as Jethro, by the advice he gave to Moses to appoint proper officers in Israel, and Hobab, by being eyes to the people, in conducting them through the wilderness, and accompanying them to the land of Canaan: *so the Kenites departed from among the Amalekites*; took the advice of Saul, and removed and pitched their tents elsewhere.

Ver. 7. *And Saul smote the Amalekites*, &c.] Engaging in battle with them, he overcame them, and beat them, and slew great numbers of them: *from Havilah* until *thou comest to Shur, that* is *over-against Egypt*; having routed them in the valley, or in whatsoever place the battle was fought, he pursued them from one end of their country to the other; from Havilah, which lay to the north-east, to Shur, which lay to the south-west, and destroyed all that came in his way between those two points, see Gen. xxv. 18.

Ver. 8. *And he took Agag the king of the Amalekites alive*, &c.] This name seems to be a common name of the kings of these people, as Pharaoh was of the Egyptians, see Numb. xxiv. 2. When this king fell into the hands of Saul, he did not put him to death, as he should have done, but preserved him; for what reasons, see in the following verse: *and utterly destroyed all the people with the edge of the sword*; that is, all that came in his way, or fell into his hands; all between Havilah and Shur; all excepting those that made their escape, for we after read of Amalekites, and that in large bodies, ch. xxvii. 8. and xxx. 1.

Ver. 9. *And Saul and all the people spared Agag*, &c.] Perhaps Saul made the motion to spare him, and the people agreed to it; it may be, out of respect to him as a king; or because of the comeliness of his person, the tallness of his stature, and the largeness of his body, as Josephus[y] notes; or to carry him in triumph in a public show, see ver. 12. *and the best of the sheep, and of*

[r] וישמע audire fecit, Vatablus, Drusius.
[s] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 7. sect. 2.
[t] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 22. 2. Jarchi in loc.
[u] Ut supra.

[w] וירב & certavit Pagninus; ut contenderet cum eo, Junius & Tremellius.
[x] Ut supra, sect. 3.
[y] Ut supra, sect. 2.

the oxen, and of the fatlings: or *of the second sort*, as in the margin, the second best; or rather which shed their two long teeth, as sheep at two-years old did when reckoned at their full strength, and fittest for sacrifice [z]: *and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them*: as they were commanded, but kept them for their own private use and advantage, and this not only the best and fattest of the flocks and herds, but of their household goods: *but every thing that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly*: such of the cattle that were poor and lean, lame or blind, or had any defect in them, and household goods that were mere rubbish and lumber; such they entirely destroyed, killed the creatures, and burnt the goods: in doing which they thought they fulfilled the will of God.

Ver. 10. *Then came the word of the Lord unto Samuel*, &c.] The word of prophecy, as the Targum; this came to him in a dream or vision, or by an articulate voice: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 11. *It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king*, &c.] Which is not to be understood of any change of mind, counsel, purpose, or decree in God, which is not consistent with his unchangeable nature; but of a change of dispensation, and outward dealings, and is spoken after the manner of men, who, when they repent of any thing, change the course of their conduct and behaviour; and so the Lord does without any change of his mind and will, which alters not; and though he changes the outward dispensations of his providence, yet he never changes and alters in the matters and methods of his grace; though he repented he made Saul king, he never repents of his making his saints kings and priests for himself; his outward gifts he sometimes takes away, as an earthly crown and kingdom; but his gifts and calling, which are of special grace, are without repentance, Rom. xi. 29. see the note on Gen. vi. 6. *for he is turned back from following me*; from after my worship, as the Targum, from doing his will and work: *and hath not performed my commandments*; particularly in this affair relating to Amalek: *and it grieved Samuel*; that Saul should so soon be rejected from being king, and that he should do any thing to deserve it; and whom Samuel had anointed king, and for whom he had a cordial respect, and to whom he wished well, both for his own personal good, and for the good of the people of Israel; so far was he from rejoicing at his fall, who came in his stead, and to whom he gave way in the affair of government: *and he cried unto the Lord all night*; or prayed, as the Targum; either that the Lord would inform him of the particulars wherein Saul had done amiss, or that he would forgive his sin, and not reject him from the kingdom.

Ver. 12. *And when Samuel rose early to meet Saul in the morning*, &c.] Having had no sleep since the revelation of the will of God was made unto him, and therefore rose betimes, being in haste to converse with Saul about it: *it was told Samuel, saying, Saul came to Carmel*; not to Carmel where Elijah offered sacrifice, for that was very remote from hence; but to Carmel, a city in the tribe of Judah, which lay in the way of Saul's return from Amalek, Josh. xv. 55. *and, behold, he set him up a place*; to divide his spoil in, as the Targum; or to encamp in, as Kimchi; or to build an altar on, as Jarchi, who takes it to be the same that Elisha after repaired; but, as before observed, this place was at a great distance from Mount Carmel where Elijah sacrificed. The word for a *place* signifies a *hand*: and, according to the Vulgate Latin version, it was a triumphal arch, and was perhaps an obelisk or pillar, a trophy or monument erected in memory of the victory he had obtained over the Amalekites. So Jerom says [a], when a victory was obtained, they used to make an arch of myrtle, palm, and olive-branches, as a sign of it; these trophies were sometimes of brass, sometimes of marble; some were only heaps of stones, others a remarkable tree with the branches cut off [b]; so the pillar Absalom erected is called his hand, 2 Sam. xviii. 18. *and is gone about, and passed on, and gone down to Gilgal*; he took a circuit, and moved in great pomp and parade, carrying the king of the Amalekites in triumph with him, and the spoil he had taken and reserved. To Gilgal he went, expecting to meet Samuel there, and offer up peace-offerings to the Lord for the victory he had got.

Ver. 13. *And Samuel came to Saul*, &c.] At Gilgal: *and Saul said unto him, blessed be thou of the Lord*; signifying that he had abundant reason to bless the Lord on his account, not only that he had anointed him king, but had sent him on such an errand, in which he had succeeded so well, and it was a pleasure to him that he might report it to him: *I have performed the commandment of the Lord*: either he was really ignorant that he had done amiss; and thought that his sparing Agag, when he had destroyed all the rest, and reserving some of the best of the cattle for sacrifice, could not be interpreted a breach of the orders given him; or if he was conscious he had broken the commandment of the Lord, this he said to prevent Samuel's reproof of him, and to sooth him with flattering words.

Ver. 14. *And Samuel said, what meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears*, &c.] For the orders were to destroy all living creatures belonging to the Amalekites, ver. 3. if therefore Saul had performed the commandment of the Lord, as he said he had, from whence were these sheep Samuel heard bleating? *and the lowing of the oxen which I hear?* where do they come from? these questions he put to convict him of the falsehood he had delivered; the bleating and lowing of these creatures proved him a liar, and were witnesses of his breach of the divine command; and one would think every bleating and lowing of these must alarm his conscience, unless dreadfully stupified.

Ver. 15. *And Saul said, they have brought them from the Amalekites*, &c.] That is, the people, laying the blame upon them, as Adam did on his wife, as if he had no concern at all in it, when it is clear from ver. 9 he had a principal one; nor is it probable the people should do this of themselves, without his consent and authority, which was so directly contrary to the express order of God; and then to excuse the people as well as he could, on whom he laid the blame,

[z] Bidentes, Virgil. Æneid. l. 6. ver. 39. Vid. Servium in ib.

[a] Heb. Trad. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. B.

[b] Vid. Alex. ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 1. c. 22.

he observes this was not done for their own private profit and advantage, but for the service and worship of God: *for the people spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God*; by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the victory they had obtained; and therefore, since they had so good an end and design in sparing what they had, and those the best and fittest for sacrifice, he hoped they would easily be excused; and that the prophet would use his best interest with the Lord, who was his God, to whom they designed to do honour, that he would overlook what was amiss in them: *and the rest we have utterly destroyed*; as they were commanded; but then it was only the vile and the refuse, the best they had reserved for their own use; though he now coloured it with this specious pretence of sacrificing to God, when he found it was taken notice of, and was resented.

Ver. 16. *Then Samuel said unto Saul, stay*, &c.] Stop a little, don't be in haste to be gone, as he might seem to be, fearing a reproof, and that something would be said to him not very agreeable; or *suffer*[r] me, that is, to speak, give me leave to say a few words; for Saul being a king, Samuel treats him as such, and asks audience of him, or leave of him to deliver what he had to say to him: *and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said to me this night*: and since it was not any thing from himself, but from the Lord, he had to say, he might expect the rather to be heard, and especially since it was what had lately, even that very night, been told him: *and he said unto him, say on*; he gave him leave, perhaps hoping he should hear something said in his praise, commending him for what he had done in destroying the nation of Amalek, see Luke vii. 40. There is a double reading of this clause, the Cetib or textural reading is, *and they said unto him*; meaning Saul, and the elders with him; the Keri, or marginal reading is, which we follow, *and he said unto him*: meaning Saul, as Kimchi notes.

Ver. 17. *And Samuel said, when thou wast little in thine own sight*, &c.] Humble and lowly, and had a mean opinion of himself, his family and tribe, and judged himself unworthy of the kingdom; see ch. ix. 21. suggesting, that now he was proud and haughty, and would have his own will and way: wast *thou not* made *the head of the tribes of Israel*; not of his own tribe only, which was the least, but of all the tribes, and so they were all subject to him, and at his command: *and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel*; all which is observed, partly to point out unto him the high honour he was raised unto, from a low estate, which laid him under obligation to serve the Lord, and obey him; and partly as an answer to him, excusing himself, and laying the blame upon the people; whereas seeing he was made king over them, his business was to rule and govern them, guide and direct them in the right way, and restrain them from that which was evil; and since he was anointed by the Lord, and not by the people, he ought to have obeyed him, and not regarded the pleasure of them.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord sent thee on a journey*, &c.] And therefore he ought to have attended to the errand sent upon, and executed the orders given; in vain, therefore, was it to lay the blame on the people: *and said, go, and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites*; those notorious sinners, who deserve no mercy at the hands of God or men; who had so highly offended the Lord, and had been so injurious to his people at their first coming out of Egypt. The orders were plain, not to be mistaken, and full and strong for the utter destruction of them without any exception, and therefore nothing could be pleaded in excuse for the violation of them: *and fight against them until they be consumed*; entirely; they were not to be left until an end was made of them; or *until they had consumed them*[s], the people of Israel, or the soldiers with Saul.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord*, &c.] Who had made him king, and sent him on this errand, and gave him such plain directions, and such strong orders to make an entire consumption of Amalek: *but didst fly upon the spoil*; like a bird of prey, such as an eagle or vulture, not to devote it to the Lord, by an entire destruction of it, but to seize it for his own use, as being greedily desirous and covetous of it: *and didst evil in the sight of the Lord?* by disobeying his commands, from whose sight nothing can be hid.

Ver. 20. *And Saul said to Samuel, yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord*, &c.] Here Saul breaks in upon Samuel before he had declared all that the Lord had said unto him; for having expostulated with him for not obeying the voice of the Lord, he could not forbear interrupting him, but with the utmost assurance affirms he had obeyed the voice of the Lord; but then it was very imperfectly, and poor proof does he give of it: *and have gone the way which the Lord sent me*; it is very true he went into the country of Amalek, but he did not do there all the Lord commanded him: *and have brought Agag the king of Amalek*; took him alive, and brought him captive; whereas he ought to have destroyed him at once, and not have reserved him for triumph; a sad proof this of his obeying the voice of the Lord: *and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites*; all that came in his way, in which he did right; but then he had not destroyed the principal of them, their king.

Ver. 21. *But the people took the spoil, the sheep and oxen*, &c.] Still he continues to lay the blame on the people, when he, as king, ought to have restrained them: *the chief of the things, which should have been utterly destroyed*; this betrays him, and is an evidence against him; he could not plead ignorance, he knew and he owns, that according to the command of God they were all devoted to destruction; and therefore he ought not to have suffered the people to have spared any on whatsoever pretence, but to have seen all destroyed; but he was as deeply in it as they, and therefore palliates the thing, and endeavours to excuse them by observing, that their end was good, the service and glory of God, which perhaps were never thought of till now: namely, *to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God in Gilgal*; as peace-offerings, by way of thanksgiving for the victory obtained, ver. 15.

[r] הרף permitte, Pagninus, Montanus; sine me, V. L. so Abarbinel.

[s] עד כלותם אתם donec consumant ipsi eos, Pagninus; so Vatablus.

Ver. 22. *And Samuel said*, &c.] In reply to Saul: *hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?* no, certainly, the one being merely ceremonial, the other moral; the one supposes sin committed, for which sacrifice is offered; the other moral, and is a compliance with the will of God, and is neither sinful, nor supposes any thing sinful, and therefore must be the more acceptable: *behold, to obey is better than sacrifice,* and *to hearken than the fat of rams;* which always was claimed by the Lord as his right and due; or the fattest rams or best sacrifices, of whatever sort, whether burnt-offerings, or sin-offerings, or peace-offerings; for had man obeyed the will of God, and not sinned, there would have been no need of sacrifice; and that was only acceptable to God when offered with a heart truly sensible of sin, and penitent for it, and in the faith of the great sacrifice of Christ, of which all sacrifices under the law were typical, and led unto.

Ver. 23. *For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft,* &c.] Or *divination* [e], in whatsoever way it was exercised; for there were divers sorts of it among the Heathens, and all condemned by the law of God, Deut. xviii. 10. Now rebellion against God, or disobeying his commands, though in things otherwise, were they not forbidden by him, lawful to be done, is as heinous a sin as to be guilty of witchcraft, or any kind of divination forbidden by the law of God, and deserves as sore a punishment: *and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry:* for a man, when he has committed a sin, to persist in it obstinately, or to vindicate himself in it, and insist on his innocence, which was Saul's case, is as hateful to God as any iniquity whatever; yea, as bad as idolatry, or making use of the teraphim, as is the word here; of which see Hos. iii. 4. than which nothing is more abominable to the Lord: *because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord;* disregarded his command, treated it with contempt and abhorrence: *he hath rejected thee from being king;* not actually, for he continued to exercise kingly power and authority to his death, and was treated as a king by his subjects, and even by David, though anointed by the Lord; but sententially, the sentence of rejection was pronounced upon him, and the entail of government on his posterity was cut off.

Ver. 24. *And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned,* &c.] This confession of his sin does not appear to be ingenuous, cordial, and sincere, and was made chiefly for the sake of getting the sentence of rejecting him from being king reversed; *for I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words;* which last seems to be added to collogue with Samuel, and to ingratiate himself with him; and Abarbinel thinks that Saul suspected that Samuel had aggravated the matter of himself, and that he did not really transgress the words of the Lord, but as the words of Samuel; and therefore according to the words of Samuel he had sinned, but not according to the words of the Lord only; *because I feared the people;* Doeg the Edomite, who was reckoned as all of them, Jarchi says: this was a mere excuse of Saul's, he stood in no fear of the people, he kept them in awe, and did as he would with them, as a sovereign prince: *and obeyed their voice;* in sparing the best of the cattle; so he pretended, when it was his own will, and the effect of his covetousness.

Ver. 25. *Now therefore, I pray thee, pardon my sin,* &c.] It can hardly be thought that Saul was so ignorant as to imagine that Samuel could pardon his sin, as committed against God, which none but God can do, but that he would forgive it, so far as he had offended him; or rather his meaning is, that as he was a prophet of the Lord, and had great interest in him, that he would make use of it on his behalf, and pray to God that his sin might be forgiven him, and the sentence reversed concerning his rejection from the kingdom; which perhaps is the chief thing he means by the pardon of his sin, which sometimes means no more than averting a threatened judgment, or freedom from punishment: *and turn again with me;* to Gilgal, for he was come out from thence to meet Samuel, having heard that he was coming: *that I may worship the Lord;* by offering sacrifice, either in thankfulness for the victory obtained, or to atone for his sin, and seek pardon for it, or both; this he thought would be a motive and inducement to Samuel to go along with him.

Ver. 26. *And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee,* &c.] Not being satisfied with his repentance and confession, he still extenuating his sin, and laying the blame of it on the people. This he said by way of resentment, and as expressing his indignation at him, though he afterwards did return with him on a change of his mind; which a good man may be allowed to make, without any imputation of falsehood or a lie unto him: *for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel;* which is repeated from ver. 23. for the confirmation of it, and to let Saul know that his pretended confession and repentance had made no alteration in the decree and sentence of God respecting the kingdom.

Ver. 27. *And as Samuel turned about to go away,* &c.] From Saul, a different way from Gilgal, perhaps towards his own city Ramah, with an intention to have nothing more to say to Saul, or to do with him, or to see his face no more; so displeased was he with him: *he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle;* in order to detain him, and prevent his departure from him, and his going a different way: *and it rent;* Samuel twitching away from him with great vehemence and warmth. The Jewish [f] Rabbins are divided about this, whose skirt was rent; some say it was Samuel that rent the skirt of Saul, and by this signified to him, that he that cut off the skirt of his garment should reign in his stead; whereby Saul knew that David would be king when he cut off the skirt of his robe, ch. xxiv. 4, 20. others, that Samuel rent the skirt of his own mantle himself, which is the way of good men when things are not right; but the plain sense is, that Saul rent the skirt of Samuel's mantle, which, when Samuel saw, he understood what that rent was a sign of, as expressed in the following verse.

Ver. 28. *And Samuel said unto him, the Lord hath*

[e] קסם חטאת peccatum divinationis, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; ariolandi, V. L. magiæ, Munster, Tigurine version.

[f] Midrash Schemuel, sect. 12. apud Jarchi, Kimchi & Abarbinel in loc.

rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, &c.] Seeing his mantle rent by Saul, he took occasion from thence to predict, and no doubt it was impressed on his mind by the spirit of God, that his kingdom should be in a like manner rent from him, on account of his own evil conduct and behaviour; and from this day forward he might expect it; the sentence was gone forth from God, and it would not be reversed; and by a like sign was signified the rending of the ten tribes from the kingdom of Solomon in his son Rehoboam, 1 Kings xi. 30, 31. *and hath given it to a neighbour of thine,* that is *better than thou:* who was David, a man after God's own heart, that would fulfil his will, who was more holy, just, and wise than Saul; whose works were better and righter than his, as the Targum; who was an Israelite, of the same nation and religion as he, and so his neighbour; and though he was not of the same tribe, yet of a neighbouring tribe; Benjamin, and Judah, of which tribe David was, joining closely to one another. It is highly probable that at this time Samuel knew not personally who he was that was designed to be made king in his room, though under the direction of the spirit of God he thus describes him; for after this he is bid to go to Jesse's family, from thence to anoint a king, and several passed before him ere the Lord pointed out the proper person to him.

Ver. 29. *And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent,* &c.] Neither of the evil which he had threatened to Saul in taking away the kingdom from him; nor of the good which he had promised to David in giving it to him; nor of his purpose and promise to Israel to protect and defend them, save and deliver them from the Philistines, and continue them a nation and kingdom: and for the confirmation of all this, this title or character of the Lord is given, *the Strength of Israel:* hence he cannot lie, which is the effect of weakness; nor repent or change his mind, as men do, when something unforeseen arises, which hinders the execution of their first design, and which through weakness they can't surmount: and hence God would support Israel as a nation, and strengthen them against their enemies, and work deliverance and salvation for them: or *the victory of Israel*[q]; the author of Israel's victories, and to whom they are to be ascribed, and who is able to give them more, and would; and as he did especially by David, to whom the kingdom is promised: or *the eternity of Israel*[r]; that gives firmness, permanency, and duration to them; all which is true of Israel in a spiritual sense; he gives them spiritual strength, victory over their enemies, sin, Satan, and the world, permanent duration, everlasting salvation, immortality, and eternal life: *for he is not a man, that he should repent:* men are weak and feeble, and can't perform what they purpose or promise, and therefore repent; but God, the Strength of Israel, is able to perform whatever he has purposed or promised, and therefore repents not; men are changeable in their minds, and repent of their first thoughts and designs; but God is unchangeable, and never alters his counsels, breaks his covenant, reverses his blessings, repents of his gifts, nor changes his affections to his Israel. Abarbinel says this may be understood of Saul, and so be given as a reason why God would not repent of the evil he had threatened him with, because he was a man that repented not of his sin; but the first sense is best, and agrees with and is confirmed by Numb. xxiii. 19.

Ver. 30. *Then he said, I have sinned,* &c.] So he had said before, ver. 24. but his confession there was attended with an extenuation of his sin, pleading in excuse of it that it was through fear of the people, but here it is without any; and yet by what follows it appears to be not ingenuous and sincere, but hypocritical: *yet honour me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel;* with his company; since should he be slighted openly by the Lord, and by his prophet, he would fall into contempt both with the principal men, and with the common people; wherefore he seemed more concerned for the loss of honour and reputation with the people, than for his sin against God, which is always the case of hypocrites: *and turn again with me, and worship the Lord thy God;* see the note on ver. 25.

Ver. 31. *So Samuel turned again after Saul,* &c.] Though he before said he would not, ver. 26. yet he did, changing his mind, as he might without being chargeable with a lie; and he also might have an impulse from the Lord so to do, and which he did not in order to worship with Saul, which it does not appear he did, but rather the contrary; but that Saul might not be despised by the people, and his authority lessened, whilst he continued king; and that he might do what Saul had neglected to do, destroy Agag: *and Saul worshipped the Lord;* alone, by offering sacrifice to him.

Ver. 32. *Then said Samuel, bring you hither to me Agag the king of the Amalekites,* &c.] This he said very probably to some of Saul's officers, and in his presence, and before all the people met together for sacrifice: *and Agag came unto him delicately;* fat and plump, as the Vulgate Latin version, and yet trembling, as that and the Septuagint; well dressed, in the garb and habit of a king, and with the air and majesty of one; or with pleasure and joy, as Kimchi, choosing rather to die than to be a captive, and live in such reproach as he did; though R. Isaiah and Ben Gersom give the sense of it, that he came bound in chains, and fetters of iron, according to the use of the word in Job xxxviii. 31. *and Agag said, surely the bitterness of death is past:* this he said, either as not expecting to die, that since he had been spared by Saul, the king of the nation, a fierce and warlike prince, he had nothing to fear from an ancient man and a prophet, and who now bore not the sword of justice; and especially when he came into his presence, and saw his form, which shewed him to be a man of clemency and mercy, as Ben Gersom observes: or as expecting it, and so Kimchi interprets it to this sense, *the bitterness of death is come;* and is near at hand, and will be soon over; or suggesting that that which was bitter, to others grievous and terrible, was to him sweet and desirable; but the former sense seems best by what follows.

[q] נצח ישראל victoria Israel, Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator; victor Israelis, Tigurine version.

[r] Æternitas Israelis, Junius & Tremellius.

Ver. 33. *And Samuel said, as thy sword hath made women childless,* &c.] Or, *bereaved*[z] them, not of their children only, but of their husbands also, and so made them both childless and widows; by which it appears that he was a cruel prince, and justly died for his own barbarity and wickedness, as well as for the sins of his ancestors 400 years ago: *so shall thy mother be childless among women;* which was according to the law of retaliation, and what the Jews call measure for measure: *and Samuel hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord in Gilgal;* either before the ark of the Lord, the symbol of the divine Presence; or before the altar, where Saul and the people had been sacrificing; this he did either himself, though an old man, or by others to whom he gave the orders; and which he did not as being the chief magistrate, and by virtue of his office, but acting as on a special occasion, at the command of God, and to shew his zeal for him, and indignation at such a breach of his command. In what manner this was done, is not easy to say; he was not torn to pieces by the hand, without an instrument, as Bæbius by the Romans[a]; or sawn asunder, as some by Caligula[b]; and as Isaiah the prophet is said to be by Manasseh, king of Judah, to which it is thought the apostle alludes, Heb. xi. 37. According to Ben Gersom, the word signifies he cleaved him, as wood is cleaved; or divided him into four parts, as Jarchi; perhaps he slew him with the sword, and then quartered him; that is, ordered it to be done.

Ver. 34. *Then Samuel went to Ramah,* &c.] His native place, and where was his usual residence: *and Saul went up to his house to Gibeah of Saul;* which was also his birth-place, and where was his father's house, and where he had his palace, and kept his court; and took its name from him, to distinguish it from another Gibeah; and so Josephus says it was called Gabath-saoule, and was about thirty furlongs from Jerusalem.

Ver. 35. *And Samuel came no more to see Saul until the day of his death,* &c.] Or *added not to see him*[d]; not that he saw him no more, he saw him afterwards, ch. xix. 24. but it was accidentally, he did not go to see him, but Saul came to him; and Abarbinel supposes he might not see him then, but hid his face from him; and he observes that it is said, *until the day of his death;* which intimates, he thinks, that he saw him after his death, when raised up by the witch of Endor; but that Samuel was then really raised, and was seen, wants proof. The meaning of the expression here is no more than this, that Samuel afterwards did not visit Saul as he used to do; he did not go to him, to give him his advice and counsel, as he wonted: *nevertheless Samuel mourned for Saul;* because of his sin, his impenitence, and hypocrisy; and because of the loss of the kingdom to him, and to his posterity; and he might be concerned also about his eternal welfare; for he appears to have a natural affection for him, and was far from envying him as his rival, and rejoicing at his fall: *and the Lord repented that he made Saul king over Israel;* nor was his mind altered, neither by the hypocritical confession of Saul, nor by the cordial prayers and tears of Samuel; see ver. 11.

CHAP. XVI.

IN this chapter Samuel is ordered to anoint a king among the sons of Jesse of Beth-lehem, ver. 1—5. all whose sons were made to pass before him, excepting David, ver. 6—10. who being then with his father's sheep, was sent for and was anointed, ver. 11, 12, 13. after which the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and he became melancholy, and it was advised to seek out a *musician* for him, and David was mentioned to him as a proper person, ver. 14—18. upon which he was sent for, and acted as a musician to Saul, and also became his armour-bearer, which was the first rise of him, ver. 19—23.

Ver. 1. *And the Lord said unto Samuel,* &c.] In a vision or dream, or by an articulate voice: *how long wilt thou mourn for Saul?* he does not blame him for mourning, but for mourning so long; but how long that was cannot be said; and though his affection for him might cause him to indulge to it, yet it was in vain, seeing the sentence was irreversible: *seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?* that is, his posterity; for he himself reigned as long as he lived, though in a very inglorious manner: *fill thine horn with oil;* with common oil; for that this was the holy anointing oil kept in the tabernacle, as the Jewish writers generally suppose, with which they say David and Solomon, and the kings of Judah, were anointed, there is no reason to believe; since the tabernacle, where this oil was, was at a distance from Samuel, and which seems to have been only for the anointing of the priests. This was not a phial he was bid to take, as when he anointed Saul; but an horn, denoting the abundance of gifts bestowed on David, and the firmness and duration of his kingdom: *and go, and I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite;* the son of Obed, whom Boaz begat of Ruth the Moabitess, Ruth iv. 21, 22. *for I have provided me a king among his sons;* but which he says not; this was reserved for an after-discovery; however God had in his own mind pitched upon him, whom he would hereafter make known; this was a king for himself, raised up to fulfil his will; Saul was chosen by him, but then it was at the request of the people, and so he was rather their king than his; but this was not at their desire, nor with their knowledge, but of his own good will and pleasure: the one was given in wrath, and the other in love: the one was to the rejection of God as King, the other to the rejection of Saul by the will of God.

Ver. 2. *And Samuel said, how can I go?* &c.]

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[z] שכלה orbavit, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus, &c.
[a] Flori Hist. l. 2. c. 21.
[b] Sueton. in Vita ejus, c. 27.
[c] De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 1.
[d] ולא יסף לראות & non addidit ad videndum, Montanus.

Which argues weakness of faith in Samuel, and fear of man, and a diffidence in and distrust of divine power; for otherwise he that sent him on such an errand could protect him: *if Saul hear it, he will kill me:* should hear that Samuel went and anointed another king, it would so enrage him, that he would either immediately lay hands on him, and put him to death, or order him to be put to death; and indeed were it not that this was done by the command of God, he would deserve to die; it being an overt-act of treason to anoint another king: *and the Lord said, take an heifer with thee, and say, I am come to sacrifice to the Lord;* a peace-offering, which might be done any where in those unsettled times, the ark being at one place, and the tabernacle at another; and might be offered upon a private altar, and by a private person; and as it seems Samuel used to sacrifice at different places; see ch. vii. 9. and xi. 15. Ben Gersom relates it as the sense of one of their Rabbins in his age, that there was a person slain in those parts, not known by whom he was slain; and so Samuel is ordered to take an heifer to fulfil the law in Deut. xxi. and therefore Saul would make no inquiry into his reason of going thither with an heifer, and this is commended both by him and Abarbinel.

Ver. 3. *And call Jesse to the sacrifice,* &c.] His family, both him and his sons, to partake of the peace-offerings; as every offerer had a right to invite his friends, and whomsoever he pleased, to eat of those parts of them which belonged to him, as a feast before the Lord: *and I will shew thee what thou shalt do;* when Jesse and his family were with him: *and thou shalt anoint unto me him whom I name unto thee;* that is, anoint him to be king over Israel, whom he should point out so plainly to him, as if he called him by name.

Ver. 4. *And Samuel did that which the Lord spake,* &c.] He filled a horn of oil, and took an heifer with him: *and came to Beth-lehem;* where Jesse and his family lived, which, according to Bunting[7], was 16 miles from Ramah; though it could hardly be so much, since Ramah was 6 miles from Jerusalem on one side, as Beth-lehem lay 6 miles from it on the other[8]: *and the elders of the town trembled at his coming;* for he being now an old man, and seldom went abroad, they concluded it must be something very extraordinary that brought him thither; and they might fear that as he was a prophet of the Lord, that he was come to reprove them, or denounce some judgment upon them for their sins. The Targum is, "the elders of the city "gathered together to meet him;" out of respect and in honour to him, and to the same sense Jarchi's note is, "they hasted to go out to meet him;" see Hos. xi. 11. *and said, comest thou peaceably?* the word *said* is singular; one of the elders put this question, the chiefest of them, perhaps Jesse; and the meaning of it is, whether he came with ill news and bad tidings, or as displeased with them himself on some account or another; or with a message from God, as displeased with them; or whether he came there for his own peace and safety, to be sheltered from Saul; and which, if that was the case, might not be for their peace and good; but would draw upon them the wrath and vengeance of Saul; for they doubtless knew that there was a variance, at least a shiness, between Saul and Samuel.

Ver. 5. *And he said, peaceably I am come to sacrifice unto the Lord,* &c.] Which he could say with truth, it being one end of his coming, though not the only one for which he came, and which he was not obliged to tell: *sanctify yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice;* prepare themselves for it, which was done by washing their garments, &c. and then attend with him, and assist him in the sacrifice: *and he sanctified Jesse and his sons, and called them to the sacrifice;* he ordered them to sanctify themselves; he distinguished them from the rest of the inhabitants, and invited them to partake of the feast, the remainder of the peace-offerings.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, when they were come,* &c.] Jesse and his sons, into the house where the entertainment was; and perhaps before they sat down, went into a private apartment by the direction of Samuel, where he acquainted Jesse with the business he came upon: *that he looked on Eliab;* who was Jesse's first-born, 1 Chron. ii. 13. called Elihu, 1 Chron. xxvii. 18. *and said, surely the Lord's anointed is before him;* or this is the person it is his pleasure should be anointed king.

Ver. 7. *But the Lord said to Samuel,* &c.] By a secret impulse upon his mind, as if he had spoken with an articulate voice to him: *look not on his countenance;* which was comely and majestic: *or on the height of his stature;* which was like that of Saul's; and because the Lord had chosen him, who was superior to the people in this respect, Samuel thought he meant to have such an one now anointed king: *because I have refused him;* or it is not my pleasure that he should be king; though Ben Gersom thinks this refers to Saul, that the Lord had rejected him, though of an high stature, and therefore Samuel should not look out for such a person to be king; and Abarbinel refers it to the height of stature itself, that God had rejected that, and laid it aside as a qualification of a king, or as a rule to judge of a proper person to be a king; but no doubt it respected Eliab: *for the Lord seeth not as man seeth;* man only sees what is without, but the Lord sees what is within; only the outward visible form of the body is seen by man, but the inward qualifications and endowments of the mind are seen by the Lord: *for man looketh on the outward appearance;* the comeliness of a man's person, the majesty of his countenance, the talness of his stature, and bigness of his body, things which recommended men to be kings among the nations of the world; see the note on ch. ix. 2. or *to the eyes*[a]; the liveliness, and briskness, and sharpness of them, thereby to judge of the sagacity and penetration of the mind, as physiognomists do; who guess at the disposition of men by them, when they are small or great, watry or dry, of this or the other colour[b]; *but the Lord looketh on the heart;* and knows what is in that, what wisdom and prudence, justice and integrity, mercy and goodness, and other

[7] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 125.
[8] Vid. Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 89. F. & 94. B.

[a] לעינים ad oculos, Montanus.
[b] Vid. Schotti Thaumaturg. Physic. par. 4. l. 7. c. 8.

princely qualifications are in that. The Jewish writers conclude from hence that the heart of Eliab was not right; it may be, full of wrath, pride, envy, *&c.* which disqualified him for government.

Ver. 8. *Then Jesse called Abinadab,* &c.] His second son, ch. xvii. 13. *and made him pass before Samuel;* that he might take a full view of him: *and he said, neither hath the Lord chosen this;* which he knew by a private suggestion from him.

Ver. 9. *Then Jesse made Shammah to pass by,* &c.] His third son, ch. xvii. 13. sometimes called Shimma, and Shimeah, 1 Chron. ii. 13. 2 Sam. xiii. 3. *and he said, neither hath the Lord chosen this;* which he knew in the same way as before.

Ver. 10. *Again Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel,* &c.] Not 7 more, for he had but 8 sons in all with David, ch. xvii. 12. but four more, which with the other three made seven; three of these four are mentioned by name, Nathanael, Raddai, and Ozem, 1 Chron. ii. 14, 15. but the fourth we nowhere read of; perhaps he died quickly after this, was an obscure person, and of no fame and note, or might be by another woman: *and Samuel said unto Jesse, the Lord hath not chosen these;* not any one of them.

Ver. 11. *And Samuel said unto Jesse, are here all* thy *children?* &c.] For neither of these being the person God would have anointed king, and yet it was one of Jesse's sons that was to be anointed, he concluded he must have more, at least one more, and therefore puts this question to him: *and he said, there remaineth yet the youngest;* or, *the little one*[c]; not of a little diminutive stature, for he was a mighty man, a man of strength, courage, and valour, ver. 18. or of a puerile age, for the Jews say[d] he was now 29 years of age; but that is not likely, he hardly exceeded more than 20, or was so much; thereabout he might be; but he is so called because he was the youngest son, as we render it: *and, behold, he keepeth the sheep;* and from following them, he was taken and anointed king; see Psal. lxxviii. 70, 71. Some of the greatest of men have been taken from rustic employment, as Moses, Gideon, Saul, and others: *and Samuel said unto Jesse, send and fetch him;* out of the field by a messenger: *for we will not sit down till he come hither;* that is, at table, to eat of that part of the peace-offerings which belonged to the offerer Samuel, and which he had invited Jesse and his sons to partake of.

Ver. 12. *And he sent and brought him in,* &c.] Sent messengers into the field and to the flock for him, and being come home Jesse introduced him into the room where Samuel was: *now he was ruddy;* which some understand not of the ruddiness of his complexion, or of his cheeks, but of the redness of his hair; the former seems best: *and withal of a beautiful countenance:* of comely features: or *beautiful eyes*[e]; bright, clear, and sparkling; eyes that are black or blue are reckoned beautiful: *and goodly to look to;* of a pleasant countenance, delightful to behold; he carried sweetness as well as majesty in his face; in this he was a type of Christ, Cant. v. 10, 16. A beautiful aspect, as well as shape and talness, recommended persons for government, as with the Ethiopians, as Aristotle[f] relates; so Agamemnon is represented by Priamus[g] for his personable appearance, as like a king, and fit to be one: *and the Lord said, arise, anoint him, for this is he:* that he had spoken to him of, and who it was his pleasure should be anointed king; and therefore, by a secret strong impulse upon his mind, was put upon doing it immediately, without any hesitation or delay.

Ver. 13. *Then Samuel took the horn of oil,* &c.] Out of his pocket, which he brought along with him by the direction of God: *and anointed him in the midst of his brethren;* not in the presence of them, they sitting around, or standing by and seeing the ceremony performed; which is not consistent with the secrecy with which Samuel was directed to manage this affair, and which was necessary to observe, to keep it from the knowledge of Saul; and with Eliab's treatment of David afterwards, who would never have addressed him in the manner he did, had he known that he was anointed king, ch. xvii. 28. but the sense is, according to Kimchi and Abarbinel, that he was selected out of them, and separated from them, and privately anointed by Samuel, and at most only his father Jesse present; wherefore some observe, that the words may be rendered, *anointed him from the midst of his brethren*[h]; that is, he took him apart from them, and anointed him: *and the spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward;* not as a spirit of grace and holiness, which probably had come upon him before this time; but a spirit of prophecy, as did on Saul after his unction; and which particularly shewed itself in music and poetry, in which he immediately became very eminent, and he was taken notice of for it, and which was the means of bringing him into Saul's court; and a spirit of wisdom and prudence, in civil as well as in sacred things; and a spirit of fortitude, as the Targum, of strength of body, and courage and valour of mind; whereby he was enabled to encounter with the lion and bear, and get the mastery of them; which, with all other gifts of the spirit fitting him for government, he was now endowed with, and which continued with him: *so Samuel rose up and went to Ramah,* his native place, and where he resided; that is, after the festival of the peace-offerings, to which Jesse and his sons were invited; for the anointing seems to be before that.

Ver. 14. *But the spirit of the Lord departed from Saul,* &c.] As a spirit of prophecy as at first, as a spirit of wisdom and prudence in civil government, and as a spirit of fortitude and courage, as the Targum: *and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him;* the reverse of the former, which by the permission of God, and as a punishment to him for his sins, came upon him; he seemed to be a demoniac, as Josephus represents[i] him, as if possessed with the devil; by whom he was almost suffocated and strangled, as well as was distracted in his counsels, and became weak and foolish; lost all courage and greatness of mind, was timorous and fearful, and started at every thing, and was full of envy, suspicion, rage, and despair.

[c] חקטן parvulus, V. L.
[d] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 36.
[e] עם יפה עינים simul pulcher ocelis, Montanus; cum pulchritudine oculorum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[f] Politic. l. 4. c. 4.
[g] Homer. Iliad. 3. v. 166.
[h] So Pool, Patrick, &c.
[i] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 8. sect. 2.

Ver. 15. *And Saul's servants said unto him,* &c.] His courtiers, who observing him to act in a frantic manner, to be dull and melancholy, timorous, and irresolute, unsteady, divided, and distressed; or his physicians, who were called in to assist him, and remove his disorder from him: *behold, now an evil spirit from God troubleth thee:* the disorder was not from any natural cause, or any bodily disease, and therefore out of the reach of physicians to do any service, but was from an evil spirit suffered of God to harass and disturb him.

Ver. 16. *Let our Lord now command thy servants which are before thee,* &c.] Meaning either themselves, or some of a more inferior rank, who were in some post and office at court, waiters there, such as yeomen of the guards: *to seek out a man who is a cunning player on the harp;* a musical instrument much in use in those days: *and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee;* when in a melancholy mood, and Satan takes the advantage of it to distress and terrify, to spread the gloom, and stir up evil passions, and promote distraction and confusion: *that he shall play with his hand;* upon the harp, that being not an instrument of wind, but of hand-music: *and thou shalt be well;* music being a means of cheering the spirits, and removing melancholy and gloomy apprehensions of things, and so of restoring to better health of body and disposition of mind; and that music has such an effect on the bodies and minds of men is certain from observation and experience in all ages. Music has been found to be medicine to various diseases, not only for the curing of the bite of vipers, and of the tarantula, but for easing the pains of the sciatica, and for helping persons labouring under the disorders of the phrensy [k]; and Pythagoras used to compose the mind, and remove the perturbations of it, by the use of the harp [l], the thing here advised to.

Ver. 17. *And Saul said unto his servants,* &c.] Approving of, and pleased with the advice they gave: *provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me;* for, being a sovereign prince, he could command whom he would to attend to his person and service.

Ver. 18. *Then answered one of the servants,* &c.] Which the Jews say [m] was Doeg the Edomite, who out of envy and ill will to David spake of him, that Saul might have an opportunity of slaying him; but this is not at all likely; rather it was one of David's friends and acquaintance, that was desirous of promoting him at court, and no doubt was directed to that motion by the overruling providence of God: *and said, behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Beth-lehemite;* he does not mention the name of his son, but so describes him, that he might be easily known by those who knew any thing of the family of Jesse; besides it was sufficient that he was one of Jesse's sons, to find him out: that is *cunning in playing;* that is, on the harp; has good skill in music, and is expert in it: *and a mighty valiant man;* as appeared by his encountering with and slaying the lion and the bear; an event now past, as very probable: *and a man of war* some think this character of him was given after the affair of his fighting with Goliath and killing him, but here put by a prolepsis or anticipation; and indeed if David had been taken into Saul's court before that affair, it is difficult to account for Saul's ignorance of him, since he must be so near him, and so often with him, as his musician and armour-bearer; though that difficulty may be removed, as may be observed in its proper place: *and prudent in matters;* in his talk and conversation, and conduct and behaviour; knew how to carry himself, even in a prince's court: *and a comely person;* which always recommended to the courts of the eastern nations; see the note on Dan. i. 4. *and the Lord is with him;* prospering and succeeding him in whatsoever he is engaged; and seeing the Lord was with him, it might be expected the evil spirit would depart from Saul, when this person, with whom the Lord was, was in his presence. The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord is for his help;" all that is said of him shewed that he was fit to be in the palace of a king, and a proper person to be with Saul in his present circumstances.

Ver. 19. *Wherefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse,* &c.] For David; not choosing to take him without his leave, though Samuel suggests that kings would do so, ch. viii. 11. *and said, send me David, thy son, which is with the sheep;* he had learnt his name, and what was his employment; and which last he mentions not by way of contempt, it not being reckoned mean and despicable even in the sons of great personages, in those times and countries, to attend flocks and herds: so with the Arabs, as Philo [n] testifies, young men and maids of the most illustrious families fed cattle; and with the ancient Romans, the senator [o] fed his own sheep. Paris, son of Priamus, king of Troy, is said [p] to feed his father's oxen and sheep; and Saul himself had done the same; but to describe him particularly.

Ver. 20. *And Jesse took an ass laden with bread,* &c.] Laden with a load of bread, as the Targum; with as much as it could carry, or was used to carry; the Septuagint version is, an omer of bread, which was as much as a man could eat in one day; and, according to Kimchi and Ben Melech, it may be interpreted an heap of bread, agreeably to the use of the word in Judg. xv. 16. *and a bottle of wine;* or a skin of wine, a leather bag or sack, which held more than our bottles; the Targum is, a flagon of wine: *and a kid;* of the goats, as the same Targum: *and sent them by David his son unto Saul;* some think that Jesse suspected that Saul had got the secret of David's being anointed, and was fearful that he had a design upon his life, and therefore sent this present by his son to pacify him, and ingratiate him unto him; but rather he sent it as a token of respect and subjection to his sovereign, and according to the custom of those times, when men used to carry presents when they waited upon princes, and indeed in their common visits; and do in the eastern countries to this day; see the note on ch. ix. 7.

Ver. 21. *And David came to Saul, and stood before him,* &c.] As a servant, and ministered to him in

[k] A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 4. c. 13. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 17. Vid. Philostrat. Vit. Apollon. Tyan. l. 5. c. 7.
[l] Seneca de Ira, l. 3. c. 9.
[m] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 93. 2. So in Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. C.
[n] De Vita Mosis, l. 1. p. 610.
[o] Pascebatque suas, &c. Ovid. Fast. l. 1.
[p] Colathi Raptus Helenæ, v. 71, 101.

the way, and for the purpose for which he was sent: *and he loved him greatly;* being a comely person, and a well-behaved youth, and especially as he was serviceable to him with his music, in driving away melancholy from him: *and he became his armour-bearer:* that is, he appointed him to this office, though we never read that he exercised it; nor did he go with Saul in this capacity to the battle related in the following chapter: it may be literally rendered: *and he was to him a bearer of vessels*, or *instruments*[q]; and Abarbinel thinks this is to be understood not of instruments of war, but of instruments of music to play with: which he brought in and bare before him when he went in to the king.

Ver. 22. *And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, let David, I pray thee, stand before me*, &c.] Continue in his service; which was great condescension in him, and great respect shewn to Jesse, not to detain his son without his leave, and to ask it as a favour of him: *for he hath found favour in my sight:* was very acceptable to him' which must be very pleasing to Jesse to hear; especially if he was in any fear that Saul had an ill design upon him, when he first sent for him.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul*, &c.] See ver. 14, 15. though the word *evil* is not in the text here; wherefore Abarbinel thinks that this here was the spirit of God, which stirred up in him thoughts of divine things, put him in mind of what God had said, that he had rejected him from being king, and had rent the kingdom from him; and this filled him with grief and trouble, and he became melancholy: *that David took an harp, and played with his hands:* upon it; and, as Josephus[r] says, at the same time sung hymns and psalms; made use both of vocal and instrumental music: *so Saul was refreshed, and was well;* became cheerful, his grief was removed, his black and gloomy apprehensions of things were dispersed, and he was cured of his melancholy disorder for the present: *and the evil spirit departed from him;* at least for a while; he had his fits and intervals; of the effects of music in a natural way, see the note on ver. 16. though no doubt the music of David was more than natural, being attended with the power and blessing of God, in order to raise his fame and credit at court.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter relates how the armies of Israel, and of the Philistines, prepared for battle, and where, ver. 1, 2, 3. describes a champion of the Philistines, who defied the armies of Israel, ver. 4—11. and whilst he was so doing, it informs us that David came into the camp, and he heard his words, and signified to one and another his inclination to fight with him, ver. 12—30. which being reported to Saul, David was sent for by him, and much discourse passed between them about it, ver. 31—37. when we are told the manner in which he engaged with the Philistine, and the victory he obtained over him, ver. 38—51. upon which the Philistines fled, and Israel pursued them; and on account of this action David was taken notice of by Saul, and brought to court again, as the following chapter shews, ver. 52—58.

Ver. 1. *Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle*, &c.] Josephus[s] says this was not long after the things related in the preceding chapter were transacted; and very probably they had heard of the melancholy and distraction of Saul, and thought it a proper opportunity of avenging themselves on Israel for their last slaughter of them, and for that purpose gathered together their dispersed troops: *and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah;* a city of the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 35. which shews that, notwithstanding their last defeat, they had great footing in the land of Israel, or however had penetrated far into it in this march of theirs: *and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah;* which were both in the same tribe, and near one another, of which see the notes on Josh. x. 10. and xv. 35. *in Ephes-dammim;* which, by an apocope of the first letter, is called Pas-dammim, 1 Chron. xi. 13. which the Jews[t] say had this name because there blood ceased.

Ver. 2. *And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together*, &c.] He being cured, at least being better of his disorder, through the music of David, and alarmed and aroused by the invasion of the Philistines, which might serve to dissipate any remains of it, or prevent its return, got together his forces: *and pitched by the valley of Elah;* which Jerom[u] says Aquila and Theodotion interpret *the valley of the oak;* but the Vulgate Latin version, the valley of Terebinth; which, according to our countryman Sandys[w], was four miles from Rama-sophim, where Samuel dwelt; for he says, "after four miles riding, we descended into the "valley of Terebinth, famous, though little, for the "slaughter of Golias;" and in the Targum this valley is called the valley of Butma, which in the Arabic language signifies a *terebinth*, or turpentine-tree; though some translate it *the oak;* and, according to some modern travellers[x], to this day it bears a name similar to that: for they say it is "now called the vale "of Bitumen, very famous all over those parts for "David's victory over Goliath:" *and set the battle in array against the Philistines:* prepared to give them battle.

Ver. 3. *And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side*, &c.] Before the Israelites are said to encamp in or by the valley: but here they are said to take the higher ground, and face the Philistines, who were on a moun-

[q] ויהי לו נשא כלים et fuit ei ferens vasa, Montanus; ferens instrumenta, Piscator.
[r] Ut supra.
[s] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 1.
[t] Midrash Ruth, fol. 48. 2. Kimchi in loc.
[u] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. F.
[w] Travels, p. 157. ed. 5.
[x] Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 305.

tain or hill on the other side over-against them, which Kimchi reconciles thus: the whole or the grand army lay encamped in the valley, and they that were set in array, or the first ranks, the first battalion, ascended the mountain to meet the Philistines. Vatablus takes it to be the same mountain, that on one part of it the Philistines formed their first battalion, and the rest of the army was in the valley; and on the other part of the mountain the Israelites pitched their camp: *and there was a valley between them;* the same as in the preceding verse.

Ver. 4. *And there went out a champion out of the camp of the Philistines,* &c.] Or a *middle* person, or a man *between two*[y]; meaning either one that went and stood between the two armies of Israel and the Philistines, as the Jewish writers generally interpret it: or a *dueller*[z], as others, with which our version agrees; one that proposed to fight a duel, and have the war decided by two persons, of which he would be one: *named Goliath of Gath;* which was one of the places where the Anakim or giants were driven, and left, in the times of Joshua, and from whom this man descended, Josh. xi. 22. *whose height was six cubits and a span;* and taking a cubit after the calculation of Bishop Cumberland[a] to be 21 inches, and more, and a span to be half a cubit, the height of this man was 11 feet 4 inches, and somewhat more; which need not seem incredible, since the coffin of Orestes, the son of Agamemnon, is said[b] to be 7 cubits long; and Eleazar, a Jew, who because of his bigness was called the giant, and was presented by Artabanus, king of the Parthians, to Tiberius Cæsar, is said by Josephus[c] to be 7 cubits high; and one Gabbara of Arabia, in the times of Claudius Cæsar, measured 9 feet 9 inches, as Pliny[d] relates, and who elsewhere[e] speaks of a people in Ethiopia, called Syrbotæ, who were 8 cubits high; the Septuagint version makes Goliath to be only four cubits and a span high, and so Josephus[f]; that is, about eight feet.

Ver. 5. *And he had an helmet of brass upon his head,* &c.] This was a piece of armour, which covered the head in the day of battle; these were usually made of the skins of beasts, of leather, and which were covered with plates of iron, or brass; and sometimes made of all iron, or of brass[g]; as this seems to have been: *and he was armed with a coat of mail;* which reached from the neck to the middle, and consisted of various plates of brass laid on one another, like the scales of fishes[h], so close together that no dart or arrow could pierce between: *and the weight of the coat was 5,000 shekels of brass;* which made 156 pounds and a quarter of zygostatic or avoirdupois weight; and therefore he must be a very strong man indeed to carry such a weight. So the armour of the ancient Romans were all of brass, as this man's: their helmets, shields, greaves, coats of mail, all of brass, as Livy says[h]; and so in the age of the Grecian heroes[i].

Ver. 6. *And he had greaves of brass upon his legs,* &c.] Which were a sort of boots, or leg-harnesses, which covered the thighs and legs down to the heels; such as Iolaus[k] and the Grecians usually wore, as described by Homer; which are supposed to be double the weight of the helmet, reckoned at 15 pounds, so that these must weigh 30 pounds of avoirdupois-weight: *and a target of brass between his shoulders;* the Targum is, " a spear " or shield of brass, which came out of the helmet, and " a weight of brass upon his shoulders." Jarchi says the same, and that it was in the form of a spear to defend the neck from the sword; it seems to be a corslet of brass, worn between the helmet and the coat of mail for the defence of the neck, supposed to weigh thirty pounds[l].

Ver. 7. *And the staff of his spear* was *like a weaver's beam,* &c.] The wooden part of it, held in the hand; this for thickness was like the beam in the weaver's loom, about which the warp, or else the web, is rolled; and it is conjectured that, in proportion to the stature of Goliath, his spear must be 26 feet long, since Hector's in Homer[m] was 11 cubits, or 16 feet and a half: *and his spear's head* weighed 600 *shekels of iron;* the iron part of the spear, the point of it, which has its name in Hebrew from a flame of fire, because when brandished it looks shining and flaming; and being the weight of 600 shekels, amounted to 18 pounds and three quarters of avoirdupois-weight, and the whole spear is supposed to weigh 37 pounds and a half; and the whole of this man's armour is thought to weigh 272 pounds, 13 ounces[n]; which was a prodigious weight for a man to carry, and go into battle with; and one may well wonder how he could be able with such a weight about him to move and lay about in an engagement; though this is nothing in comparison of the weight some men have carried. Pliny[o] tells us that he saw one Athanatus come into the theatre clothed with a leaden breastplate of 500 pounds weight, and shod with buskins of the same weight: *and one bearing a shield went before him;* which when engaged in battle he held in his own hand, and his sword in the other; the former was reckoned at 30 pounds, and the latter at four pounds, one ounce; though one would think he had no occasion for a shield, being so well covered with armour all over; so that the carrying of it before him might be only a matter of form and state. His spear is the only piece of armour that was of iron, all the rest were of brass; and Hesiod[p], writing of the brazen age, says, their arms and their houses were all of brass, for then there was no iron; and so Lucretius[q] affirms, that the use of brass was before iron; but both are mentioned together, Gen. iv. 22. see the note; hence Mars is called Χαλκεος Αρης[r].

[y] איש הבנים vir intermedius, Montanus; inter duo, Vatablus; vir medietatum, Noldius, p. 194. No. 883.
[z] Quidam duellator, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[a] Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 2. p. 57-7.
[b] Herodot. Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 68. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. , c. 16.
[c] Antiqu. l. 18. c. 5. sect. 5.
[d] Nat. Hist. ib.
[e] Ibid. l. 6. c. 30.
[f] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 1.
[g] Vid. Lydium de re militari, l. 3. c. 5. p. 63.
[h] ——— Rutilum thoraca indutus ahenis Horrebat squamis ——— Virgil. Æneid. l. 11.

[h] Hist. l. 1. c. 20.
[i] Pausan. Messenica, l. 3. p. 162. So Homer frequently describes the Grecians with a coat of mail of brass.
[k] Hesiod. Scutum Herc. ver. 122.
[l] Vid. Hostii Monomach. David & Goliath, c. 5.
[m] Iliad. 12.
[n] Hostius, ut supra.
[o] Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 20.
[p] Opera & Dies, l. 1. ver. 147, 148.
[q] De rerum natura, l. 5. & prior æris erat, &c.
[r] Homer, Iliad. 5. ver. 704, 859, 864. Pindar. Olymp. Ode 14.

Ver. 8. *And he stood and cried unto the armies of Israel, &c.*] He stood in the valley between the two armies, and cried with a loud voice that he might be heard; and as he was of such a monstrous stature, no doubt his voice was very strong and sonorous; and as the battalions of Israel designed by armies were posted on the mountain or hill, his voice would ascend, and be the more easily heard: *and said unto them, why are ye come out to set your battle in array?* either as wondering at their boldness, to set themselves in battle array against the Philistines; or rather suggesting that it was needless, since the dispute between them might be issued by a single combat: *am not I a Philistine, and you servants to Saul?* a common Philistine, according to Jarchi; not a captain of a hundred, or of a thousand; and yet would fight any one of them, their general officers, or be they who they would; or rather, as Abarbinel, he was a prince among the Philistines, and king of Gath; and though he was, and it was usual with great persons to engage with their equals, yet he did not insist on that; but would engage with any man, though of an inferior rank, even with any of Saul's servants; and by calling the Israelites the servants of Saul, he might have some respect to Saul's arbitrary government over them; and since they must be servants and slaves, it was as well to be servants to the Philistines as to him: *choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me*; according to Jarchi and the Targumist, the challenge first respects Saul their king; that if he was a man of fortitude and courage, let him come and engage with him; if not, choose another, and send him down into the valley to fight with him. These same writers represent him as blustering and bragging that he killed the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, took the ark captive, and carried it into the temple of Dagon; that he had been used to go out with the armies of the Philistines, and had obtained victories, and slain many, and yet had never been made captain of a thousand among them; all which is improbable, and some of it notoriously false; for in every battle after the taking of the ark the Philistines had been beaten.

Ver. 9. *If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants, &c.*] For which it does not appear he had any commission or authority to say; nor did the Philistines think themselves obliged to abide by what he said, since, when he was slain, they did not yield themselves servants to the Israelites: *but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us*; to which terms also the Israelites did not consent; nor did David, who engaged with him, enter the list on such conditions.

Ver. 10. *And the Philistine said, I defy the armies of Israel this day, &c.*] Or *reproach*[s] them; that is, should they not accept his challenge, and send down a man to fight with them, he should then upbraid them with cowardice; and now he disdained them, as if there was not a man among them that dared to encounter with him: *give me a man that we may fight together*; and so decide the controversy between us; such as were those duels fought between Paris and Menelaus in the Trojan war, and between the Lacedemonians and the Argives in the times of Orthryades, and between the Athenians and Romans by the Horatii and Curiatii, as Grotius observes.

Ver. 11. *When Saul and all Israel heard these words of the Philistine, &c.*] For they were delivered with such a tone and strength of voice, as to be heard very generally, at least by many, and which soon was reported through the whole army: *they were dismayed, and greatly afraid*; which may seem strange, when there were so many valiant men among them, as Saul himself, who had behaved with so much courage against the Ammonites, Philistines, and Amalekites; but now the spirit of God was departed from him, and he was become timorous and fearful; and though he was much better than he had been, yet still he was not the man of spirit and resolution as before: there was also Abner, the general of his army, a very valiant man, a great man in Israel, and yet appears not on this occasion; and, what is more wonderful, Jonathan the son of Saul was present, as appears from ch. xviii. 1. who had not only smitten a garrison of the Philistines, but with one man more only had attacked another garrison, and routed the whole army of the Philistines, and yet now shews not his head against a single man: so it is when God cuts off the spirits of princes, or takes away their courage; victory over this man, and the glory of it, were reserved for David; and all this fear and dread throughout the armies of Israel were suffered, that he might appear the more glorious.

Ver. 12. *Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Beth-lehem-judah, whose name was Jesse, &c.*] Before made mention of, ch. xvi. 1. *and he had eight sons*; seven only are mentioned, 1 Chron. ii. 13, 14, 15. one of them being, as is thought by some, a grandson, perhaps Jonadab the son of Shammah; or was a son by another woman, or died without children, as Jarchi, and therefore not mentioned: *and the man went among men for an old man in the days of Saul*; the phrase, *among men*, either signifies that he was ranked among old men, infirm and unfit for war, and so excused, and his sons went in his room, so Kimchi; or he was reckoned among men of the first rank, men of esteem, credit, and reputation, so Jarchi and R. Isaiah, with which agrees the Targum; or whenever he went abroad, he was attended by many men, had a large retinue, which sense Abarbinel mentions, and is that of Ben Gersom, and agrees with the Talmud[t]; but the Syriac and Arabic versions read *stricken in years*, which seems most agreeable.

Ver. 13. *And the three eldest sons of Jesse went and followed Saul to the battle, &c.*] Either of their own accord, or rather at their father's motion, or however with his knowledge and consent, who because he could not go himself, willed them to go; and these were forward, and some of the foremost that followed Saul to the battle, being zealous and well disposed to defend their king and country: *and the names of the three sons that went to the battle were Eliab the first-born, and next unto him Abinadab, and the third Shammah*: who are the three mentioned by name that passed before Samuel, when he came to anoint one of Jesse's sons to be king, ch. xvi. 6, 8, 9.

[s] חרפתי exprobrari, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus; probro affeci, Tigurine version; probro afficere, Junius & Tremellius.

[t] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 58. 1.

Ver. 14. *And David was the youngest*, &c.] For the sake of whom this account is given of Jesse and his family, and who after this makes a considerable figure in the camp and court of Saul: *and the three eldest followed Saul*; as before related, and which is repeated, that it might be observed that they only of Jesse's sons followed Saul; not David particularly, but who was providentially sent to the army at the time the Philistine was defying it.

Ver. 15. *But David went, and returned from Saul*, &c.] Or *from above Saul*; Josephus [u] says, the physicians of Saul advised to get a man to stand ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς, *over his head*, and sing psalms and hymns to him; and Saul being recovered from his phrensy and melancholy, by means of David's music, he was dismissed from him, or had leave to go home, or he returned upon Saul's taking the field; though one would think, if he was now his armour-bearer, he would have gone with him, see ch. xvi. 21. It seems that when he was called to the court of Saul, that he did not continue there, but was going and coming, was there at certain times when Saul wanted him; and so when in the camp he might go and return as there was occasion for it: *to feed his father's sheep at Beth-lehem*: for though he was anointed king, and was called to court, yet such was his humility, that he condescended to attend this employment of keeping sheep: and though Jesse knew all this, yet he kept him at home to this business, when it might be more reasonably thought he would have lain in the way of preferment, had he followed Saul to the camp, and appeared in the army: but he chose to leave things to the providence of God to work the way for him, and by which he was directed to take the following step, though perhaps without any design to his son's future promotion.

Ver. 16. *And the Philistine drew near morning and evening*, &c.] Twice a day he came near the camp, within the hearing of it. The Jews [w] say, he took those seasons on purpose to disturb them in reading their *Shema*, or *hear, O Israel*, &c. and saying their prayers morning and evening: *and presented himself* 40 *days*; successively, before the armies of Israel, daring them to send down a man to fight with him, and reproaching them for their cowardice in not doing it.

Ver. 17. *And Jesse said unto David his son*, &c.] His youngest son, that was at home with him keeping sheep; he had three more at home, and who were elder than David, and yet he is directed by the providence of God to pitch upon him, and send him on the following errand, there being work for him to do Jesse knew nothing of: *take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn*; pointing to a quantity of it in a certain place; this was wheat or barley dried in a furnace or oven, and ground into meal, and being mixed with water, or milk, or butter, or honey, or oil, was eaten, and reckoned very delicious; and besides this, there was another sort of *kali*, the word here used, which was parched pulse, as beans, peas, &c. parched, and which to this day is by the Arabs called by this name [x]; of both which mention is made, 2 Sam. xvii. 28. Now an *ephah* was as much as ten men could eat in a day, it consisted of ten omers, Exod. xvi. 16, 36. and the number ten is after used of loaves and cheese: *and these ten loaves of bread*; or cakes of bread, as Kimchi interprets it; pieces or morsels of bread, as the Targum; which seems not so agreeable as loaves or cakes, which are not in the text, but to be supplied: *and run to the camp to thy brethren*; which, according to Bunting [y], was four miles from Beth-lehem; and whither it seems he went a-foot, and is bid to make haste, and even to run, as his brethren might be in want of provision; and Jesse was very desirous of relieving them, and hearing from them as soon as possible; it is very likely he had a servant or servants to attend him, and assist in carrying this load of provision, which, with what follows, was too much for one man to run with.

Ver. 18. *And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand*, &c.] Their chiliarch or colonel, who had the command of 1,000 men, and under whom Jesse's sons fought; Jarchi thinks this was Jonathan, who had 1,000 men with him at Gibeah, and so now, ch. xiii. 2. these cheeses were sent by Jesse to the captain, to be distributed among his men, or a present to himself, that he might use his sons well who were under his command: *and look how thy brethren fare*; whether in good health, in good spirits, and in safety: *and take their pledge*; that is, if they had been obliged for want of money to pawn any of their clothes, or what they had with them to buy food with, that he would redeem and take up the pledge, by paying the money for which they were pawned; for it is thought that soldiers at this time were not maintained at the expense of the king and government, but at their own, and the families to which they belonged: though some are of opinion that this was some token which they had sent by a messenger to their father, by which he might know he came from them, so Ben Gersom; and which David was now to take with him, and return it; or a token that he was to bring from them, whereby he might be assured of their welfare; and so the Targum, "and bring their goodness," a token of their being in good health. The Jews [z] understand it of bills of divorce to be given to their wives, that if they should die in battle, or be taken captive, that their wives might marry after three years.

Ver. 19. *Now Saul, and they*, &c.] That is, the sons of Jesse, and brethren of David: *and all the men of Israel*; the soldiers in the army: were *in the valley of Elah*; or *by* it, near unto it; for they were set in array on the mountain on the side of it: *fighting with the Philistines*; not actually engaged in battle, but drawn up for it; prepared and in readiness to engage whenever it was necessary, or they were obliged to it; and perhaps there might be now and then some skirmishes in the out-parts of the camp.

Ver. 20. *And David rose up early in the morning*, &c.] Being very ready and eager to obey his father's orders, and visit his brethren: *and left the sheep with a keeper*; which shewed his care and faithfulness in the

[u] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 8. sect. 2.
[w] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 42. 2.
[x] Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 7. col. 47.
[y] Travels, &c. p. 135.
[z] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. D.

discharge of his office; he was not unmindful of his father's sheep, any more than of his commands: *and took;* the ephah of parched corn, the ten loaves, and the ten cheeses: *and went, as Jesse had commanded him:* went and carried them to the camp, according to his orders: *and he came to the trench;* foss or ditch, which was cast up all around the army, partly to prevent the enemy falling on them before, and partly to prevent deserters from them behind; or the word signifying a waggon or carriage, which is here used, this might be a fence around the camp made of waggons fastened to each other; though it may only signify the camp itself, which lay in a circular form, with proper guards about it to watch the enemy. Now David came up to it just as *the host was going forth to the fight;* preparing and getting every thing ready to the battle, and in motion, and upon the march to meet the enemy: *and shouted for the battle;* which was usually done when about to make the onset, to animate the soldiers, and strike the greater terror into the enemy; and this noise was sometimes made with the voice in a hideous and howling way, and was called *barritus*[a] by the Romans; with the Trojans it was like the noise of cranes in the air[b]; it was also attended with the clashing of shields and spears[c]; with the Persians, it was a rough, boisterous, and confused noise[d].

Ver. 21. *For Israel and all the Philistines had put the battle in array,* &c.] Both sides prepared for it, and drew up in line of battle: *army against army:* rank against rank, battalion against battalion, the right wing of the one against the left of the other, *&c.*

Ver. 22. *And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage,* &c.] That is, he left his load of provisions he brought with him in the hand of the keeper of the bag and baggage of the army, their clothes, and such-like things; not having an opportunity to deliver them to his brethren, who were just going to engage in battle: *and ran into the army;* which shewed the valour and courage of David, who chose rather to expose himself in battle, than to abide with the keeper of the carriages: *and came and saluted his brethren;* asked them of their welfare, in his father's name and his own.

Ver. 23. *And as he talked with them,* &c.] About their health, and the errand he came upon, and the message of his father to them, and how it was with him, who sent them his best wishes: *there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name;* of whom see ver. 4. he came out of the valley, and drew near to the mountain the Israelites were descending: *out of the armies of the Philistines;* from the plains where they were encamped, as Kimchi, though they seem to have been encamped on a mountain as the Israelites were; or from the ranks of the Philistines; according to the marginal reading, he came out of one of the battalions that were set in array: *and spake according to the same words;* which he had spoken time after time forty days successively, namely, what is expressed ver. 8, 9, 10: *and David heard them;* and observed them.

Ver. 24. *And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man,* &c.] Even as it should seem before they heard him; knowing who he was, and what he was about to say, having seen and heard him forty days running: *fled from him, and were sore afraid;* it is pretty much a whole army should be afraid of one man, and flee from him; they must be greatly forsaken of God, and given up by him, see Deut. xxxii. 30. but perhaps they were not so much afraid of personal danger from him, as that they could not bear to hear his blasphemy.

Ver. 25. *And the men of Israel said,* &c.] To one another: *have ye seen this man that is come up?* taken notice of him, and observed him? *surely to defy Israel is he come up;* to challenge them to fight with him, and upbraid them with cowardice that they did not: *and it shall be that the man who killeth him;* this, and what follows, they said to encourage any person to engage with him, though none of them cared to encounter him themselves: *the king will enrich him with great riches;* give him a large gratuity, make a present of a great sum of money to him: *and will give him his daughter;* to be his wife, in like manner as Caleb promised to give his daughter in marriage to the person that should take Kirjath-sepher, Judg. i. 12. *and make his father's house free in Israel;* from all tributes, taxes, levies, impositions, king's service, and duty; or, as the Targum, "make his father's house freemen, nobles;" raise it to the rank of nobility.

Ver. 26. *And David spake to the men that stood by him,* &c.] Who were next to him, looking upon the Philistine, and hearing what he said, saying: *what shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel?* which he asked not for the sake of the reward, but to observe the necessity there was of some man's engaging with him, and killing him, or otherwise it would be a reproach to Israel, and to signify that he had an inclination to attempt it: *for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?* there were two things which provoked David, and raised indignation in him against this man; the one was, the character of the person that reproached, a Philistine, an uncircumcised person, a profane man, that had no true religion in him, an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger to the covenants of promise; and the other was the persons whom he reproached, the armies of the living God, of the King of kings, and Lord of lords; and which in effect was reproaching the Lord himself, and which David, filled with zeal for God, and for his people, could not bear; and the consideration of these things animated him to engage with him, not doubting of success.

Ver. 27. *And the people answered him after this manner,* &c.] Told him what was proposed to be done in honour to the man that should attempt to kill him, and succeed: *saying, so shall it be done to the man that killeth him;* as before related, that he should be enriched, marry the king's daughter, and his family be ennobled.

Ver. 28. *And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he*

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[a] Vid. Valtrinum de re militar. Roman. l. 5. c. 3. p. 314, 315. & A. Gell. Noct. Attic. l. 1. c. 11.

[b] Homer. Iliad. 3. ver. 1, 2, 3.

[c] Vid. Lydium de re militari, l. 4. c. 3. p. 158, 159.

[d] Curt. Hist. l. 3. c. 10. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 4. c. 7.

spake unto the men, &c.] Heard the questions he put to them, by which he perceived his inclination: *and Eliab's anger was kindled against David*: because what he had said carried in it a tacit reproach of him, and others, that they had not the courage, and did not attempt to encounter with the Philistine; or the displeasure he expressed was either out of affection to him, fearing, or being assured almost he would perish in the enterprise; or rather out of envy to him, lest succeeding in so bold an action, he should gain superior glory to him, and the rest of his brethren, who yet was the youngest of them: *and he said, why comest thou down hither?* for though David had talked with his brethren, or had begun to talk with them, yet he had not sufficiently explained the reasons of his coming: *and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness?* the wilderness of Judea, or some wilderness near Beth-lehem; by this he would not only insinuate a charge of unfaithfulness, in not taking care of his father's flock committed to him; but his view was to make him look little and mean in the eyes of the people, that in the family he belonged to he was thought to be fit for nothing but to keep sheep, and those but a small flock, and in doing this was negligent and careless: *I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart*; that he was too proud to keep sheep, and wanted to advance himself in the army, and make a figure there, and thereby gratify his vanity and ambition, which was the reverse of David's character; for, such was his humility, that, though he was anointed king, and had been preferred in Saul's court, yet condescended with all readiness to keep his father's sheep; and what he now proposed was not from any bad principle in his heart, but purely for the glory of God, and the honour of the people of Israel, who were both reproached: *for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle*; out of curiosity, and to take every advantage and opportunity of signalizing and making himself famous.

Ver. 29. *And David said, what have I now done?* &c.] That is criminal and blameworthy; as if he should say, I have only expressed an indignation against this uncircumcised Philistine, and a concern for the glory of God, and the honour of the people of Israel: is there *not a cause?* either for his coming to the camp, being sent by his father; or of his expressing himself with indignation at the Philistine's defiance of the armies of Israel. Some take the sense to be, that he had done nothing, he had not committed any fact; it was mere words what he had said, he had attempted nothing, and therefore there was no reason to bear so hard upon him; to this purpose is the Targum, "what have I done as yet? is it not a word *only* "which I have spoken?" but the former sense seems best.

Ver. 30. *And he turned from him towards another*, &c.] From his brother Eliab, to another person right against him, and directed his discourse to him: *and spake after the same manner*; as in ver. 26. inquiring what encouragement would be given to a man that should attempt to kill the Philistine, and expressing his concern to hear the armies of the living God defied by such a wretch: *and the people answered him again after the former manner*: telling him what gratuities and honours would be conferred on such a person, as in ver. 25. and the design of his talking to one, and to another, was, that what he had said might spread and reach to the ears of Saul, to whom in modesty he did not choose to apply himself.

Ver. 31. *And when the words were heard which David spake*, &c.] To one, and to another, and these reported to other persons, and so they went from one to another through many hands: *they rehearsed them before Saul*; coming to the ears of some of his courtiers and counsellors, or officers about him, they told him what such an one had said: *and he sent for him*; to his tent or pavilion where he was, to talk with him on this subject. From the 11th verse, to the end of this, the whole is wanting in the Septuagint version, according to the Vatican exemplar; and these *twenty* verses are thought, by some [c], to be an interpolation; and it must be owned there are difficulties in them, and that the connexion of ver. 11th with the following is very clear and consistent, as also is ver. 50th left out in the same version; and likewise the four last verses of the chapter, and five with which the next begins.

Ver. 32. *And David said to Saul, let no man's heart fail because of him*, &c.] The Philistine, though so gigantic, mighty, and blustering: this he said within himself, so Kimchi; as David perceived the hearts of most, if not all, did, since none dared to go out and fight him, but on the contrary fled from him: *thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine*; and therefore there need be no thought, care, or concern to look out for another man.

Ver. 33. *And Saul said to David, thou art not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him*, &c.] Had neither strength of body, nor skill in military affairs, to encounter with a man of his stature, and warlike genius and practice: *for thou* art but *a youth*; some say about 14 or 16 years of age, but very probably about 20, and not more, and so not only weak, but inexpert in the art of fighting: *and he a man of war from his youth*; a gigantic man, trained up in, inured to, and expert in the affairs of war; so that David could not, on any account, be a competitor with him, and a match for him.

Ver. 34. *And David said unto Saul*, &c.] In answer to his objection of inability to encounter with one so superior to him; and this answer is founded on experience and facts, and shews that he was not so weak and inexpert as Saul took him to be: *thy servant kept his father's sheep*; which he was not ashamed to own, and especially as it furnished him with an instance of his courage, bravery, and success, and which would be convincing to Saul: *and there came a lion and a bear, and took a lamb out of the flock*; not that they came together; though Kimchi so interprets it, *a lion with a bear*; but these are creatures that don't use to go together; and besides, both could not be said with propriety to take one and the same lamb out of the flock: to which may be added, that David in the next verse speaks only of one, out of whose mouth he took the lamb; wherefore the words may be ren-

[c] See Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 2. p. 418, &c.

dered, *a lion or a bear* [f]; and if the copulative *and* is retained, the meaning can only be, that at different times they would come and take a lamb, a lion at one time, and a bear at another.

Ver. 35. *And I went out after him*, &c.] Whether a lion or a bear; but mention after being made of his beard, a lion rather is meant: *and smote him:* with his fist, or rather with his shepherd's staff: *and delivered it out of his mouth;* snatched it out from thence, or obliged him to drop it, by beating him: *and when he arose against me;* after he had let go the lamb, threatening to tear him in pieces for attempting to disturb him in his prey, and take it away from him; *I caught* him *by his beard:* such as lions have; hence a lion is often called in Homer [g] λις ηυγένειος, the well-bearded lion. Kimchi thinks the beard with the nether jaw is meant, which David caught hold on: *and smote him, and slew him:* tore him to pieces, as Samson did, or slew him with some weapon in his hand.

Ver. 36. *Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear*, &c.] At different times, and several of them at one time or another; whenever any of them came into the flock, he used to lay hold on them and kill them, with all the ease imaginable. The Jews suppose this phrase denotes many of them [h]. *And this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them;* as he was like them in nature, savage, cruel and unclean, so he would be in his end, killed as they; of this David was fully persuaded and assured in mind, having an impulse from the spirit of God, by which he was certified of it: *seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God;* so that as he justly deserved to die, he made no doubt of it it would be his case.

Ver. 37. *And David said moreover*, &c.] For the further confirmation of it, and as more strongly expressing his faith of it; not as owing to any natural strength or skill of his, but to the power of God, of whose assistance he made no question: *the Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear;* for to him he ascribes his deliverance from those savage creatures, and his victory over them, and on him he relied for help and salvation in the present case: *he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine;* David did not go forth in his own name and strength, but in the name and strength of the Lord of hosts: *and Saul;* seeing him so positive, and fully assured of victory: *said unto David, go, and the Lord be with thee;* to help and assist him, to deliver him out of the hand of the Philistine, and give him victory over him; the Targum is, "the Word of "the Lord be for thy help."

Ver. 38. *And Saul armed David with his armour*, &c.] Not with what he wore himself; for it can't be thought he would strip himself of his armour in the field of battle, and when just going to it; and besides what suited the one would not be fit for the other, their bulk and stature being different; but this was some armour Saul had brought with him, besides what he himself wore, to furnish any with that might want it: *and he put an helmet of brass upon his head;* such an one, though not so large as Goliath had, these being usually made of brass; see the note on ver. 5. *also he armed him with a coat of mail;* which probably was of brass also, and like that of Goliath's too, only lesser, ver. 5.

Ver. 39. *And David girded his sword upon his armour*, &c.] Which Saul also perhaps furnished him with: *and he assayed to go;* made an attempt, and had a mind to go thus accoutred; he at first shewed an inclination to go in such an habit, but afterwards would not: *for he had not proved it;* as warriors were wont to do; so Achilles did [i]; he never made trial of such armour before, he had not been used to it, and knew not how to behave in it, or walk with it on him; it was an encumbrance to him: Abarbinel renders it, *but he had not proved* it; he would have gone with it but for that reason; the Targum is, "because "there was no miracle in them;" because if he had made use of this, there would have been no appearance of a miracle in getting the victory over the Philistine, as was by using only a sling and stones: *and David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these, for I have not proved* them; he thought fit to acquaint Saul with it that he could not go thus accoutred, and his reason for it, lest he should be offended with him: *and David put them off him;* took off the helmet from his head, ungirt the sword upon his armour, and stripped himself of his coat of mail, and went forth entirely unarmed.

Ver. 40. *And he took his staff in his hand*, &c.] His shepherd's staff, which he used in keeping his father's sheep, and chose rather to appear in the habit of a shepherd than of a soldier: *and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook;* which ran in the valley, which became smooth by lying in the water running over them; and which being smooth were fitter for his purpose, being the more easily cast out of the sling; though De Dieu is of opinion that these were parts or pieces of stones, cleft ones, which were rough and rugged, and which would more easily and firmly be fixed in the forehead of the Philistine: *and put them in a shepherd's bag which he had, even in a scrip;* in which he had been wont to put things he needed for the good of the flock, and was such as travellers put their food in; and this might also be the use of it with shepherds; but, according to the Ethiopic interpreters [k], it was that piece of the leather in the midst of the sling, in which the slingers used to put the stones, that they might stick the more firmly: *and his sling was in his hand;* which he intended to use in slinging the stone or stones he had in his scrip; and which was an exercise he had been accustomed to in all likelihood, and for which the Benjaminites his neighbours, of the next tribe, were very famous: *and he drew near to the Philistine;* marched towards him, thereby signifying that he accepted his challenge, and would enter the list with him.

Ver. 41. *And the Philistine came on, and drew near unto David*, &c.] By slow paces, because of the

[f] הארי ואת הדוב leo vel ursus, V. L. leo aut ursus, Junius & Tremellius, Bochart. Noldius, p. 271.
[g] Iliad. 17. ver. 109. & Iliad. 18. ver. 318.

[h] See Halicot Olam, p. 177.
[i] Homer. Iliad. 19. ver. 384, 385. so Theocrit. Idyll. 10. ver. 61.
[k] Apud Ludolf. Lexic. Ethiop. p. 64.

weight of his armour, and bulk of his body, yet with a haughty air, and a proud gait: *and the man that bare the shield* went *before him*; see the note on ver. 7.

Ver. 42. *And when the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him*, &c.] He looked about for his antagonist, to take a view of him, what sort of a man he was, expecting to see one much like himself; but observing a puny young man, he despised him in his heart, and perhaps looked upon it as an affront to him to send such a man to fight with him: *for he was but a youth*; his age was one reason why he despised him, being, as before observed, about 20 years of age, and not come to his full strength, a stripling, as he is called, ver 56. another reason follows, *and ruddy, and of a fair countenance*; looked effeminate, had not the appearance of a soldier, of a weather-beaten veteran, exposed to heat and cold, and inured to hardships.

Ver. 43. *And the Philistine said unto David, am I a dog*, &c.] Truly David did not think him much better, because of his impudence, impurity, and barking blasphemy against God, and the armies of Israel; the Targum is, "am I a despised dog?" verily he was by David: *that thou comest to me with staves?* or with a staff, the plural for the singular, to beat him with it as a dog is beaten, and as David used to beat his dog with, while keeping his father's sheep, when the dog he had with him did not do his business as he should; he says nothing of his sling and stones, they being out of sight: *and the Philistine cursed David by his gods*; by Dagon and others; he made an imprecation by them, and wished the greatest evils might befall him from them; he devoted him to them, and doubted not to make a sacrifice of him.

Ver. 44. *And the Philistine said to David, come to me*, &c.] He seems to have stood still, disdaining to take another step towards such a pitiful combatant, and therefore bids him come up to him, and he would soon dispatch him; unless he said this, because David was light and nimble, and he heavy and unwieldy because of his bigness, and the burden of armour on him, and therefore could not make such haste as he wished to destroy his adversary, of which he made no doubt: *and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field*; the wild beasts he means; though Jarchi thinks he spoke improperly, since it is not the way of the beasts of the field, as sheep, oxen, &c. to devour a man, or even to eat any flesh; and therefore he observes, when David comes, he uses another word, which signifies the wild beasts of the earth, and so we render it, ver. 46. but Kimchi shews that even these are comprehended in the word here used, see Isa. xviii. 6.

Ver. 45. *Then said David to the Philistine*, &c.] In answer to the contempt he held him in, and to the threatening words he gave him: *thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield*: the word for *shield* is not the same with that so rendered, ver. 41. which his armour-bearer carried before him, but with that translated a *target*, which was between his shoulders, ver. 6. however, they were all weapons of war, either defensive or offensive: *but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied*: the Lord of all hosts, in heaven and in earth in general, and in particular the God of the armies of Israel; which he was at the head of, led on, protected and defended, having a kind and merciful regard unto them, and which this Philistine had defied, reproached, and blasphemed; and now David was come, by a commission from this great Jehovah, to vindicate his honour, and to avenge his people on him: he had asked for a man, and now the Lord of hosts, as the Jews[1] observe, comes forth as a man of war, for the battle was his, as in a following verse; and David was his messenger, and came in his name, and was the man into whose hands he should be given.

Ver. 46. *This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hands*, &c.] Of which he was assured by divine inspiration, by the impulse of the spirit of God upon him; or otherwise he could not have expressed himself with such certainty, and have given the particulars of what he should do, as in the following clauses: *and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee*: and yet he had no weapon in his hand to do it with, ver. 50. but it was revealed to him that he should do it, and he believed it; though the Philistine no doubt looked upon all this as romantic: *and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air, and to the wild beasts of the earth*; not only this man's carcass, which should fall and become a prey to fowls and wild beasts, but the carcasses of the Philistine army, which fleeing upon the fall of their champion, and pursued by the Israelites as they were, would be cut off, and become the food of wild creatures, see ver. 52. though some think the plural is put for the singular, and that it only means his carcass, who was a Philistine; but the host of the Philistines, carries it to the other sense: and this would be done, *that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel*: not only the land of Canaan or Palestine, but the whole earth, and all the inhabitants of it, who should hear of the fall of this giant by such means, and of the rout of the Philistine army upon it; the report of which no doubt was spread far and near.

Ver. 47. *And all this assembly shall know*, &c.] The congregation of Israel, and church of the living God, great part of which were now gathered together, and were spectators of this wonderful event: *that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear*: that is, by outward means and instruments, by arms and armed men; he does not save by them only, or by them always; he can save as well without them as with them: *for the battle is the Lord's*: it is under his direction; the issue and event of it depend on his will, and are owing to him; or, as the Targum, "from the Lord is the "victory of wars," it is he that gives it to whom he pleases: *and he will give you into our hands*: not only this Philistine into the hands of David, but the army of them into the hands of the Israelites; David knew, and was assured of this by the Lord, and it was on this he relied, and was what animated him to engage with this champion in the manner he did.

[1] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 42. 2.

Ver. 48. *And it came to pass, when the Philistine arose,* &c.] Or prepared for the encounter, and was in all probability in great wrath and fury at hearing what David said, and which hastened him to it: *and came and drew nigh to meet David;* as fast as his unwieldy body, and heavy load of armour on him, would admit of: *that David hasted and ran toward the army;* the army of the Philistines, from whence this champion came: *to meet the Philistine;* to get up to him before he could draw his sword, or put himself in a posture to make use of any weapon to strike at David with.

Ver. 49. *And David put his hand in his bag,* &c.] The shepherd's scrip, in which he had put the five stones he took out of the brook: *and took thence a stone;* and put it into his sling he had in his hand: *and slang it, and smote the Philistine in his forehead;* it is made a difficulty of, how he should smite him on his forehead, when he had a helmet of brass upon his head, ver. 5. in answer to this Kimchi observes, that some say, that when David said he would give his flesh to the fowls of the air, at the mention of that he looked upwards, and what was upon his forehead fell backwards, and then David slung and smote him; or he might put back his helmet to talk with David, and hear and be heard the better; and having nothing to fear from an unarmed man, might neglect to put it forward again; or there might be some open space left in the helmet for him to look through, in at which the stone might pass; so the Targum renders it, he smote him in the house of his eyes, so the stone passed through the eye-hole into his brain: but after all, supposing his forehead ever so well covered, as the stone slung by David was under a divine direction, so as to hit a person in motion, it came with a divine power, which nothing could resist; and supposing this, of which there need no doubt, it could as easily pass through the helmet of brass, as pierce into his forehead and sink there; nor can this be thought the least incredible, if what Diodorus Siculus[m] relates of the Baleares be true, that they were so dexterous at slinging, that they not only would sling stones bigger than others could, and were so directed, that they seldom missed their mark, being inured to it from their youth, but would even in battle break in pieces shields, helmets, and all kinds of armour, with which bodies were covered: *that the stone sunk into his forehead;* and so into his brain, as a stone is immersed and sinks in water, when thrown into it; with such force did it go, and with so much ease did it make its way, through the direction and power of God: *and he fell upon his face to the earth;* Jarchi observes, that it was most natural for him to have fallen backwards, being struck upon his forehead; but so it was, that David might have no trouble to cut off his head, for by this means he fell nearer to him.

Ver. 50. *So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone,* &c.] And with them only, without any other warlike weapon: *and smote the Philistine, and slew him;* smote him with the stone, which brought him to the ground, and then slew him with his own sword, as afterwards related: *but there was no sword in the hand of David;* when he engaged with the Philistine, and smote him, for he had put off all his armour, ver. 39.

Ver. 51. *Therefore David ran and stood upon the Philistine,* &c.] Upon his carcass, as it lay prostrate on the ground, and trampled on him, in just contempt of him who had defied, reproached, and despised the armies of Israel: *and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof;* which no doubt was a very large one, and required a good deal of strength to unsheath it, and use it; and therefore either David, though so very young, was naturally very strong, or he had at this time a more than ordinary measure of strength given him: *and slew him;* for it seems that by the blow of the stone he was only stunned, and fell to the ground, but still had life in him, which David soon put an end to by his own sword: *and cut off his head therewith;* by which it would appear to both armies looking on that his business was done, and he was thoroughly dispatched: *and when the Philistines saw their champion was dead;* of which the cutting off his head was a demonstrative proof, and which they could discern at a distance: *they fled;* being struck with a panic at this unexpected event, and no doubt by the Lord; for otherwise, had they given themselves the least time to reflect on their own numbers and strength, they had no just occasion to flee; their safety not depending on a single man, though ever so strong: upon this occasion David penned the ninth psalm.

Ver. 52. *And the men of Israel and of Judah arose,* &c.] From their encampment and entrenchment, or they prepared for a pursuit: *and shouted, and pursued the Philistines;* shouted when they first set out, and continued shouting as they pursued, to animate their own troops, and terrify the enemy: *until thou come to the valley, and to the gates of Ekron;* which was one of the five principalities of the Philistines; so that they pursued them to their own cities, and to the very gates of them: *and the wounded of the Philistines fell down by the way to Shaaraim;* a city in the tribe of Judah, and seems to be the same with Sharaim, Josh. xv. 36. see the note there. Josephus says[n], there were killed of the Philistines 30,000, and twice as many wounded: *even unto Gath, and unto Ekron;* Josephus[o] has it, to the borders of Gath, and to the gates of Ascalon, which were two other principalities of the Philistines; according to Bunting[p], the whole chase was this, to the valley and river Sorek 4 miles; from thence to Ekron 8 miles; to Ascalon 20 miles, and to Gath 24 miles; that is, from the place where Goliath was killed.

Ver. 53. *And the children of Israel returned from chasing after the Philistines,* &c.] The remainder that escaped having got into their fortified cities: *and they spoiled their tents;* which they left in their camp, all their armour, goods, money, and provisions, they found there, they seized upon as their prey and booty; these they did not stay to meddle with as soon as the Philistines fled, but first pursued them, and slew as many of them as they could, and then returned to the spoil; which was wisely done.

[m] Bibliothec. l. 5. p. 298.
[n] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 5.
[o] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 5.
[p] Travels of the Patriarchs, &c. p. 128.

Ver. 54. *And David took the head of the Philistine, and brought it to Jerusalem*, &c.] After he had been introduced with it to Saul, and when he had passed through various cities in Israel, carrying the head in triumph; where he was congratulated by the women, who came out singing and dancing, and speaking highly in his commendation and praise: why he carried it to Jerusalem is not easy to say, this not being a royal city, nor was it wholly in the hands of the Israelites; part of it indeed was in the possession of Judah and Benjamin, but the strong hold of Zion was possessed by the Jebusites; and it is generally thought that it was to the terror of them that the head of Goliath was carried there. R. Joseph Kimchi thinks, that Nob, where the tabernacle was at this time, was surnamed Jerusalem, but for what reason cannot be said: *but he put his armour in his tent*: not where the army was encamped before the engagement; for David had not his tent there, and beside the camp broke up upon this victory obtained; but rather in his tent or apartment at Beth-lehem, when he returned thither, and where he laid up the armour he took from Goliath; though Abarbinel thinks, and so other Jews[q], that by his tent is meant the tabernacle of the Lord, called David's, because of his attachment to it; and certain it is that the sword of Goliath was either now, or at least hereafter, laid up there, see ch. xxi. 9. where all that went to sacrifice might see it, and call to mind this wonderful instance of the power and goodness of God, and praise him for it.

Ver. 55. *And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine*, &c.] Set out to meet him, and engage with him, as he might from the side of the mountain, where he was encamped: *he said unto Abner, the captain of the host*; his own cousin, whom he had raised to this high post in the army, ch. xiv. 50. *Abner, whose son is this youth?* it is thought strange by many that Saul should not know who he was, when he had been often at his court, and served him as a musician, and had been very useful to him, and he loved him, and made him his armour-bearer, and even had just now conversed with him about encountering with the Philistine, and had clothed him with his own armour: to get rid of the former part of the objection, some have supposed that this event happened before David was his musician and armour-bearer, and is by anticipation spoken of in ch. xvi. but that the connexion with this and the following chapter will not admit of; and besides, before this event, David is said to return home from Saul, ver. 15. so that it is certain he had been at Saul's court, and in his presence before: but to remove this seeming difficulty it may be observed, that Saul, having laboured under a disorder of body and mind, might easily forget David, and his serving him in the above capacity; and to which the multiplicity of business, and of persons in a court, might greatly contribute; and what with the distance of time, and the different habits in which David appeared, sometimes as a musician, and sometimes as a shepherd, and at other times as a soldier, and always as a servant, it is no wonder the king should not know him again; though after all it is not about his person that he inquires, but whose son he was, what was his father's name, and from what family he sprung; for though Saul was made acquainted with this in the time of his disorder, and therefore sent to his father Jesse for him, and afterwards desired leave for his continuance; yet this might slip out of his memory in a course of time, he having had no personal knowledge of Jesse, nor any correspondence with him, but just at that time; and it behoved him to know the pedigree of David, since, if he was victorious, he was not only to be enriched by him, but to have his daughter for wife, and his family ennobled: *and Abner said, as thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell*: he swore by the life of Saul, as Joseph by the life of Pharaoh, that he knew nothing of him; which need not at all seem strange, that a general of an army, always employed in military affairs, and often abroad, should know nothing of a domestic servant of Saul's, under the character of a musician, and not always at court neither; and still less that he should be ignorant of his family, and know nothing of his father, who lived in obscurity in Beth-lehem, and was an old man in those days.

Ver. 56. *And the king said, inquire thou whose son the stripling is.*] Still the question is the same, being very desirous of knowing of what family he was, for the reason before given.

Ver. 57. *And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine*, &c.] Carrying his head in triumph, and no doubt accompanied with the acclamations of the people: *Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand*; to give an answer to the king's question concerning him, who could best do it himself; and that Saul might have the opportunity of rewarding him, according to his merit, for so great a piece of service he had done for Israel, of which the head in his hand was a sufficient proof.

Ver. 58. *And Saul said unto him, whose son* art *thou, thou young man?* &c.] Still the question was such as did not necessarily imply ignorance of his person, but of his family: *and David answered*, I am *the son of thy servant Jesse the Beth-lehemite*; which doubtless refreshed the memory of Saul, and he quickly called to mind who he was. This interview was very probably at Gibeah of Saul, which was the place of his birth and residence, and where he kept his court, and to which he returned after the above victory was obtained.

CHAP. XVIII.

THIS chapter gives an account of the respect shewn to David by Saul and Jonathan, by the servants of Saul, and all the people, and of what was said in his praise in the songs of the women, ver. 1—7. which

[q] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. E.

latter gave Saul a great offence, and upon which he envied him, and eyed him, and indeed sought his life, and removed him from him; and yet still he continued the darling of the people, behaving wisely among them, which greatly embarrassed Saul, that he knew not what to do, ver. 8—16. he proposed his eldest daughter to him in marriage, which he had a claim to by killing the Philistine, and then he baulked him by giving her to another, ver. 17—19. and then he offered his youngest daughter to him, on condition that he would bring him 100 foreskins of the Philistines, in the execution of which he thought his life would be exposed to danger, which yet he performed, ver. 20—27. and having the affection of his wife, and the good esteem of the servants of Saul, Saul was more afraid of him, and became his enemy, ver. 28—30.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul,* &c.] In answer to his questions about his descent and family, and doubtless more things were talked of than are recorded: *that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David:* he won his heart, made a conquest of his affections, these went out towards him, and cleaved unto him; such were the comeliness of his person, his graceful mien and deportment, his freedom and fluency of expression, his courage and undauntedness, joined with prudence, modesty, and integrity, that they strongly attached him to him: *and Jonathan loved him as his own soul;* not only according to the excellency of David's soul, and the greatness of it, as that deserved respect and love, as Abarbinel suggests, but he loved him as he loved himself. There was a similarity in their persons, in their age, in the dispositions of their minds, in their wisdom, courage, modesty, faithfulness, and openness of soul, that attracted them to each other, that they became as another self; as one soul, as Aristotle speaks[z] of true friends: instances of very cordial friendship are given by Plutarch[a], as in Theseus and Pirithous, Achilles and Patroclus, Orestes and Pylades, Pythias and Damon, Epaminondas and Pelopidas; but none equal to this.

Ver. 2. *And Saul took him that day,* &c.] Not only into his favour, and into his service, but into his court; even on that very day he slew the Philistine, or however as soon as it could be done: *and would let him go no more home to his father's house;* as he used to do before; when he only served as a musician to him, then he was only at court when Saul was in a melancholy disposition, and wanted him, and so was going and returning, and in the intervals kept his father's sheep, ch. xvii. 15. but now he would not suffer him to attend such business any longer, since he was not only to become a courtier, and be made a prince or noble, but to marry his daughter, according to the declaration he had made, with respect to any man that should kill Goliath.

Ver. 3. *Then Jonathan and David made a covenant,* &c.] A covenant of friendship; entered into a solemn agreement to keep up and maintain a cordial respect to each other, and to support each other's interest both in life and after death, whoever was the survivor; and in consequence of this David had a friend at court, when Saul fell out with him, and who pleaded his cause, and discovered his father's plots, and was the means of preserving David's life: *because he loved him as his own soul;* so that this covenant was not founded in mere words, but in sincere and cordial affection, and was lasting and inviolable.

Ver. 4. *And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him,* &c.] As a token of his hearty love and true friendship, and that David might appear at court not in the habit of a shepherd, but in that of a prince: *and gave it to David, and his garments;* his other garments besides his robe, and so clothed him from top to toe, and which fitted him; for as there was a similarity in their souls, and the disposition of them, so in the make and bulk of their bodies, and in the stature of them: *even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle;* these he gave him to accoutre himself with, that he might appear as a soldier, as well as like a prince, and as another Jonathan, or rather as the same; that they might seem as one, as alike in body, so in garb and habit.

Ver. 5. *And David went out whithersoever Saul sent him,* &c.] About any business whatsoever, especially about martial affairs, for which he was abundantly qualified: *and behaved himself wisely;* in the management of them, using great prudence and discretion, and so failed not of success, and of recommending himself; the Targum renders it *prospering;* he was prosperous and successful in whatsoever he engaged, for the Lord was with him, and blessed him: *and Saul set him over the men of war;* that is, of some of them, gave him the command of a troop; for Abner was captain or general of the army, and continued so: *and he was accepted in the sight of all the people:* of all the people in the land in general, of all that knew or heard of him; being looked upon as a wise, valiant, and successful commander, and which gained him the esteem and affection of the people: *and also in the sight of Saul's servants;* which was very much, and a rare thing, for servants are too apt to envy such as are rising in their credit and reputation; though this must not be understood of all, without exception; but of the generality of them; nor is the word *all* used of them, as is of the people; for some of them took the part of Saul afterwards against David, and were secretly his enemies, see ver. 22—26.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, as they came,* &c.] The armies of Israel, with their commanders at the head of them: *when David was returned from the slaughter of the Philistine;* either from the slaughter of Goliath, with his head in his hand, going to Jerusalem, and Saul accompanying him; or rather from the slaughter of the Philistines at some other time, the singular being put for the plural; since, according to the order of the history, this seems to be done after David was brought to court, and had been made a captain, and had been sent out on military expeditions, and had been successful therein, and from one of which he now returned: *that the women came out of all the cities of Israel;* through which they passed: *singing and dancing;* as were usual after great victories obtained, and deliverances wrought, the female sex being generally

[z] Ethic. l. 9. c. 4, 9. So Porphyr. de Vita Pythagor.

[a] Apud Patrick in loc.

greatly affected with such things; since when things go otherwise they suffer much, and their fears rise high in time of battle; and when victory goes on their side, it gives them great joy, and which they used to express in this way: *to meet King Saul;* the commander-in-chief, with his other officers, and David among the rest: *with tabrets, with joy, and with instruments of music;* with pipes or flutes, which they both blew with their mouths, and played on with their hands, and other musical instruments exciting joy; the last word is, by the Targum, rendered, "with "cymbals;" and so the Septuagint version; it signifies a musical instrument of three cords, according to Kimchi; and others, as Ben Gersom, understand it of principal songs, in which things wonderful, excellent, and honourable, were spoken of: see Exod. xv. 20. Judg. xi. 34. Such sort of women were among the Romans called Cymbalistriæ and Tympanistriæ[1], who shook the cymbals, and beat upon tabrets and drums at times of rejoicing.

Ver. 7. *And the women answered* one another *as they played,* &c.] They sung vocally to their instruments, and that by turns, one rehearsing one line or verse in the song, and then the other another: *and said, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands;* which, if to be referred to the battle in the preceding chapter, as it commonly is, must be understood thus, that though Saul, in pursuit of the Philistines, slew many thousands of them, and David but one, even Goliath; yet the slaying of him was the occasion of slaying ten thousands, and therefore it is ascribed to him: but it seems rather that in some after-battles David had been more prosperous and victorious than Saul, and therefore superior commendations are given him by the author of the song the women sung; which, however just it might be to give them, was not wise, since it served to irritate their king, as follows.

Ver. 8. *And Saul was very wroth, and the saying displeased him,* &c.] Partly because they called him plain Saul, and not King Saul; did not give him his royal title, which might serve to strengthen his suspicion, after suggested; and chiefly because they attributed a greater number of slain to David than to him, as follows: *and he said, they have ascribed unto David ten thousands, and to me they ascribed* but *thousands;* and so had given more honour to an inferior officer than to the commander-in-chief, more to a subject than to a sovereign: *and what can he have more but the kingdom?* there is nothing left out of their song, and nothing remains to be given him but that; some think that Saul knew, by the prudent behaviour of David, and the favour he was in with God and men, and by these commendations of the women, that the kingdom would be his; and that the words of Samuel were true, and would be confirmed, that the kingdom would be rent from him, and given to his neighbour better than he. This clause, with the three following verses, are left out of the Greek version, according to the Vatican copy.

Ver. 9. *And Saul eyed David from that day and forward.*] Instead of looking pleasantly, and with a smile, upon him, as a courtier and favourite, he was justly entitled to by his gallant behaviour, he looked at him with a sour ill-natured look; he looked at him with an evil, spiteful, malicious, and envious eye; or he diligently watched and observed all his motions and actions, whether they tended to disloyalty and treason, to dethrone him, and take the kingdom to himself, which he was suspicious of; he laid wait for him, as the Targum, and laid snares too, as the following history shews.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass on the morrow,* &c.] After the women had met him with their music and dancing, and when returned home: *that the evil spirit from God came upon Saul;* thinking on the above things that had passed, he became melancholy: *and he prophesied in the midst of the house;* either really, delivering out divine songs, as the prophets did; according to Abarbinel, he foretold that David would be king, and the kingdom would be taken from him, and given to him; or he feigned himself a prophet, mimicking their motions and gestures; or, as the Targum, acted like a mad man, or a fool, uttering foolish words, and using ridiculous gestures, which seems most agreeable to the evil spirit in him: *and David played with his hand as at other times;* upon his harp, to remove the evil spirit, or melancholy disposition from Saul; for though he was now advanced at court, and an officer in the army, and high in the affections and applause of the people, yet he did not think it below him to act as a musician, to do service to his prince; of such an humble, kind, and ingenuous disposition was he: *and there was a javelin in Saul's hand;* a kind of spear, or half-pike, which he had taken into his hand on purpose to kill David whilst playing; for persons in such circumstances as his, as they are very mischievous, so very subtle at contriving.

Ver. 11. *And Saul cast the javelin,* &c.] Out of his hand at David: *for he said;* in his heart, determining in his mind: *I will smite David even to the wall* with it; he determined to cast it with such force and violence, that it should pierce through David, and enter into the very wall, by the side of which David was: *and David avoided out of his presence twice;* to escape the javelin cast at him; either he went out at the first time of its being thrown, and then came in again, when he threw it a second time at him, upon which he also withdrew; or this was one of the times, and the other some time after, of which see ch. xix. 9. Abarbinel thinks, that David, whilst he was playing, his eyes were so fixed upon his own hands, that he was not aware of the javelin, and turned himself from Saul without intention both times, and so escaped without knowledge of it; such was the good providence of God towards him, and which, when Saul perceived, it wrought upon him, as follows.

Ver. 12. *And Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with him,* &c.] Protecting and preserving him, prospering and succeeding him, giving him victory over his enemies, and favour among the people; the Targum is, "the Word of the Lord was for "his help." Procopius Gazæus interprets it of the Holy Ghost, whose grace was vouchsafed unto him: he might be afraid in his melancholy fits, that as he had attempted to take away the life of David, that

[1] Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 166, 174.

David would contrive and seek an opportunity, and take away his life, and seize the kingdom which God had given him, and his being with him strengthened these fears: *and* was *departed from Saul;* so that he was destitute of courage, and greatness of mind, and of wisdom and prudence, and became mean and abject, and exposed himself to the contempt of his subjects.

Ver. 13. *Therefore Saul removed him from him,* &c.] From court, partly that he might be out of his sight, having such an hatred of his person that he could not bear to see him, and partly that he might be safer from any designs of his upon his life, which he might fear, because of his treatment of him: *and made him his captain over a thousand;* not out of respect to him, and in honour of him, but partly to cover his malice, and please the people, and partly in hope that he might be slain by the enemy at the head of his troop: *and he went out and came in before the people;* or at the head of them, as the Targum; he led them out to war, and returned with them in safety, with victory and in triumph, with great honour, and highly respected by them; quite contrary to the intention and hope of Saul.

Ver. 14. *And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways,* &c.] Both in the court and in the camp, in whatsoever service he was employed; or *prospered*[a], as the word also signifies; for, generally speaking, those that behave wisely succeed well; in this he was a type of Christ, Isa. lii. 13. the reason of it follows, *and the Lord* was *with him;* from whom he had his wisdom and success; the Targum is, " the Word of the Lord " was for his help."

Ver. 15. *Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely,* &c.] So that he could get no advantage against him, and he succeeded and was prosperous in all his enterprises, and was more and more in favour with the people: *he was afraid of him;* lest the time was drawing near that the kingdom should be rent from him, and given to David.

Ver. 16. *And all Israel and Judah loved David,* &c.] The verb is singular, and denotes that every one of them loved him in all the tribes of Israel, as well as in Judah his own tribe; in such general esteem was he, and so much had he got the hearts and affections of the people: *because he went out and came in before them;* the people, as in ver. 13. so the Septuagint version, in which, according to the Vatican copy, the three following verses are wanting.

Ver. 17. *And Saul said to David,* &c.] Not in friendship and good will to him, but designing to lay a snare for him: *behold, my eldest daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife;* most interpreters understand it, that he was obliged to this by promise, on account of David's slaying Goliath, ch. xvii. 25. but Abarbinel is of another mind, and he rightly observes, that the words referred to are not the words of Saul, but of the men of Israel, who might suppose what the king would do; or if they heard any thing like it spoken by Saul, it was only in a hyperbolical way, signifying he did not care what he gave, and what he parted with, to the man that killed the Philistine, but was not strictly bound to this particular thereby; nor did David ever claim such promise, nor did Saul think himself bound to do it, but proposes it as an instance of his great kindness and favour, as he pretended, and therefore expected great returns for it, as follows: *only be thou valiant for me, and fight the Lord's battles;* he knew he was a valiant man, and ready enough to fight; but he expected that in consideration of such a favour, and such high honour as this, that he would exert himself in an extraordinary manner, and engage in hazardous attempts, and shew himself worthy to be the son of a king, in the defence of him and of his country, and for the glory of the God of Israel; all this he suggests, when his view was, that he should expose his life to such danger, that it might be hoped it would be taken away: *for Saul said;* not openly and verbally, but in his heart; he thought within himself, *let not mine hand be upon him;* he had attempted to lay hands on him, or to kill him with his own hands, but now he thought better, and consulted his credit among the people: *but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him;* he hoped by these means that he would fall by their hands at the head of his troop, whilst he was displaying his valour, and hazarding his life for the good of his king and country; what Saul contrived proved his own case, he died in battle with the Philistines, ch. xxxi. 4.

Ver. 18. *And David said unto Saul,* &c.] Surprised at the offer Saul made him, yet not refusing it, but expressing himself with great modesty and humility: *who* am *I?* as to his person, parentage, and employment, mean and despicable, at least in his own eyes, a type of the lowly Jesus, Matt. xi. 29. *and what is my life?* keeping sheep, for from thence was he taken and advanced; though some think his meaning is, that to hazard his life, as Saul proposed, was not equivalent to such an honour he meant to confer upon him, and that he was ready to do it at all times: or *my father's family in Israel;* though in an honourable tribe, and was an honourable family, yet it seems not to be very great, at least was not in David's esteem worthy of such high advancement, as that one of it should be so nearly related to the king; Ben Gersom thinks David has reference to the original of his family, Ruth the Moabitess: *that I should be son-in-law to the king?* as he would be by marrying his daughter.

Ver. 19. *But it came to pass, at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David,* &c.] Either when the giving of her to him was talked of, or when the time fixed for her marriage was come: *that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite to wife;* Saul either having in reality never designed she should be given to David, only proposed it to please the people, or to affront David, and expose him to shame and confusion by the step he meant to take, or however he soon changed his mind; though Abarbinel's notion is, that the young lady had disposed of herself to this person without her father's knowledge, which seems not likely; the person she was given to was the son of Barzillai the Meholathite, 2 Sam. xxi. 8. and some have observed, as the curse of God on this match, that all her sons were delivered to the Gibeonites, and hanged up, as related in the same place; for though

[a] משכיל prospere admodum res gerebat, Vatablus; secundabatur, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so the Targum and Jarchi.

these sons are said to be brought up by Michal, they were bore by Merab to him.

Ver. 20. *And Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David, &c.*] His youngest daughter fell in love with him, because of the comeliness of his person, his gallant behaviour, his wise conduct, and the general esteem and reputation he was had in, as may be supposed: *and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him*: not that his daughter loved David, or that he should be his son-in-law, but that he should have an opportunity, as he hoped, of destroying David, which he had lost by giving his elder daughter to another; as also of retrieving his credit with the people, which was greatly sunk by using David in the manner he did, who was become the darling of the people.

Ver. 21. *And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, &c.*] The cause and occasion of his fall and ruin, by means of what he should propose to him as the condition of marriage; but instead of proving a snare to him, as he hoped, she was the means of his deliverance, when Saul sent messengers to slay him, ch. xix. *and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him*: provoked by what he should put him upon doing to them. The scheme he had in his head after appears, and what he now said was not openly said before his servants and courtiers, whom he did not trust with his secrets, but this he said within himself, conceived and contrived it in his own mind: *wherefore Saul said to David*: who was as yet at court, or whom he sent for on this occasion: *thou shalt this day be my son-in-law* in the one *of the twain*: by marrying one of his two daughters; signifying, that he would not defer the marriage, or put it off to a longer time, as he had done before, but that he should be married immediately to one or other of his daughters; and seeing he could not have the eldest, she being disposed of, he should have the youngest, and so be equally his son-in-law. If we read the words without the supplement, *shalt be my son-in-law in the two*, or in both, the sense is, that he should have them both; and so the Jews say[w], that he married them both, first Merab, and after her death Michal; or that he should be his son-in-law on two accounts, one by betrothing Merab, though he was not married to her, and the other by being married to Michal, so that he would be doubly his son-in-law; but the sense, according to the supplement, is best.

Ver. 22. *And Saul commanded his servants, saying, commune with David secretly, &c.*] And persuade him to marry Michal, and assure him of Saul's real regard to him, and good intention towards him: for it seems that David being ill used in the affair of his eldest daughter, did not listen to the proposals of Saul as to the youngest, and therefore Saul took this method to bring him into them: *and say, behold, the king hath a delight in thee*; bore a good will towards him, had an high opinion of him, and it would be a pleasure to him that he should be his son-in-law: *and all his servants love thee*: which might be true in general, excepting some few; which was no small mortification to Saul, though he here pleads it, and puts his servants on making use of it to gain his present purpose: *now therefore be the king's son-in-law*; accept of the proposal he has made, and marry his youngest daughter.

Ver. 23. *And Saul's servants spake these words in the ears of David, &c.*] Those before related, which Saul commanded them to speak, which they delivered exactly according to their orders, with an audible voice, clearly, plainly, and distinctly, so that David might hear and understand them: *and David said, seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son-in-law*; a small thing, a trifling matter, an easy thing to come into, and perform every thing requisite to it: *seeing that I am a poor man*; and not able to give a dowry suitable to the daughter of a king; it being usual in those times for a man to give a dowry to, and not receive a portion with a wife; and which also was the custom of the Germans, as Tacitus[x] relates; and this was to be according to the rank and quality of the person married, and which in this case David was not equal to: *and lightly esteemed?* not by the people of Israel and Judah, who loved him, as he was loved even by the servants of Saul, at least in profession; but by Saul himself, who had slighted him in giving his elder daughter to another man, when he had promised her to him, which was discouraging to David, and resented by him.

Ver. 24. *And the servants of Saul told him, saying, on this manner spake David.*] Such and such words were spoken by him, to this purpose; the sum and substance of them were expressive of his unworthiness to be a king's son-in-law, and of his inability to bring a dowry suitable to her quality.

Ver. 25. *And Saul said, thus shall ye say to David, &c.*] In answer to his objections, and in order to remove them, and especially what concerned the dowry: *the king desireth not any dowry, but 100 foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies*; that is, he required or desired no other dowry of David, but that he would slay 100 Philistines, and bring their foreskins to him; by which he would be able to know that they were Philistines he slew, not Israelites who were circumcised; though it can't well be thought that Saul should have any suspicion of that, or take such a method to prevent it; but as those were almost, if not altogether, the only uncircumcised persons that were their neighbours, since the Arabians, Edomites, Midianites, *&c.* received circumcision from their ancestors, it would be a clear case to him that these were the men he slew; and whom he the rather pitched upon, because they were his enemies, and the enemies of Israel, and abhorred of the Lord; which carried in it a shew of zeal for the glory of God, and the good of his people, and because he hoped David would fall by them in the enterprise, or however render himself very odious to them, and they would bear him ill will, and seek his ruin. Strabo[y] reports of the people in Carmania, that no man among them marries a wife before he cuts off the head of an enemy, and brings it to the king; and the king lays up the skulls in a treasury, and he is the most famous that has the most heads brought unto him. Saul chose not heads, but foreskins, for the reasons before given: *but Saul thought*

[w] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2.
[x] De Moribus German. c. 18.

[y] Geograph. l. 15. p. 500. Vid. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. l. 1. c. 24.

to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines: he hoped in the enterprise the Philistines would be too powerful for him, and kill him.

Ver. 26. *And when his servants told David these words*, &c.] That the king desired no other dowry than 100 foreskins of the Philistines: *it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law*; on such conditions; partly because of the honour of it, and partly because of his love to Michal; and chiefly because it would give him an opportunity of destroying the enemies of God, and of his people, as well as such a match would lead the way, and be a step in Providence to ascend the throne designed for him in due time: *and the days were not expired*; neither for the bringing in of the foreskins, nor for the consummation of the marriage.

Ver. 27. *Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines 200 men*, &c.] This he did himself, for the verb is singular, and which were 100 more than required; this he did to shew his regard to the orders of Saul, and his obedience to him, and to testify the sincerity of his affections to his daughter, for whose sake he risked his life in this expedition, as well as to express his zeal for God, and his country, against their avowed enemies; the Greek version has only one hundred men, see 2 Sam. iii. 14. *and David brought their foreskins*; along with him to Saul's court, having taken them off when slain. Josephus says [z] he cut off their heads, and brought them to him, and he makes the number to be 600; neither are according to the text, but to make his history more agreeable to the Gentiles, see ver. 21. an Arabic writer [a] makes mention of a people, that cut off the genital parts of men, and gave them to their wives for their dowry: *and they gave them in full tale to the king*; the messengers David sent in with them, even the full tale of 200, which were as many more as were demanded: *that he might be the king's son-in-law*; being now as desirous of it as the king was: *and Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife*; which he could not in honour refuse to do, seeing he had performed the condition he had required. David's marriage of the younger sister, when upon various considerations it might have been expected that he should have married the elder, may be an emblem of Christ's espousing the Gentile church, when the Jewish church, her elder sister, is neglected by him, she having rejected him.

Ver. 28. *And Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David*, &c.] This he perceived by the favour he gave him among men, by overruling all the steps Saul took to do him hurt, for his good, and in giving him success in all that he engaged in; the Targum is, "that "the Word of the Lord was for the help of David:" *and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him*; and therefore could entertain no hope of making use of her as an instrument of his ruin, but, on the contrary, would, out of her great affection to her husband, betray the designs of her father against him, and do all she could to preserve him.

Ver. 29. *And Saul was yet the more afraid of David*, &c.] Because the Lord was with him, and his wife loved him; so that he feared he should never be able to accomplish his designs, and that this marriage, which he intended as the means of his ruin, would pave the way for his ascending the throne: *and Saul became David's enemy continually*; was every day giving fresh evidence of his enmity against him; before it was by fits, and at certain times, there were some intervals; but now enmity was rooted and habituated, and was constant and continually shewing itself.

Ver. 30. *Then the princes of the Philistines went forth*, &c.] Out of their cities in troops, to revenge and spoil the land of Israel, being enraged at their defeat when Goliath their champion was slain, and at the injury and dishonour done them by David very lately in slaying 200 of them, and taking off their foreskins; and, as the Jews say [b], having heard of the marriage of David, and understanding the Israelites had a law, that a new-married man might not go to the war the first year, took this opportunity of invading and spoiling them; whereas David understood that law better than they, and knew it referred not to a voluntary war, but to that which was the command of God against the seven nations; and even in that case, as some think, it did not oblige such persons to remain at home, but left it to their choice to do as they pleased: *and it came to pass after they went forth*; and were met and opposed by the Israelites, by the troops of Saul, under different commanders: that *David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul*; shewed himself to be more expert in the art of war, and formed designs with great wisdom and prudence, and which he as wisely executed, as well as with great courage and valour, to the annoyance and defeat of the enemy, and to the advantage, defence, and safety of the people of Israel; or he was more *prosperous* than they, as the Targum, and so others interpret it; he was more successful in his attacks on the Philistines, and in his skirmishes with them: *so that his name was much set by*; he was in high esteem with the people; his name was *precious* [c] to them, as the word signifies; they made mention of it, as Ben Gersom interprets it, with great honour and glory; so that Saul failed much, and was greatly disappointed in the scheme he had formed against him.

CHAP. XIX.

THIS chapter relates the dangers David was exposed unto through Saul's enmity at him, and his deliverance from them, as by the notice Jonathan gave him of his father's designs against him, and by his kind interposi-

[z] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 10. sect. 3.
[a] Alcamus apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 19. col. 120.
[b] Midrash Schemuel apud Abarbinel. in loc.
[c] וייקר & in pretio esset *vel* erat, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

tion on his behalf, ver. 1—7. by David's slipping out of Saul's presence, when he was about to cast a javelin at him, ver. 8, 9, 10. by Michal's letting him down through a window, when Saul sent messengers to kill him, and by deceiving them with an image laid in his bed in the room of him, ver. 11—17. and again by Samuel's protection of him at Naioth, whither David fled, and where Saul sent messengers after him, and at length came himself; and instead of laying hands on David, both he and the messengers were set a prophesying, ver. 18—24.

Ver. 1. *And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, &c.*] Who was heir to his crown; and though he knew he loved David, and was in strict friendship with him, yet he might hope, that as his succession to the kingdom was in danger, as he thought, and that David was his rival in it, his mind would be alienated from him; and that he would listen rather to a father than a friend, and would see where his true interest lay, and abandon David, yea, seek his ruin, which Saul was intent upon: *and to all his servants*; who yet pretended to love David, and as he himself said they did, and some of them might; with these he might rather hope to succeed, as they were attached to him, and might be secretly enemies of David, and therefore to these, as well as to his son, he spake, and gave his orders: *that they should kill David*; as if he was a traitor, and an usurper of his throne, and one that had a design upon that, and upon his life; finding he could do nothing by the schemes, and snares, and stratagems, he used in a private manner, he grew outrageous and furious, and openly declared his views, and laid his injunctions on his son and servants to take away David's life, as a very dangerous person to his crown and government.

Ver. 2. *But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David, &c.*] In his company and conversation; he loved him with a love of complacency, and was constant and steadfast in it, and which was a kind providence to David; for by this means he came to the knowledge of Saul's designs upon him, and could the better guard against him: *and Jonathan told David, saying, Saul my father seeketh to kill thee*; to inform him of which was acting the part of a sincere and faithful friend: *now therefore, I pray thee, take heed of thyself until the morning*: it seems it was now evening when he informed him of it; and as he knew not what emissaries Saul might have out that night in quest of him, he advises him to take care of himself, and not expose himself to any danger, and to keep a strict guard about him; and in the morning he would try to conciliate his father to him, when he might hope, having slept upon it, that he would be in a better temper, and more disposed to hear what might be said to him: *and abide in a secret place, and hide thyself*; he seems to suggest as if it was not safe for him to be in his own house, and in his own bedchamber that night, but that it was advisable to retire to some private place, where it might not be known or suspected that he was there. By what follows he means some field, and a private place in it.

Ver. 3. *And I will go out, &c.*] In the morning, at the same time his father used to take his morning-walk: *and stand beside my father in the field where thou art*; on that side of him next to David, that he might not see him, and yet be so near, that David might hear what passed between them: *and I will commune with my father of thee*; speak in favour of him, and endeavour to dissuade him from attempting to take away his life, which was of so much importance and usefulness in the commonwealth of Israel: *and what I see that I will tell thee*; what David could not well hear he would inform him of, and what he could perceive in the countenance of Saul, as well as conclude from his words, that he would make known to David, that so he might know better what he had to do, and provide for his safety.

Ver. 4. *And Jonathan spake good of David unto Saul his father, &c.*] Observed to him what a good man he was, and what good things he had done, what wisdom and prudence he had shewn in the management of all his affairs, what valour and courage in all his expeditions, what faithfulness and integrity to his king and country in every instance: *and said unto him, let not the king sin against his servant, against David*; by taking away his life; which would have been a great sin indeed, a sin against the law of God, which forbids murder, and which would have been attended with sad aggravations of cruelty and ingratitude: *because he hath not sinned against thee*; had not disobeyed any of his orders, but faithfully served him in every thing, and much less ever thought to take away his life, or seize his crown, as he might imagine: *and because his works have been to thee-ward very good*; by slaying the Philistines, when he and his army were in the utmost terror; by driving away the evil spirit from him, through playing on his harp before him; as well as by commanding his troops, and leading them against the Philistines, and obtaining victory over them.

Ver. 5. *For he did put his life in his hand, &c.*] Exposed himself to the utmost danger, when no one in all the camp of Israel would do the like: *and slew the Philistine*: Goliath of Gath, who defied the armies of Israel; against him he went unarmed, only with his sling and stones, and fought him, and slew him: *and the Lord wrought a great salvation for all Israel*; by his hand, so that they were delivered from their enemies, who fled before them, and they pursued them, and got a complete victory over them: *thou sawest it, and didst rejoice*: he was an eye-witness of David's going forth against the Philistine, and slaying him, and of all the happy effects of it, which then greatly affected him, and he could not forbear expressing great joy on that occasion: *wherefore then wilt thou sin against innocent blood, to slay David without a cause?* and so entail the guilt of it on himself and family.

Ver. 6. *And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan, &c.*] Not only heard him out what he had to say, but was affected with it, and wrought upon by it, and was convicted for the present that he was wrong in seeking the life of David, and therefore would desist from it: the Lord working upon his mind by what Jonathan said, and inclined him to listen to it, and act accordingly: *and Saul sware, as the Lord liveth, he shall not be slain*: this oath he added to what he said to Jonathan, for the confirmation of it; and which was taken

either with a real intention to keep it, though that intention did not long continue; or with a view to deceive Jonathan, that he might acquaint David with it, and so prevent his flight and escape, and that he might the more easily fall into his hands; but the former seems rather to be the case.

Ver. 7. *And Jonathan called David, &c.*] Out of his lurking-place in the field, after Saul was returned home: *and Jonathan shewed him all these things*: which had passed between him and his father, and particularly the oath he had made that he should not be slain: *and Jonathan brought David to Saul*; introduced him at court again, and into the presence-chamber of Saul; who, in appearance, received him courteously, and a reconciliation was seemingly made: *and he was in his presence as in times past*: when he was first received at court, and in great esteem both with Saul and his courtiers.

Ver. 8. *And there was war again, &c.*] Between Israel and the Philistines; it does not appear that either of them sent out their whole force, only some parties or detachments, between which there were skirmishes: *and David went out and fought with the Philistines*: he went out with his thousand men, over which he was made captain, ch. xviii. 13. for he had not the command of the whole army; that belonged to Abner: *and slew them with a great slaughter, and they fled from him*; he killed many of them in his engagements with them, and the rest fled, and he returned victorious; which stirred up the envy and increased the jealousy of Saul, to observe which this is related.

Ver. 9. *And the evil spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, &c.*] His melancholy and frantic disorder returned upon those victories of David, and he grew envious, jealous, spiteful, and malicious: *as he sate in his house with his javelin in his hand*; which either describes the posture he was in when the evil spirit came upon him; or the effects of it, he became dull and melancholy, did not care to go abroad, but kept at home, and was suspicious of every body; and therefore kept a javelin in his hand to defend himself; or it may be rather to dispatch David with it, when an opportunity should offer, which quickly did: *and David played with his hand*; on some instrument of music, particularly the harp, to drive away the evil spirit, the melancholy disorder, from Saul; which shewed his humility, that though he was an officer in the army, had a considerable post in it, yet deigned to act the part of a musician to Saul, and his great kindness and affection for him his sovereign, willing to serve him what he could to promote his health and comfort, and the trust and confidence he put in his promise and oath, or rather in the providence of God for his protection in the way of his duty, though he knew how spiteful and injurious Saul had been to him.

Ver. 10. *And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with his javelin, &c.*] To strike it through him, and fasten him to the wall with it, as he had attempted before, ch. xviii. 11. *but he slipped away out of Saul's presence*: he perceived his design, and being of great agility of body, moved out of his place before him very nimbly: *and he smote the javelin into the wall*; he threw it with such force that it entered into the wall, and stuck there; so great was his resolution to destroy David, and such the rage and passion that he was in, and such his strength of body, and which, in persons in his circumstances, is strangely exerted at times: *and David fled, and escaped that night*; it being towards night, or in the evening, very probably, when this affair happened; upon which he departed from Saul's court, and went to his own house, and so escaped the danger he was exposed to for the present.

Ver. 11. *And Saul sent messengers unto David's house, &c.*] Supposing that he was gone thither; where this was is not said, very likely in Gibeah, where Saul lived: *to watch him*; that he might not get out from thence in the night: *and to slay him in the morning*; the reason why he did not order them to break into the house, and slay him at once, but wait till morning, seems to be, lest should he be alarmed by their breaking in, he might take the advantage of the night, and easily escape, or another person through mistake might be slain for him; and therefore, that they might be sure of him, they were to watch till it was broad day-light, when they could not well miss of him. Josephus[a] says, the orders to watch him until morning were, that he might be taken and brought to a court of judicature, and be condemned and put to death, which was usually held in a morning; but Saul's orders to the messengers were to put him to death themselves, and he had no notion of dealing with him according to a formal process of judgment: *and Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, if thou save not thy life to-night, to-morrow thou shalt be slain*; meaning, if he did not take the benefit and advantage of the night to make his escape, he would not be able to do it in the morning; the house being so beset, as she perceived, by persons whom she might suspect were sent by Saul to destroy him, knowing the ill will her father bore to him, or a messenger at the same time might be dispatched to her, either from her brother Jonathan, or from one of her friends at court, acquainting her with the design against David, and the danger he was in. Upon this occasion David penned the 59th psalm.

Ver. 12. *So Michal let David down through a window, &c.*] In like manner as Rahab let down the spies from her house in Jericho, when the king's messengers were in quest of them; and as the disciples let down the Apostle Paul at Damascus, to preserve him from the designs of the Jews upon him: *and he went, and fled, and escaped*; he departed from his house, and ran with all the haste he could, and escaped the messengers that had beset the house, and were waiting for him.

Ver. 13. *And Michal took an image, &c.*] Or *teraphim*, as the word is; which, if the same with those that Rachel stole from her father, they seem to be of the same sort with the penates or household gods of the Heathens, which were privately kept by Michal; for, had David known of them, he would not have suffered them to have been in his house. Aben Ezra supposes they were images made in the form of men under such a constellation, a sort of talismans, to receive the heavenly influences, and which being con-

[a] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 11. sect. 4.

sulted, foretold things to come; and R. Isaiah is of opinion, that Michal chose and placed these in the bed, that her father might conclude, when he should hear of them, that David had found them; and by this means knew that his intention was to kill him, and therefore fled; but to consult such images was very far from David, and without it he knew Saul's intention. Abarbinel makes mention of several sorts of teraphim, some for idolatry, some to draw down the heavenly influences, some to know the time of the day, a sort of dials; some were made after the form of a man known, and like him in his form and features; and women, he says, used to have the forms or statues of their husbands, that they might have them continually before them, because of the great love they had to them; and of this sort he supposes were the teraphim of Michal, and which is approved of by Abendana; and that this image had the likeness of an human face is very probable, or it could not have so well answered her purpose: *and laid* it *in the bed:* where David used to lie, that it might seem to be he himself; *and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster:* she took the finest of the goats' hair, which she had in the house, women being used to spin in those days, even great personages, and put it into a pillow, and made a bolster of it, and put it under the head or block of the image, which would sink it, being soft, and so look like a sick man, whose face could not easily be discerned; though some think this goats' hair was put about the head of the image, to make it look the more like an human head; goats' hair being very much like human hair[e], and of different colours, and such a colour might be chosen as was most like David's, see Cant. iv. 1. the Targum interprets it, a bottle of goats' skins, that is, a leathern bottle or bag made of goats' skins, such as they used to put wine into; hence the conceit in the Midrash[f], that a bottle of wine was put instead of David: but the pillow or bolster had the form of a leathern bag or bottle; the Septuagint version is very odd, "and put the liver of goats at his "head;" and so Josephus says[g]; and it is observed[h], that the liver of a goat will move a long time after it is taken out, and so make a shew of the palpitation of the heart: but then this was put, not within the bed, but at the head of the image: *and covered* it *with a cloth:* to keep her sick husband warm, as she would have it understood.

Ver. 14. *And when Saul sent messengers to take David,* &c.] Either the same who in the morning inquired for David, or those staying longer than Saul expected, and fearing they were negligent or corrupted, he sent others: to whom *she said, he is sick:* and in bed, and can't be spoke with; this lie she told through her affection to David, and to preserve his life; and this stratagem she devised to gain time, that whilst she was amusing the messengers with this tale of her's, before they could discover the truth of the matter David would be out of their reach; whereas, had she denied his being at home, or signified that he had made his escape, they would have immediately pursued after him, and he would have been in danger of being taken by them.

Ver. 15. *And Saul sent the messengers again to see David,* &c.] Not to visit him, or to see how he was, or inquire of his health, in a kind manner, but to see his person, whether he was sick or no, and whether he was there or no; for Saul might suspect some deceit was used, because the messengers took the report of Michal, and saw not David, nor attempted to see him; but now they have strict orders to see him, and not take Michal's word as before; wherefore the supplement *again* may be left out: *saying, bring him up to me in the bed:* if so bad that he was not able to rise, or not fit to be taken out of his bed, his orders were, that he should be brought to him in it; resolved he was to have him, sick or well: *that I may slay him:* not content that he should die a natural death, or willing to wait for it, he is in haste, being full of wrath and malice, to slay him himself.

Ver. 16. *And when the messengers were come in,* &c.] To David's house, and into the room where he was supposed to lie: *behold,* there was *an image in the bed:* to their great surprise; they expected to see David, but instead of him the teraphim, as in ver. 13. if they had been in the room before, and thought they had seen David in the bed, they might be the more surprised to find that it was only an image they saw: *with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster;* see the note on ver. 13.

Ver. 17. *And Saul said unto Michal,* &c.] After the messengers returned and reported what they had seen, when Saul either came to her at her house, or sent for her to his palace: *why hast thou deceived me so;* for deceiving his messengers was deceiving him, by pretending David was sick and in bed, when she had placed an image there, and had let him down through a window, and he was gone: *and sent away mine enemy, that he is escaped?* as if she was more obliged to gratify the wicked passion of a father, than to provide for the safety of her husband: *and Michal answered Saul, he said unto me, let me go, why should I kill thee?* though she was concerned for the preservation of her husband, yet not for his honour and credit, nor for her own veracity; she attempted not to vindicate her husband from the charge of being an enemy to Saul, as she might; but suggested that he was so desperate a man, that if she had offered to have detained him, he would have murdered her, and threatened, if she did, he would do it, when both were false; that he should say to her let me go, when it was she that advised him to go, and that if she refused he would kill her; which lies were framed by her to excuse herself, at the expense of her husband's reputation.

Ver. 18. *So David fled and escaped,* &c.] Fled from his own house, and escaped falling into the hands of the messengers of Saul, and so of Saul himself: *and came to Samuel to Ramah;* the place where Samuel dwelt: to him David chose to come, by whom he had been anointed king, that his faith might be strengthened by him with respect to the kingdom, which might be weakened by what had happened to him; and that he might have some advice and direction from him what he should do, and what course he should take in his present circumstances, and that he might receive some

[e] Vid. Stockium, p. 509.
[f] Apud Kimchium & Abarbinel. in loc.
[g] Ut supra.
[h] Vid. Hudson. not. in ib.

comfort from him under his present troubles: *and told him all that Saul had done to him:* how he had spoken to his servants to kill him, had cast a javelin at him himself, and had sent messengers to his house to slay him: *and he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth:* which was in or near to Ramah, as appears by the following verse; which perhaps was a more retired place, and so chosen for the sake of conversation between them, or reckoned a more safe place. Here being a school or college of the prophets, might be a kind of an asylum, and where it might be thought Saul would not attempt to lay hands on David, should he know where he was; for if the Philistines gave no disturbance to the hill of God, and the prophets in it, ch. x. 5. it might be reasonably concluded Saul would not; so the Targum paraphrases it, *he and Samuel went and dwelt in the house of doctrine*, or in the school, the school of the prophets. R. Abimi the Nothite, or Naiothite, mentioned in the Talmud[i], is supposed[k] to be of this place; it is said[l] to be six miles from Jerusalem to the north.

Ver. 19. *And it was told Saul*, &c.] By some officious persons who saw David at Ramah, and observed that he and Samuel went together to Naioth: *saying, behold, David is at Naioth, in Ramah;* or near it; according to R. Isaiah, Ramah was the name of a hill, or mountain, so called from its height, and Naioth the name of a place on it; it signifies pastures and pleasant places, as meadows and pastures are; and here in the fields near Ramah was the house of doctrine, as the Targum calls it, or the school of the prophets, being pleasant and retired, and fit for study.

Ver. 20. *And Saul sent messengers to take David*, &c.] Notwithstanding the sacred place he was in, so bent was he upon his destruction: *and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying;* or praising, as the Targum; singing hymns and songs of praise to God, under the inspiration and influence of the spirit of God, who endited these songs for them, and excited them to sing them; these prophets belonged to the school or college of prophets at Naioth, whom the messengers saw when they came thither, and found them thus employed; or *when he saw*[m], for the word is singular, that is, the chief of the messengers, or every one of them, so Kimchi: *and Samuel standing as appointed over them:* he was president of the college, and he stood to instruct and teach them in the knowledge of divine things: so the Targum, "standing, teaching over them, or by them," and to direct and assist them in singing their songs of praise: *the spirit of the Lord was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied;* or praised, as the Targum; sung hymns and songs of praise as the prophets did, and were so taken up with these religious exercises, that they forgot, or were inattentive to the business they were sent to do. Ben Gersom thinks they foretold things to come, and so Abarbinel; and particularly that they prophesied that David should rule over all Israel, and that God would not suffer Saul to slay him; and so were indifferent to, and negligent of doing the errand they were sent on, yea, purposely avoided it.

Ver. 21. *And when it was told Saul*, &c.] That the messengers he had sent, instead of seizing on David, were prophesying of him, or however were attending to services of a different nature than what they were sent upon: *he sent other messengers, and they prophesied likewise;* when they came to the same place: *and Saul sent messengers again a third time, and they prophesied also;* joined the rest in singing praises, or foretelling future events.

Ver. 22. *Then went he also to Ramah*, &c.] That is, Saul; his messengers not returning to him, when he sent one after another to take David, at length he set out himself from Gibeah to Ramah: *and came to a great well that is in Sechu;* which was either the name of a man, the owner of the well, or a place near to which the well was, and is commonly thought to be the same with Shochoh, ch. xvii. 1. at such places there was generally a concourse of people at certain times, to fetch water for the inhabitants of the place, and for the watering of flocks and herds, and so a proper place to stop at, and ask the following questions: *and he asked and said, where are Samuel and David?* for his messengers not returning to him, he could not be sure where they now were, though he had heard they were at Naioth: *and one said, behold, they be at Naioth in Ramah;* at the house of doctrine, or school in Ramah, as the Targum; thus one at the well replied, in answer to his question, who had seen them go there, or knew they were there.

Ver. 23. *And he went thither to Naioth in Ramah*, &c.] He went on from the well towards the place: *and the spirit of God was upon him also;* as well as upon his messengers; even the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum: *and he went on and prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah;* in this he differed from his messengers; they did not prophesy till they came to that place, but Saul began to prophesy before he came thither, as he was in his way from the well to it.

Ver. 24. *And he stripped off his clothes also*, &c.] Not all his clothes, but his upper garments, as men in such circumstances used to do, as the prophets sometimes did, and as it seems his messengers had done; according to Jarchi, R. Isaiah, and others[n], he stripped himself of his royal robes, and put on the habit of the scholars, the disciples, and sons of the prophets: *and prophesied before Samuel in like manner;* as the messengers had done, singing such-like songs, or foretelling such-like things as they did; he and they speaking not of themselves, but as they were moved by the holy spirit of prophecy; for such gifts have sometimes been bestowed on men that were destitute of the grace of God, as Balaam, Caiaphas, and others; *and lay down:* or *fell down*[o], as persons in an ecstacy or trance: *and lay naked all that day, and all that night;* not entirely naked, but without his upper garment or royal robes,

[i] T. Bab. Sabbat, c. 1. fol. 17. 2. Avodah Zarah, c. 2. fol. 36. 1.
[k] Aruch in voce נויות, fol. 9[?]. 4. Juchasin, fol. 74. 2.
[l] Adrichom. Theatrum T. S. fol. 28. 2.

[m] וירא & vidit, Montanus, Vatablus, Tigurine version; & vidit quisque vel unusquisque illorum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[n] Vid. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. G.
[o] ויפל & cecidit, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, & corruit, Vatablus.

or else his armour; so an unarmed man is said to be naked, though otherwise he has his clothes on: thus Gelon having conquered the Carthaginians, and made himself master of all Sicily, went into the forum *naked* (*i. e.* unarmed), and declared he would restore the government to the citizens, wherefore a naked statue for him was erected in the temple of Juno[r]; so Quinctius Cincinnatus was found ploughing naked[s], who can't be supposed to be without any clothes on him. Jarchi, from Menachem, reports, that he had heard from an Arabian, that the word the Targum makes use of for *naked*, signifies, in the Arabic language, one that is furious or mad, as persons in an ecstacy, or under a prophetic spirit, sometimes seemed to be; now Saul was kept and held in such circumstances a whole day and night, that David might have an opportunity of making his escape, and getting at such a distance from him that he could not overtake him: *wherefore they say, is Saul also among the prophets?* this became a common saying, a proverbial expression, at least was now revived and observed with admiration; that Saul, who had behaved himself in so ill a manner, as an enemy to so good a man, should be found among the prophets of the Lord, and prophesying as they did.

CHAP. XX.

DAVID fleeing from Naioth came to Jonathan, and acquainted him with his circumstances, and entreated his favour, ver. 1—8. which Jonathan promised, and renewed the covenant with him, ver. 9—17. a scheme was formed between them, by which David might know whether Saul was reconciled to him, and he might come to court, ver. 18—23. which being tried, Jonathan found it was not safe for him to appear, ver. 24—34. of which he gave notice by the signals agreed on, ver. 35—40. and they took their leave of one another with strong expressions of affection and attachment to each other, ver. 41, 42.

Ver. 1. *And David fled from Naioth in Ramah*, &c.] Whilst Saul was prophesying, or lay in a trance there: *and came*: to Gibeah, where Saul dwelt, and had his palace, and kept his court: *and said before Jonathan*; whom he found there, and for whose sake he thither fled to have his advice, and to use his interest with his father, and be his friend at court: *what have I done? what is mine iniquity? and what is my sin before thy father, that he seeketh my life?* surely, as if he should say, I must have been guilty of some very great crime, and yet I am not sensible of it; canst thou tell me what it is that has so provoked thy father, that nothing will satisfy him but the taking away of my life, which he seeks to do?

Ver. 2. *And he said unto him, God forbid, thou shalt not die*, &c.] He could not believe his father had any such intention; and that if he discovered any thing of that kind, it was only when he was in a phrensy, and a melancholy disorder had seized him; and that David had nothing to fear on that head, and that he would secure him from all danger in that respect; the thing was too gross and detestable to be credited: *behold, my father will do nothing, either great or small, but that he will shew it me*: such an interest had he in him, and in his favour, being his son and heir to his crown, and having done many warlike exploits, which had the more endeared him to him, that he made him privy to all his secret designs, and took his opinion in all matters of moment and importance: *and why should my father hide this thing from me?* his design of taking away the life of David, if he had really formed one: *it is not so*; Jonathan concluded, from his ignorance of it, there was nothing in it, and that it was only a surmise of David's; and yet it is strange that Jonathan should know nothing of the messengers being sent to David's house to take him, and of others sent to Naioth after him, and of Saul's going there himself with such a design; and if he did know any thing of the matter, he made the best of it to David, partly to allay his fears, and partly that his father might not appear so black and vile as he really was.

Ver. 3. *And David sware moreover, and said*, &c.] To assure Jonathan of the truth of it, that he did most certainly seek after his life, of which, as he had no doubt himself, by an oath he endeavoured to remove any that might be in Jonathan, who was not willing to believe his father could be guilty of so foul a crime: *thy father certainly knoweth that I have found grace in thine eyes*: that he was high in his favour, that he had a great value for him, and he had a large share in his love and friendship, and that was the reason why he hid from him his base intentions: *and he saith, let not Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved*; as he would be, both for the evil his father would be guilty of, and the danger David, his beloved friend, would be in: *but truly, as the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth*, there is *but a step between me and death*: as appeared by his casting a javelin at him, sending messengers to his own house to slay him, and others to Naioth to seize him, and coming himself thither with an intention to kill him, and in each of these instances he had a narrow escape for his life; and this he declared in the most solemn manner by an oath, for the confirmation of the truth of it to Jonathan.

Ver. 4. *Then said Jonathan unto David*, &c.] Now giving credit to what he had said, and in order to comfort and support him under the apprehensions he had of danger: *whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee*: for the preservation of his life, by speaking to his father on his behalf, endeavouring to dissuade him from his evil intentions, or by hiding and concealing him in some obscure place, that he might not execute his evil designs upon him, or by any method he could point out to him.

Ver. 5. *And David said unto Jonathan*, &c.] Moved that the following method might be taken as a trial of the disposition of Saul's mind towards David: *behold, to-morrow is the new moon*; the first day of the month,

[r] Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 6. c. 11.

[s] Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 20.

which was kept solemnly with burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, see Numb. x. 10. and xxviii. 11. Some say [r] this feast was not kept for the new moon, but because it was the day of the feast of trumpets, or the first day of the new year, which fell together on that day; the calends, or first day of the month, was with the Heathens sacred to deity [s], in imitation of the Jews: *and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat*; it had been usual for him at such a time to sit at table with the king; next to him, as Jarchi interprets it, either as his son-in-law, or as one of his princes; the custom being for the king, and his family and nobles, to eat together on that day upon the peace-offerings; and it was the duty of David to attend at that time, and it might be expected he would: *but let me go*; he asked leave of Jonathan, who had power in his father's absence to grant it, he not being yet returned from Naioth: *that I may hide myself in the fields, unto the third day at even*; or until the time of the evening of the third day, as the Targum, which was the evening of the second day of the month; for that was the third from that evening they were discoursing together, as Ben Gersom observes; the fields he proposed to hide himself in were near to Gibeah, and he doubtless meant some cave in those fields, where he might be, and not be seen by men; though it can't be thought that he remained, or proposed to remain, in such a place during that time, where he would be in want of food, but that he would abide incognito among his friends somewhere or another, until the festival was over.

Ver. 6. *If thy father at all miss me*, &c.] Or diligently inquires after me: *then say, David earnestly asked leave of me, that he might run to Beth-lehem his city*: the place of his birth, called the city of David, where he was born and had lived, Luke ii. 4. John vii. 42. which was not far from Gibeah, and whither he could soon run; and which shews the haste he proposed to make, and his eager desire to be there, and which also is signified by his earnest and importunate request; for all this might be true, and no lie of David, framed for an excuse; and after he had hid himself some time in the field, until it was evening, he might go to Beth-lehem, and return soon enough to meet Jonathan in the field at the time fixed by them on the third day: *for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family*; it was customary for the family of Jesse one day in a year, and as it should seem on a first day of the month, and perhaps the first day of the first month, or New-Year's Day, to have an anniversary feast by way of gratitude and thankfulness for the mercies of the year past, and for the continuance of them for time to come; in which the family rejoiced together at the great goodness of God unto them, ch. ix. 12.

Ver. 7. *If he say thus*, it is *well*, &c.] It is very well, it is very good and right in him to do so: *thy servant shall have peace*: it will be a token that the wrath of the king was removed, and that his mind was well disposed towards David, and things had taken an happy turn, and would issue in his peace and prosperity: *but if he be very wroth*: with Jonathan for giving leave, and with David for going away: then *be sure that evil is determined by him*: that he has a settled obstinate malice in his heart, which is become implacable and inveterate, and confirmed in him; and that it is a determined point with him to slay David if possible, which he hoped to have an opportunity of doing at that time; in which he was disappointed, and caused such wrath in him.

Ver. 8. *Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant*, &c.] By informing him how his father's mind stood affected to him, that he might conduct himself accordingly, either by appearing at court, or by providing for his safety by flight: *for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee*; a covenant of friendship between Jonathan and David, of which Jonathan was the first mover, and so is said to bring or persuade him into it; called the covenant of the Lord, because made in his name and fear, and before him as a witness of it; and this David pleads as an argument with Jonathan, to deal kindly and faithfully by him in the present case: *notwithstanding, if there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself*; or pass sentence upon him to be slain; which, if guilty, he might have power to do in his father's absence, and which David desires might be done, notwithstanding the covenant of friendship between them, should he appear to deserve it by any action of his, of which he was not conscious; this expresses the strong sense he had of his own integrity, and served to confirm Jonathan in his opinion of it; *for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?* deliver him up into his hands to be put to a cruel death by him, or give him the trouble of doing it, when he might as well dispatch him at once.

Ver. 9. *And Jonathan said, far be it from thee*, &c.] To entertain such a thought of me, or to have the least suspicion of me, that I should conceal my father's ill intentions against thee, if known to me; *for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would I not tell it thee?* certainly I would; canst thou doubt of my kindness and fidelity? surely thou hast no reason, when such a covenant of friendship subsists between us, and there has not been the least breach of it on either side.

Ver. 10. *Then said David to Jonathan, who shall tell me?* &c.] The disposition of Saul's mind towards him, whether he gave a kind answer to the report of Jonathan concerning him: *or what if thy father answer thee roughly?* or hard words, as the Targum, whether he answers in a kind, loving, and smooth manner, or whether in a rough and angry one: the question is here, how he should be informed of this, since especially, if in the latter, it would not be safe for Jonathan to come himself to him, nor could he well trust the message with any other. Abarbinel thinks, that the first of these expressions is by way of question, who should declare to him his father's will and intention, whether good or bad; and the latter by way of outcry, woe unto me, if thy father should answer thee roughly; I greatly fear he'll chide thee for my sake; my heart

[r] Weemse's Expos. Ceremon. Law, c. 22. p. 100, 101.

[s] Macrob. Saturnal. l. 1. c. 15. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 18. in fine.

will be filled with sorrow if thou shouldest suffer reproach and rebuke on my account.

Ver. 11. *And Jonathan said unto David, come, and let us go out into the field*, &c.] That they might more fully, and freely, and familiarly talk of this affair between them, without any danger of being overheard by the servants of Saul, as they were in his palace, where they now were: *and they went out both of them into the field*: which belonged to Gibeah.

Ver. 12. *And Jonathan said unto David, O Lord God of Israel*, &c.] Or by the Lord God of Israel, I swear unto thee; for this is the form of the oath, as Jarchi and Kimchi observe: *when I have sounded my father about to-morrow any time*, or *the third day*; searched, inquired, and found out how his disposition is: *and, behold, if there be good toward David*: if he is well disposed to him, as may appear by speaking respectfully of him, or kindly inquiring after him, and by being satisfied with the account given him: *and I send not unto thee, and shew it thee*: then let the vengeance of God fall upon me in some remarkable manner or another, as follows; or *shall I not then send unto thee, and shew it thee*[t]? certainly I will: that is, I will send a messenger to thee to acquaint thee with it, who shall tell it, and cause thee to hear it, as from myself.

Ver. 13. *The Lord do so and much more to Jonathan*, &c.] Recompence evil more than can be thought of and expressed, should he neglect to inform David of the good disposition of Saul unto him: *but if it please my father to do thee evil*: if he seems determined upon it to take away thy life: *then I will shew it thee*; not by a messenger, by whom it would not be safe to communicate it, lest by that means Saul would know where he was, and come and slay him; but Jonathan would come himself, and acquaint him with it: *and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace*: give him leave, and advise him to depart, and provide for his own safety, adding his blessing on him, and prayer for him: *and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father*: in the beginning of his reign, giving him counsel and advice in all things, and victory over his enemies, succeeding and prospering him in whatsoever he engaged in; the Targum is, "the Word of "the Lord be for thy help, &c." Jonathan seemed to be fully apprized that David was to succeed in the kingdom.

Ver. 14. *And thou shalt not only, while yet I live, shew me the kindness of the Lord*, &c.] Such kindness as is well-pleasing in the sight of God, and imitate what he shews to men, and which was covenanted, promised, and agreed to in the presence of the Lord, when David and Jonathan entered into covenant with each other; this Jonathan did not doubt of, and therefore did not make this a request: *that I die not*; he had no fear nor dread on his mind, should David come to the throne whilst he was alive, that he would take away his life; which was usually done by tyrants and usurpers, when there were any that had a fairer title, and better claim to the throne than they.

Ver. 15. *But* also *thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever*, &c.] His family should partake of it as well as himself: *no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David, every one from the face of the earth*: Saul and his sons, and every one that should oppose his settlement in the kingdom: Jonathan's meaning is, that the covenant between them should not be only between them personally, but include their posterity, as follows.

Ver. 16. *So Jonathan made* a covenant *with the house of David*, &c.] Not with David himself only, which was now renewed, but with his family also: saying, *let the Lord even require it at the hand of David's enemies*: take vengeance on Jonathan, or on any of his posterity, should they break this covenant, by shewing themselves enemies to David, and his crown; and, on the other hand, also on David, and his posterity, should they not shew kindness to Jonathan and his seed, according to the tenour of this covenant.

Ver. 17. *And Jonathan caused David to swear again*, &c.] Or Jonathan added to make David swear[u]; having sworn himself to make a covenant of friendship with David and his family, he moved and insisted on it, that David should swear to keep covenant with him, and his family: *because he loved him*: it was not so much for the good and safety of his offspring that he made this motion, and was so desirous of renewing and enlarging his covenant with David, as it was his strong love and affection for him; being on that account desirous that there might be the strictest friendship imaginable retained between the two families; or he made him swear by his love to him, as some understand it, which is not so likely; the former sense is best, for he himself sware by the Lord, ver. 12, 13. *for he loved him as his own soul*: or *with the love of his soul*[w]; with the most cordial affection, with a truly hearty and sincere love, see ch. xviii. 1.

Ver. 18. *Then Jonathan said to David, to-morrow is the new moon*, &c.] The first day of the month, as David had before observed, ver. 5. *and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty*: or be inquired after, because not in his usual place at mealtime.

Ver. 19. *And when thou hast stayed three days*, &c.] From court, either at Beth-lehem, which seems most probable, or in some other place incognito; however, not in the field he proposed to hide himself in, where he could not continue so long for want of food: *then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself*; which makes it clear that he did not continue there during that time, but went elsewhere; from whence he was to come in haste at the expiration of three days, to the place he first hid himself in, and which was fixed upon to meet at: *when the business was* in hand; when the affair was discoursed of, about getting knowledge how Saul was affected to David, and of informing him of it; or *on the day of work*[x]; or business, on a working-day, as the Septuagint; and so the Targum, on a common day; when, as the Vulgate Latin, it was lawful to work on it; and such was the day when Jonathan and

[t] ולא אז אשלח אליך an non tunc mitterem? Junius & Tremellius; nonne tunc mittam ad te? so some in Vatablus.

[u] ויסף & addidit, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so the Tigurine version.

[w] אהבת נפשו secundum dilectionem animæ suæ, Pagninus; amore sui ipsius, Junius & Tremellius.

[x] ביום המעשה in die operis, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; die profesto, Tigurine version.

David conversed together about the above affair; it being the day before the new moon, or first day of the month, on which day they used not to work: some render it, *thou shalt three times go down*[y] to that place; and the sense is, that he should come on the morrow, and if he found not Jonathan there, he might conclude that as yet he knew nothing of his father's mind, and therefore should come the day following that; and if he found him not then, to come on the third day, that so he might be on the spot, let him come on which day he would: *and shalt remain by the stone Ezel*: which, because it signifies *going*, the Jewish commentators generally understand it as a sign to direct travellers which way to go; but one would think this should be an improper place for David to be near, since it must be where two or more ways met, and so a pulic frequented place; others think therefore it had its name from David and Jonathan often going thither, to discourse with each other; the Septuagint calls it Ergab; and so the place where Jonathan, the son of Saul, exercised himself by shooting darts, is called by Jerom[z]; it is said by Josephus[a] to be 150 furlongs from Jerusalem, and from Jordan 60.

Ver. 20. *And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof*, &c.] On the side of the stone Ezel; three are pitched upon, according to the number of the days David was missing: *as though I shot at a mark*; as if he made the stone the mark he shot at; so that his shooting would not be taken notice of.

Ver. 21. *And, behold, I will send a lad*, &c.] That attended on him, and carried his bow and arrows, and fetched his arrows when he had shot them: saying, *go, find out the arrows*; where they are fallen, and return them: *if I expressly say unto the lad, behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them*; on one side of him, whether the one or the other, which he would bid him take up, and bring them to him: *then come thou*; David, out of the place where he hid himself: *for there is peace to thee, and no hurt, as the Lord liveth*; he might appear, and not be afraid of being seen by any, since by this sign he might be assured that Saul was well affected to him, and would shew him favour, and do him no injury; and that he might promise himself prosperity and safety, and be assured of it for the present.

Ver. 22. *But if I say thus unto the young man, behold, the arrows are beyond thee*, &c.] Being shot to a greater distance than where the young man was: *go thy way, for the Lord hath sent thee away*: then he was to depart directly, without staying to have any conversation with Jonathan, which would not be safe for either of them, and so make the best of his way into the country, and escape for his life; for so it was ordered by the providence of God, that he must not stay, but be gone immediately: the signals were these, that if things were favourable, then he would shoot his arrows on one side of the lad, and David might come out and shew himself at once; but if not, he would shoot them beyond him, by which he might know that he must flee for his life.

Ver. 23. *And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of*, &c.] The covenant they had made between them and their families: *behold, the Lord be between me and thee for ever*: as a witness of the covenant, and a revenger of those that should break it; so the Targum, "behold, the Word of the Lord be "between me and thee a witness for ever."

Ver. 24. *So David hid himself in the field*, &c.] Not directly, but at the time appointed; for he went to Beth-lehem, and returned from thence before that time: *and when the new moon was come*; the first day of the month, which was a solemn festival: *the king sat him down to eat meat*; Saul sat down at his table to eat of the provisions that were set upon it; which it is very probable were the peace-offerings for that day, which he, his family, and nobles, feasted on together; it is in the Hebrew, *he sat down at the bread*[b], which is put for all the food on the table, and the provisions of it.

Ver. 25. *And the king sat upon his seat as at other times*, &c.] Upon the seat he usually sat on: even *upon a seat by the wall*; on a couch by the side of the wall; or, as Jarchi and R. Isaiah say, at the head of the couch by the wall, which was the most honourable place; and Kimchi observes, it was the custom in those days to eat meat sitting on beds or couches, see ch. xxviii. 23. *and Jonathan arose*; either in reverence to his father, when he came in and took his seat, or in respect to Abner upon his coming in, being the son of Saul's uncle, and general of the army; for though he arose, he did not depart, it is plain he sat down again, ver. 34. Kimchi thinks, that after Jonathan had sat down at the side of his father, he arose and placed Abner there, because he would not be near his father, that if he should be wroth with him on account of David, he might not be near him to smite him: *and Abner sat by Saul's side*; according to Josephus[c], Jonathan sat at his right hand and Abner on the left, and it was usual for the master, or principal person, to sit in the middle; so Dido in Virgil[d]. Abarbinel places them thus, Saul was at the head of the table, and David was used to sit by him, and Jonathan by David, and Abner by Jonathan; and now the king sat in his place, and Jonathan in his place, and Abner after him; and David's place being empty, Jonathan was left next to his father, without any between; wherefore he now arose from his place, and Abner sat on that side where Saul was, so that Abner was between Jonathan and Saul: *and David's place was empty*: where he used to sit at table, he not being there, and no one taking it.

Ver. 26. *Nevertheless, Saul spake not any thing that day*, &c.] About David's absence, took no notice of it, said nothing about it: *for he thought something had befallen him*; some impurity, some nocturnal pollution, see Lev. xv. 16. *he is not clean, surely he is not clean*; which he repeated in his mind for the confirmation of it, and in contempt, and to the reproach of David; and in this way he accounted for his absence the first day, and so was easy, it not being lawful and

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[y] שלשת תרד מאד tertiabis, descendes valde, Montanus; descendes ter, vel tertiabis descendere, Castalio; so Patrick.
[z] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. C.
[a] Apud Adrichom. Theatrum T. S. p. 17.

[b] על הלחם ad vel juxta panem, Pagninus, Montanus.
[c] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 11. sect. 9.
[d] —— mediamque locavit. Æneid. 1. prope finem. Vid. Servium in ib.

fitting for an unclean person in a ceremonial sense to eat of the peace-offerings, which Saul and his family were now partaking of.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second* day *of the month*, &c.] The Targum is, "and it was on the day after it, which was the inter-"calation of the second month;" when the beginning of the month was judged of by the appearance of the moon, and there was a difficulty about that, what day it appeared on, two days were kept for it; and Abarbinel[*] is clear for it, that two days were kept in this month; but if this was not the case, since the remainder of peace-offerings might be eaten the next day, Lev. vii. 16. Saul and his guests might meet on the second day for that purpose: *that David's place was empty;* on that day also: *and Saul said to Jonathan his son;* who he knew was David's friend and confident, and could give the best account of him: *wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday nor to-day;* he accounted for his not coming yesterday, because he supposed he might be under some ceremonial uncleanness; but then that only lasted to the evening of that day; but not coming the second day when he was clean, he inquires after him; and not owning him for his son-in-law, by way of contempt, and to lessen him in the esteem of all at table, he calls him the son of Jesse.

Ver. 28. *And Jonathan answered Saul*, &c.] In reply to Saul's question, and to excuse David, he said, *David earnestly asked* leave *of me* to go *to Beth-lehem;* his own city, his native place, where his family lived, whom he was desirous to see, and yet chose not to go without asking leave; and as Saul was not at home, he asked leave of Jonathan, who was next to him, and acted for him; and he was very pressing and importunate in his suit, and therefore Jonathan could not well deny him it; and he hoped this would be a sufficient excuse for his absence, especially when what follows should be observed.

Ver. 29. *And he said, let me go, I pray thee, for our family hath a sacrifice in the city*, &c.] In the city of Beth-lehem where they lived, a peace-offering on account of the new moon, and as an anniversary thanksgiving for the mercies of the year, ver. 6. and seeing, though he was not at the feast in one place, he observed it in another, his absence at court was the more excusable; and the rather, since it was kept by him with his own family, in his own city: besides, it is added, *and my brother he hath commanded me* to be there; his elder brother Eliab, whose commands, as a younger brother, he judged he ought to obey; 'tis probable his father was now dead, since no mention is made of him, and his elder brother took upon him the command of the family: *and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren;* he should take it as a favour to have leave to depart, and be free for the present from waiting upon the king at court, and so have an opportunity of seeing his brethren, for which he had a great desire; having not seen them a long time, not even since he saw them in the camp, when he slew Goliath: *therefore he cometh not to the king's table;* this was the reason of it, at least one reason of it, and Jonathan was not obliged to tell the whole.

Ver. 30. *Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan*, &c.] For giving David leave to go, and for excusing him in this manner: *and he said unto him, thou son of the perverse and rebellious* woman; most of the Jewish commentators supply it as we do, but the supplement of *woman* may as well be left out, and be read, *thou son of perverse rebellion*[†]; thou perverse and rebellious wretch, perverse in thy temper, and rebellious in thy conduct; for the design of the expression is not to reproach his mother, for which there seems no provocation, but Jonathan only; and the next clause confirms it, which expresses a concern for his mother's honour and credit; the Targum is, "an obstinate son, "whose rebellion is hard," or intolerable; according to which, Abarbinel says, it may refer to David: *do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?* The above writer observes, that he does not say to his own confusion, because David would not reign in his life-time, only after his death, but to the shame of Jonathan and his mother; to Jonathan's shame, who would be reckoned by men an arrant fool, to be so friendly to a rival, and who in all probability would jostle him out of the throne; and what would men say of him? that either he was not fit to reign, or had no right to the throne, that a son-in-law took place before him; and that his mother had played the whore, and he was no son of Saul, having nothing of his genius, temper, and disposition in him, as appeared by loving such his father hated; and besides, his mother would not have the honour she expected, to be the mother of a king.

Ver. 31. *For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom*, &c.] He would not, though heir to the crown, be sure of it; it would be precarious to him, he would be in great danger of being deprived of it on the death of his father; and therefore it would be his highest wisdom to deliver David up to be slain, as it was his greatest folly to protect him, and provide for his safety: *wherefore now send and fetch him unto me;* send to Beth-lehem for him to come to court directly: *for he shall surely die;* or he is *the son of death*[‡]; guilty of death, as the Targum, deserves to die, and Saul was determined upon his death if possible.

Ver. 32. *And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him*, &c.] Making no answer to the charges of perverseness, rebellion, and folly brought against himself, which he bore with patience, but could not bear to hear his dear friend spoken against, and as worthy of death; and therefore in answer to that says, *wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done?* has he attempted to take away thy life? to deprive thee of thy crown? to settle himself upon the throne? what overt-act of treason has he been guilty of, that he should die? on the contrary, has he not done many things worthy of immortal honour, for the good of the nation, and the glory of thy reign? and if God has determined the kingdom for him, and anointed him to it, what

[*] Comment. in Exod. xii.

[†] בן נעות המרדות fili perversæ rebellionis, Pagninus, Montanus.

[‡] בן מות filius mortis, V. L. Montanus, Vatablus, Piscator; reus mortis, Junius & Tremellius.

blame can be laid upon him? nay, should he not be the rather respected and honoured?

Ver. 33. *And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him*, &c.] So provoked to wrath was he by what he said. It seems by this that Saul always had a javelin or spear in his hand, which is to be accounted for by the custom of those times; in other countries, as well as in this, the kings used to carry spears in their hands instead of sceptres, and which they used as such; so Justin[h], speaking of the times of Romulus, says, that kings in those times had spears, as an ensign of royalty, which the Greeks call sceptres; and so the Greeks called sceptres spears[i]: *whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David*; for since he attempted to smite him, his own son, for speaking on his behalf, it might be well concluded, that such was his settled wrath and malice, that he would if possible kill David, could he get him into his hands.

Ver. 34. *So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger*, &c. Resenting his father's attempt to smite him, and his resolution to slay David: *and did eat no meat the second day of the month*; not then at that meal he was just sat down to, nor at another time that day, his stomach was so full through indignation at his father, and grief for his friend David; and besides, being a mourner on the above accounts, he might not eat of the sacrifices: *for he was grieved for David*: that his death should be determined upon by his father, and he in so much danger of it; as also that he himself must be parted from and lose so dear a friend, which was one reason he ate no meat that day: and another follows, *because his father had done him shame*; the copulative *and* being wanting; and this he did by calling him a perverse and rebellious son, and representing him as an arrant fool, and particularly by casting a javelin at him to smite him.

Ver. 35. *And it came to pass in the morning*, &c.] The next morning, the morning of the third day of the month: *that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David*; he went to the place in the field, or near it, where David hid himself, and at the time agreed between them; which, Abarbinel says, was the time the nobles agreed on for walking, and motion, and for hunting, and casting of arrows, so that Jonathan could go forth without suspicion: *and a little lad with him*; to carry his bow and arrows, and fetch his arrows when cast.

Ver. 36. *And he said unto his lad, run, find out now the arrows which I shoot*, &c.] He no doubt told him the mark which he should shoot at, the stone Ezel, and bid him look out about that for them: and *as the lad ran*; before he had got to the mark: *he shot an arrow beyond him*; or it; beyond the lad, or beyond the mark he shot at; purposely shooting with great strength, that he might exceed, and thereby give notice to David how things stood, which was the sign agreed on.

Ver. 37. *And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot*, &c.] To the mark which he told him he should shoot at, and whereabout he might expect to find the arrow: *Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, is not the arrow beyond thee?* he cried with a loud voice and said this, not so much that the lad might hear him, but that David, who lay hid near the place, might hear him; so that if they had no opportunity of seeing and conversing with each other through any person going by at that time, David might know by this sign that evil was determined against him, and must flee for his life; the Syriac and Vulgate Latin versions read, *behold, the arrow is beyond thee*; so Noldius[k].

Ver. 38. *And Jonathan cried after the lad, make speed, haste, stay not*, &c.] But bring the arrows to him directly, that he might dismiss him; for, observing that no man was passing by, he was desirous of embracing the opportunity for a few minutes to have an interview with David alone before he fled: *and Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows*; for though the textual reading is singular, the marginal is plural, to shew, as Kimchi observes, that he cast three arrows, as he said he would, ver. 20. *and came to his master*; with them.

Ver. 39. *But the lad knew not any thing*, &c.] What was meant by shooting the arrows, and by shooting them beyond where he was, and by bidding him make haste to bring them: *only Jonathan and David knew the matter*; what was signified by them, those being signs agreed upon between them.

Ver. 40. *And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad*, &c.] *His vessels*[l] or instruments; his arms, as the Targum, his quiver, bow, and arrows: *and said unto him, go, carry* them *to the city*; to Gibeah, to Jonathan's house, or to his apartments at court there.

Ver. 41. *And as soon as the lad was gone*, &c.] Which David could observe from his lurking-place: *David arose out of* a place *toward the south*; to the south of the field in which he was hid, or to the south of the stone Ezel, near which he was; and so the Targum, "and David arose from the side of the stone "Atha, which was towards the south;" Jonathan shooting his arrows to the north of it, lest the lad should have discovered David when he ran for them: *and fell on his face to the ground*; in reverence of Jonathan, as the son of a king, and in respect to him as his friend, who had so faithfully served him, and was so concerned to save his life: *and bowed himself three times*; this was before he fell prostrate on the ground. Abarbinel observes, that bowing three times was fit and proper to be done to a king; once at the place from whence they first see him, the second time in the middle of the way to him, and the third time when come to him; but though this may have been a custom in more modern times, it is a question whether it obtained so early; however it is certain bowing was as ancient, and therefore Xenophon[m] is mistaken in ascribing it to Cyrus as the first introducer of this custom; and be it that he was the first that began it among the Persians, it was in use with others before, as this behaviour of David shews: *and they kissed one another*; as friends about to part: *and wept one with*

[h] E Trogo, l. 43. c. 3.
[i] Pausanias in Bœoticis, sive, l. 9. p. 606. Vid. Barthii Animadv. ad Claudian. in nupt. Honor. ver. 119.
[k] Concord. Ebr. Part. p. 265. No. 1141.

[l] את כליו vasa sua, Montanus; instrumenta sua, Piscator; arma sua, V. L. Tigurine version.
[m] Cyropædia, l. 8. c. 23.

another: as not knowing whether they should ever see each other's face any more: *until David exceeded*; in weeping more than Jonathan; he having more to part with, not only him his dear friend, but his wife and family, and other dear friends and people of God, and especially the sanctuary and service of God, which of all things lay nearest his heart, and most distressed him; see ch. xxvi. 19. and many of his psalms on this occasion. Ben Gersom suggests that he wept more than was meet, through too much fear of Saul; but that seems not to be the case.

Ver. 42. *And Jonathan said to David, go in peace*, &c.] In peace of mind, committing himself, his family, and affairs, to the providence of God, who would take care of him, and keep him in safety from the evil designs of Saul; and particularly he would have him be easy with respect to what had passed between them two, not doubting but it would be faithfully observed on both sides: *forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord*: had made a covenant with each other by an oath, in the name and presence of God as a witness to it: *saying, the Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever*; as a witness of the agreement between them, including them and their offspring, and as a revenger of such that should break it. The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord be between thee and me, &c." *and he arose and departed*: that is, David arose from the ground, and took his leave of Jonathan, and departed into the country for the safety of his person and life: *and Jonathan went into the city*: into the city of Gibeah, where Saul dwelt and had his court.

CHAP. XXI.

THIS chapter relates that David went to Nob, and pretending he was on secret business for the king, got shew-bread, and the sword of Goliath, from Ahimelech the priest, ver. 1—9. and that passing from thence to Gath, where he was known, through fear feigned himself mad, and so escaped from thence, ver. 10—15.

Ver. 1. *Then came David to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest*, &c.] The high-priest, as Abarbinel rightly calls him; he was the brother of Ahijah, the son of Ahitub, who being dead he succeeded him; though some say [a] he was the same; see ch. xiv. 3. and xxii. 9. who was now at Nob, the tabernacle being there, whither probably it was removed by Saul, and where and at Gibeon, according to the Jews [b], it continued 57 years; as in the times of Joshua it was in Shiloh, in the tribe of Ephraim, of which tribe he was; and in the times of David it was placed in the tribe of Judah, to which he belonged; so in the times of Saul it was in Nob, a city of his tribe, 12 miles from Gibeah, according to Bunting [c]; for that it was in the tribe of Benjamin appears by its being mentioned along with Anathoth, Neh. xi. 32. and according to Jarchi and Kimchi [d] it was near Jerusalem, and so near that it might be seen from thence; some say they are the same [e]; Jerom [f] speaks of it as near Diospolis or Lydda. David, before he departed further off, was willing to see the tabernacle once more, and there worship his God, and inquire of him by the high-priest, as he did, ch. xxii. 10. to direct him what way he should take, and that he would prosper and succeed him in it, grant him his presence, and keep him in safety: *and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David*; hearing that he was come or coming, he went out to meet him, but when he saw him alone he trembled; especially if he had heard of his having fallen under the displeasure of Saul, and that he now fled from him, therefore he might fear that he should fall into disgrace and danger should he entertain him: *and he said unto him, why art thou alone, and no man with thee?* he might well wonder at it, and put such a question, seeing he was so great a man, both in the court and camp, and the king's son-in-law; he might therefore reasonably suspect something more than ordinary was the case, and which occasioned his fears.

Ver. 2. *And David said unto Ahimelech the priest*, &c.] In reply to his question, and to account for such an appearance he made without an equipage: *the king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee*: he pretended he was upon a secret expedition, by the order of Saul, which none were to know of, no, not his own servants, and that was the reason why he came to him alone; which was a downright lie, and was aggravated by its being told only for the sake of getting a little food; and especially told to an high-priest, and at the tabernacle of God, and when he was come to inquire of the Lord there; and was attended with a dreadful consequence, the slaughter of the Lord's priests there, which afterwards lay heavy on David's mind, ch. xxii. 22. and is the very sin he is thought to refer to in Psal. cxix. 28, 29. This shews the weakness of the best of men, when left to themselves; David, who as much hated lying as any man did, fell into it himself: *and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place*; to such a place, of such an one, not naming place nor person, that they might not be known; so the Targum calls it a place hidden and kept; and that David had some servants, though not now with him, who ate of the shew-bread, appears from Matt. xii. 3. whom Jonathan might send after him, to a place agreed on and appointed between them; so that this might be true.

Ver. 3. *Now therefore what is under thine hand?* &c.] Meaning, what food had he in his house? *give me five loaves of bread in mine hand*; to take with him, for him and his servants in such a place: *or what there is*

[a] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. H.
[b] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Zebachim, c. 14. sect. 7.
[c] Travels, &c. p. 136.
[d] Comment. in Isa. x. 32.
[e] Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 1.
[f] Epitaphium Paulæ, fol. 59. A.

present; or to be found [g] in the tabernacle; if not five loaves, two, or three, or four, or what food soever he had by him.

Ver. 4. *And the priest answered David, and said, there is no common bread under mine hand,* &c.] In the tabernacle, though he might have such in his own house; which was common for any man to eat of, even such as were not priests; but he had none there, and David was in haste to be gone because of Doeg, and could not stay till such was fetched: *but there is hallowed bread;* such as was devoted to sacred use. Kimchi's father thinks this was the bread of the thank-offering, to which Ben Gersom inclines; otherwise the Jewish writers in general understand it of the shew-bread; and it is clear it was that from ver. 6. and from what our Lord says, Matt. xii. 4. Now this the priest had under his hand, being just taken off of the shew-bread table, and was the perquisite of the priests; and which, though it was not lawful for any but priests to eat of, yet in this case of necessity he seemed willing to give it to David and his men, on this condition: if *the young men have kept themselves at least from women;* from their wives or others, and from any pollution by them, in any way or manner; but as this was also only of a ceremonial kind, it might as well have been dispensed with, had this been the case, as the other.

Ver. 5. *And David answered the priest, and said unto him,* &c.] In reply to the case of the young men his servants, and of himself too, who also was intended by the priest, though out of reverence to him not mentioned: *of a truth women have been kept from us these three days since I came out;* reckoning either from the time he fled from Saul at Naioth, or from the time he left Jonathan, during which time both he and his men could have no converse with women, and receive no pollution by them; and this was the time which according to the law was required for the sanctifying of persons in this way, Exod. xix. 15. *and the vessels of the young men are holy;* their garments, as Kimchi, not being defiled with any ceremonial uncleanness, as by the touch of any unclean person: or what instruments soever they were provided with for their journey; or rather their bodies; see 2 Cor. iv. 7. 1 Thess. iv. 4. and with respect to the priest's saying that the bread he had was hallowed or sacred, and so not for common use, David replies, *and the bread is in a manner common;* inasmuch as it was taken off of the shew-bread table, and was now common to the priest and his family, though not to others, yet in case of necessity through hunger might be allowed to strangers: *yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel;* even though it had been set but that day on the shew-bread table, and so became holy to the Lord; and yet even in such a case and circumstances as David and his men were in, it might be taken from thence and eaten of; for, as Abendana observes, nothing stands in the way of preservation of life, but idolatry, adultery, and murder; every thing else may be done for the sake of that but them: or as in the margin of our Bibles, *especially when there is this day* other *sanctified bread;* that is, since other bread is this day put upon the shew-bread table, in the room of that which has been taken away, whereby it is become holy to the Lord; then that which is removed may be eaten, and be allowed to us in our circumstances. It seems by this that this was the sabbath-day; for on that day the removal of the shew-bread loaves was made, Lev. xxiv. 8. and R. Isaiah says, that it was at the going out of the sabbath that David came there; and which still makes it a more apposite case, as produced by our Lord to justify his disciples in plucking ears of corn on the sabbath-day, Matt. xii. 1—4.

Ver. 6. *So the priest gave him hallowed* bread, &c.] Being satisfied with the account he gave of himself, and his young men, and of the lawfulness of it in case of necessity, acts of mercy being to be preferred to ritual services. Whether he gave him five loaves, as he desired, is not said; but the reason of his giving him such sort of bread is observed, *for there was no bread there;* in the tabernacle, whatever might be in the house of the priest: *but the shew-bread that was taken from before the Lord;* from off of the shew-bread table; and it seems to have been just taken off, it being sabbath-day, and not as yet carried to the house of the priest, and divided among the other priests as usual; and which was then removed, *to put hot bread, in the day that it was taken away;* that is, new bread, 12 fresh cakes; for when the 12 that had stood a week on the shew-bread table were removed, 12 more were immediately put in their room, and it seems by this they were put hot there; but here arises a difficulty, how they could be put hot there, when it was not lawful to bake on a sabbath-day. About this the Jews are divided; some say they were baked on the sabbath-day, but the greater part say that baking did not drive away the sabbath, or it was lawful on the sabbath-day; but others say that they were baked on the evening of the sabbath, and kept in the oven until the time of their being set upon the table [h]; and, as Abarbinel observes, the mouth of the oven might be stopped up till that time to keep in the heat; but others say [i] this heat was miraculous, or that a miracle was wrought for the sake of it; which is not probable.

Ver. 7. *Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day,* &c.] When David came to Nob, and asked bread of the priest, and had it, which this man was an eye-witness of, ch. xxii. 9, 10. *detained before the Lord;* either because it was sabbath-day, and so he might not travel, at least no more than 2,000 cubits; or by some vow of his, which he was obliged to stay and perform; or on account of some impurity he had contracted, which he came to be cleansed from; or this detention was voluntary, in order to offer sacrifice to the Lord, or pray unto him, or to study the law of God in the tabernacle, pretending to be a very religious man: *and his name was Doeg, an Edomite;* being by birth an Idumean, but a proselyte to the Jewish religion; or he was of the seed of Israel, but because he had dwelt in Edom, he was called an Edomite, as Kimchi thinks; just as Uriah is called for a like reason the Hittite: *the chiefest of the herdmen that* belonged *to Saul;* Saul had

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[g] הנמצא quicquid inveneris, V. L. inventum, Montanus; quicquid inventum fuerit, Tigurine version.

[h] T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 95. 2.

[i] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 21. 1. Menachot, fol. 96. 2.

his herds and men to look after them, and this man was set over them all, to see that they faithfully discharged their trust. The same officer the Romans called the præfect, or master of the cattle[k]; see the note on 1 Chron. xxvii. 29, 31. though this man was not only over the king's cattle, but over those that kept them; and was in the same office as Phorbas was, under Laius king of Thebes[l], and Melanthius in Homer[m], and Faustulus to Amulius[n]: but Abarbinel is of opinion that this is to be understood not of the keepers of herds and flocks, but of the shepherds or rulers of the people; and that this man was set over all the other magistrates and rulers of the people, hence said to be *set over the servants of Saul*, ch. xxii. 9. and so Jarchi calls him *Ab Beth Din*, or father of the sanhedrim, or great court of judicature; who was detained in the tabernacle to learn the law there, that he might be the better qualified for his office; but Kimchi interprets it as we do, the chief of the keepers of the herd, and both the Septuagint and Josephus[o] say that he fed the king's mules.

Ver. 8. *And David said unto Ahimelech*, &c.] After he had given him some of the loaves of the shewbread: *and is there not here under thine hand spear or sword?* any weapon, meaning in the tabernacle, and in his keeping, and at his dispose; he knew the sword of Goliath was there, and perhaps had a principal view to it, and put this question in order to get that in his possession: *for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me*: neither his sword, nor any part of his armour, but was come quite naked and unarmed; and, as he pretended, *because the king's business required haste*: still continuing his lie; whereas the true reason was, he was let down in haste by his wife through a window of his house, and could not stay to take his armour with him; and had lain hid for some time, and passed incognito from place to place, and without armour, that he might be the less known and observed, and least suspected; though it may seem strange that Jonathan had not provided him with a sword.

Ver. 9. *And the priest said, the sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah*, &c.] See ch. xvii. 2, 51. *behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod*: the garment of the high-priest, in which were the Urim and Thummim, and the breast-plate, or the linen vestments of the priests; see ch. xxii. 18. which were laid up in a chamber for their use; and behind them the sword of Goliath was wrapped up in a linen cloth, and reserved as a monument of the goodness of God to Israel, and the salvation of them wrought by the hands of David, who slew Goliath with this his own sword, and brought it with him. The Targum understands this word, rendered *behind*, not of the place where the sword was, but of the time when the priest said this, and paraphrases the words, "after "he had inquired for him by the ephod;" see ch. xxii. 10. *if thou wilt take that, take* it: as if he should say, it is not mine to give thee, but thou mayest take it if thou pleasest; none has a better right to it; it is what thou tookest from the Philistine, and may take it again for thy use if thou art so inclined; and thou must either take this or none: *for there is no other save that here*: in the tabernacle, nor even in the priest's house, nor in the city; for it was a city of priests, who did not wear swords: *and David said*, there is *none like that, give it me*: and which, as he was capable of wielding and making use of, as it is plain he was by cutting off Goliath's head with it; so it might serve to strengthen his faith in God, as often as he looked upon it, that he would keep and preserve him, and in due time deliver him out of the hands of Saul, and all his enemies.

Ver. 10. *And David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul*, &c.] He had fled before for fear of him, both from his own house, and from Naioth, ch. xix, 18. and xx. 1. but now he fled out of the land of Israel, for fear of him; or it may be the reason of his fear and flight on this day was because of Doeg the Edomite, lest he should go directly to Saul, and tell him where he was; and therefore through fear of him would not stay any longer, but the same day he came, he fled: *and went to Achish the king of Gath*: Gath, according to Bunting[p], was 24 miles from Nob. Achish, the king of it, is called Abimelech in the title of the 34th psalm, that name being common to the kings of the Philistines, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt. It may seem strange that David should go into an enemy's country, and especially to the country of the Philistines, by whom he was mortally hated for the victories he had obtained over them, and the numbers of them he had slain; and particularly that he should go to Gath, the place of Goliath, their champion, whom he had slain, and whose sword he now had with him: but this is to be said for him, that such was the fury of Saul against him, and his resolution to slay him, that he was as safe in an enemy's country as in the land of Israel; and that if he must die, he might as well die in one place as another; and that he went particularly here, the reason might be, because all other lands were at peace with Saul, and so would have delivered him up to him, had he went elsewhere; but this people were at war with him, and he might hope not to be known by them; and if he was, that they might think it their interest to detain such a person that was so serviceable to Saul, and so hurtful to them; and being Saul's enemy, they might hope to engage him on their side against him; and besides, he might know that Achish was well disposed towards him, as he seems to be, and might like him never the worse for cutting off Goliath's head, who might not be heartily in the interest of Achish. After all, as impolitic as this step of David's may seem to be, it is what great men have taken in their distress, to go over to their enemies, as Themistocles to the Molossians, and Alcibiades to the Lacedemonians.

Ver. 11. *And the servants of Achish said unto him*, &c.] Who knew who David was, and perceiving that he was respected by Achish: *is not this David the king of the land?* of the land of the Philistines; so some

[k] Vid. Pignorium de servis, p. 539.
[l] Senecæ Œdipus, Act. 4. v. 815, 816, 839.
[m] Odyss. 20. ver. 21.
[n] Aurel. Victor. orig. Gent. Roman.
[o] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 1.
[p] Travels, &c. p. 136.

render the words, *the king of this land*[q]; which belongs unto him for his conquest of Goliath; for this was what was proposed by him, that whoever was the conqueror should possess the kingdom; and seeing it belongs to him, O Achish, why dost thou admit him to court? thou wilt be driven from the throne, and we shall be his servants, and not thine[r]: but rather they mean the king of the land of Israel, having heard that he was anointed king by Samuel, and was to succeed Saul; or rather, they called him so because he led out the armies of Israel as their general, and being victorious was more respected than even Saul was; for they had heard what the women sung in their songs as follows: *did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?* which are the burden of their song, ch. xviii. 7. and from whence the servants of Achish concluded, that he was in greater authority or honour, and in greater esteem than Saul their king was.

Ver. 12. *And David laid up these words in his heart,* &c.] Pondered upon them, and thought them over in his mind, finding that he was known, and his character also, and considered with himself what might be the consequence of this: *and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath;* lest he should be set against him, and be prevailed upon by his servants to take away his life, or deliver him up into the hands of Saul.

Ver. 13. *And he changed his behaviour before them,* &c.] Behaved like a fool, or a madman: or changed his *taste*[s]; which some understand of his reason, acted as if he was deprived of it; and others of his speech, his words and the accent of them, drawled them out, as such persons do: *and feigned himself mad in their hands;* for in their hands he was, being taken by them, as the title of the 56th psalm shews; and this stratagem he used to get himself out of their hands, acting the part of a madman, delirious, and out of his senses: *and scrabbled on the doors of the gate;* as if he was writing something there, and making marks upon them: *and let his spittle fall down upon his beard;* slavered, as ideots and madmen do; and however mean this may seem in David to act such a part, it cannot be condemned as wicked, since it was only a stratagem to deliver himself out of an enemy's hand, and stratagems are always allowed to be used against an enemy; and such a method as this has been taken by men of the greatest sense and wit, as by Brutus[t] and Solon[u]; and yet, according to the Vulgate Latin and Septuagint versions, this case of his was real and not feigned; that through the surprise of being known in the court of Achish, he was seized with an epilepsy; that his countenance was changed, and his mouth distorted, as persons in such fits are; that he fell among them as one convulsed, and fell at, and dashed against the doors of the gates, and foamed at the mouth, as such persons do; see Luke ix. 39. and so in the following words the Greek version is, ye see the man is an epileptic; I don't want epileptics; but the 34th and 56th psalms, composed by him at this time, shew that as he was of a sound mind, so in good health of body, and not subject to such fits as here represented; which would have rendered him unfit for such composures.

Ver. 14. *Then said Achish to his servants, lo, you see the man is mad,* &c.] Which he said, as willing his servants should think so, and therefore rather the object of their pity than of their rage and malice; or as really believing he was so, which he and they might conclude not merely from these his actions, before described, which they might judge real and not feigned; but they might suppose this was truly his case, brought upon him by the ill usage of Saul, who pursuing him from place to place, and sending after him to take away his life, had really brought him to distraction; and this they might rather conclude from his coming to Gath, an enemy's country, and whose champion he had slain, and many others of them; which it might be thought no man in his senses would have done: *wherefore* then *have ye brought him to me?* for if he was brought to be employed in his service, he seemed very unfit for it, whether in the camp, or in the court; and if to be tried and condemned as an enemy, since he was a madman, he was rather to be pitied.

Ver. 15. *Have I need of madmen?* &c.] Or fools, do I want them? have not I enow of them already at my court? I want wise men, and not fools and madmen. The Jews say[w] that the wife and daughter of Achish were mad; that whilst David was playing the fool and madman without, they were acting the same part within; so that Achish had enough of that sort of diversion, if it was to be reckoned such; as it was according to the taste of some persons, who used, as in later so in earlier times, to keep fools in their houses to make them sport; but Achish had enough of that, and too much, at least needed no more: *that ye have brought this* fellow *to play the madman in my presence?* or act the part of a fool before me: *shall* this fellow *come into mine house?* court or palace, and have a post there; you need be in no pain about it; he's neither agreeable to me, nor fit for any; and therefore Achish drove him away as a fool or madman, instead of imprisoning him as an enemy, or taking away his life; see the title of psalm 34th.

C H A P. XXII.

THIS chapter gives us an account of the flight of David from place to place, from Gath to the cave of Adullam, where his relations came to him; from thence to Mizpeh in Moab, where he got leave of the king of Moab for his father and mother to dwell there; and from thence, by the advice of Gad the prophet, departed into the land of Judah, and came to the forest of Hareth, ver. 1—5. and of the complaint of Saul to his

[q] מלך הארץ rex hujus regionis, Vatablus.
[r] Vid. Jarchium & Jesaiam in loc.
[s] טעמו sensum suum, Montanus, Vatablus; sermonem suum, Paguinus.
[t] Liv. Hist. l. 1. c. 56. [u] Aurel. Victor. de Vir. Illustr. c. 13.
[u] Justin e Trogo, l. 2. c. 7.
[w] Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel. in loc.

servants of their unfaithfulness to him, and indolence and unconcern at the behaviour of Jonathan and David to him, ver. 6, 7, 8. when Doeg the Edomite informed him of David being seen by him at Nob, and of his receiving food and a sword from Ahimelech the priest, who inquired of the Lord for him, ver. 9, 10. upon which Saul sent for Ahimelech and all the priests at Nob, and charged them with a conspiracy against him; and notwithstanding the defence the priest made, Saul ordered him and the rest of the priests to be slain by his guards; which they refusing, Doeg became the executioner of them, and of all the inhabitants of the city of Nob, and the cattle in it, ver. 11—19. only Abiathar a son of Ahimelech escaped and fled to David with the sorrowful news; which greatly affected David, looking upon himself to be the occasion of this sad disaster, and he took Abiathar under his protection, and promised him safety, ver. 20—23.

Ver. 1. *David therefore departed from thence,* &c.] From Gath, being driven by Achish from his court, and let go by his servants, and glad he was of the deliverance: *and escaped to the cave Adullam:* which was no doubt near to a city of the same name in the tribe of Judah, of which see the note on Josh. xv. 35. this being a strong place, and in his own tribe, he might hope to be in greater safety; here he penned his 142d psalm: *and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it;* that he was come thither: *they went down thither to him;* to visit and comfort him, counsel and assist him all they could; and chiefly to secure themselves from the rage and malice of Saul, who they might fear would fall upon them, and avenge himself on them for David's sake.

Ver. 2. *And every one* that was *in distress,* &c.] In straitened circumstances, through the oppression of men, through poverty, and afflictive providences in their families: *and every one* that was *in debt;* and not able to pay their debts, and whose creditors were pressing upon them: *and every one* that was *discontented;* with Saul's government and conduct: or *bitter in soul*[x]; distressed and uneasy in their minds, being pinched with want, or pressed with sore afflictions, which made them very disconsolate: these *gathered themselves unto him;* to help him, or rather to be helped by him; hoping in time things would take a favourable turn with him, and he should be advanced to the throne, and so their circumstances would be mended thereby: *and he became a captain over them;* they enlisted themselves in his service, and he took the command of them; he might not know the circumstances of those in debt, nor of any of them thoroughly, nor their views in joining him; however he meant not to shelter them from paying their just debts if able, nor to encourage them in disloyalty to their king, only to make use of them for his own preservation for the present. In this he was a type of Christ, who receives sinners distressed with a sense of sin, discontented in their present state, and in debt, and unable to pay their debts; see Matt. xi. 28. Luke vii. 41, 42. and xv. 2. *and there were with him about* 400 *men;* among whom some think were the three mighty men spoken of in 2 Sam. xxiii. 13, 14. 1 Chron. xi. 15, 16.

Ver. 3. *And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab,* &c.] So called to distinguish it from a place of the same name in the land of Israel; which Junius says is the same with Malle, and signifies a fortified place, and refers to 1 Maccab. v. 26. here he might think himself safer, though in an enemy's country, than in the land of Israel: *and he said unto the king of Moab, let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth;* out of the land of Israel, or out of the cave of Adullam, whither they were come to him: *and* be *with you;* if not with the king of Moab at his court, yet in some part or other of his country, where they might be safe from the rage of Saul: *till I know what God will do for me;* on whose power and providence he wholly relied, and not upon the men that flocked to him, nor upon his own power and policy, courage and wisdom; he knew the promise of God to him, and he put his trust in him for the performance of it; but knew not the time, nor way, and manner, in which it would be performed; and expected in the mean while to be obliged to remove from place to place; and considering that his aged parents were not fit for such quick and sudden motions, and long flights, he provided as well as he could for their settlement; which was an instance of his filial affection for them, and piety towards them. His father's name is well known, Jesse, but his mother's name is nowhere mentioned; the Jews say her name was Natzbet, the daughter of Adal[y].

Ver. 4. *And he brought them before the king of Moab,* &c.] Having leave from him for it, and left them with him; so the Targum, "caused them to remain "before him:" *and they dwelt with him all the whole time that David was in the hold;* either in the cave of Adullam, as some think; or rather at Mizpeh in Moab, which might be a fortified place; or the sense may be, whilst he was in any hold in those parts, as he might go from one to another; what became of David's parents afterwards, we nowhere else read. The Jews[z] say the king of Moab slew his father and his mother, and his brethren, all but one, whom Nahash the Ammonite preserved; and is the kindness David speaks of, 2 Sam. x. 2. and if this was the case, now it was that his father and mother forsook him, and God took him up, Psal. xxvii. 10.

Ver. 5. *And the prophet Gad said unto David,* &c.] Who either accompanied him in his exile, or was sent unto him on this account, being one of the company of the prophets, over whom Samuel was president, ch. xix. 20. *abide not in the hold, depart, and get thee into the land of Judah;* this seems to confirm it that the hold David was in was not the cave of Adullam, because that was in the tribe of Judah; but rather some hold in the land of Moab, which he is directed by the prophet to quit, and go into the country of Judah, his own tribe, where Saul would not be so forward to pursue him, and where he would be among his friends, and in the way, upon Saul's death, to be anointed king over Judah; besides, appearing more openly would shew the innocence of his cause, and his confidence in

[x] מר נפש amarus animo, Pagninus, Montanus.
[y] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 91. 1.

[z] Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 14. fol. 212. 1. Tanchuma apud Jarchium in loc.

the Lord, more than to lurk about in a foreign land: *then David departed from Mizpeh in Moab*; or, however, from the hold in which he was: *and came into the forest of Hareth*: where he would have places and opportunity enough to hide himself as he saw fit. Jerom[a] speaks of a village called Arath, where David abode, to the west of Jerusalem. Kimchi says this was a dry barren place, but for the sake of David it was made by the Lord a well-watered and fruitful one.

Ver. 6. *When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him*, &c.] That it was known where David was, and what number of men were gathered to him, and that they now openly appeared in the tribe of Judah: for some time Saul had heard nothing of him, but now a report had reached his ears that David was in arms, and at the head of a number of men; which now greatly alarmed Saul, and possessed him with fears and jealousies of his people, and all about him: *now Saul abode in Gibeah, under a tree in Ramah*: this was Gibeah of Saul, and in or near which was a place called Ramah, or an high place, as the word signifies, on which was a remarkable tree, and under that Saul abode, being a proper shelter for him from any inclemency of the weather; for this was not Ramah where Samuel dwelt, though the Jews in the Talmud[b] so think, and metaphorically understand the tree in it of Samuel in Ramah praying for him, by means of which he continued two years in the height of his kingdom; but this was a tree in a literal sense. R. Jonah[c] says it is possible it might be the same which in Arabia is called Ethel, and is like to a tamarisk-tree: *having his spear in his hand*; ready to defend himself, and revenge his enemies; or rather which he held as a sceptre in his hand; see the note on ch. xx. 33. *and all his servants were standing about him*; in reverence of him, and honour to him, waiting upon him, and ready to obey his orders: these were his courtiers, or his guards, or both.

Ver. 7. *Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him*, &c.] He took this opportunity of addressing them in the following manner, upon the report of David being at the head of a certain number of men: *hear now, ye Benjamites*; for Saul being of the tribe of Benjamin, his courtiers and his body-guards chiefly, if not altogether, consisted of persons of that tribe; and therefore as they were under obligation to him, and ought to abide by him, and adhere closely to him, so it was the more ungrateful in them, as he thought, not to be concerned for his honour and interest: *will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards*; as Saul had done, or was capable of doing, and would do if they were faithful to him; whereas it was not in the power of David, whom in contempt he calls the son of Jesse, to do it; and even should he ever be king, and in his power to make such donations, it can't be thought he would give them to them, but to the favourites of his own tribe: and *make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds*; which he now could not do, since he had with him but 400 men in all; and should his army increase, and the kingdom come into his hands, so far would all of them be from being advanced to posts in the army, that it was probable none of them would, but those of his own tribe and party.

Ver. 8. *That all of you have conspired against me*, &c.] For though they had not revolted from him, and been guilty of overt-acts of treason, yet since they did not discover to him what he supposed they knew, and shewed no concern for the circumstances in which he was, he interpreted this a conspiracy against him: *and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse*; Saul did not know this certainly, he only suspected it from the strict and close friendship between them, and imagined that some of his servants were acquainted with it, though they kept it from him; whereas none knew of it but Jonathan and David themselves: *and there is none of you that is sorry for me*; concerned, troubled, and grieved, that he should be in such circumstances, his own son and his son-in-law in league against him: or, as De Dieu renders it, were not *solicitous* for him, cared not how things went with him, or against him: *or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me to lie in wait, as at this day?* which he concluded was the case, from Jonathan's not appearing at court since Saul cast the javelin at him; or, however, if he did, his countenance shewed he was uneasy and discontented, and displeased with Saul; and, besides, he could not think that David, with such a handful of men he had with him, would ever attempt to invade his kingdom, and seize his crown and throne, unless he was privately encouraged by his own son; and David's being either in the cave of Adullam, or forest of Hareth, whichever of them Saul heard of, he interpreted as lying in wait for him, whereas it was only for the security of himself; and what Saul took ill of his servants was, that none of them apprized him of his son's concern in this matter.

Ver. 9. *Then answered Doeg the Edomite*, &c.] Josephus[d] calls him a Syrian, and so the Septuagint version; see ch. xxi. 7. being full of enmity to David, and willing to curry favour with Saul, and eager of further preferment, which Saul seemed to promise; and being more forward than the rest of his servants, prevented them and spoke first: *(which was set over the servants of Saul;)* over his herdsmen; see ch. xxi. 7. *and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub*; in imitation of Saul, he calls David by way of contempt the son of Jesse; and signifies that what he had to say of him was not by report, but he himself was an eye-witness of his coming to Nob, a city of the priests, and to Ahimelech the high-priest there, and of what passed between them.

Ver. 10. *And he inquired of the Lord for him*, &c.] Which not being expressed before, some have taken it to be a lie of Doeg's, he being charged with lying by David, Psal. lii. 3, 4. and cxx. 2, 3. but it is not at all improbable that David should desire him to inquire of the Lord for him, and that he did; and he seems to acknowledge it, ver. 15. but according to the Jewish writers Doeg meant by this to prove a charge of treason both against David and Ahimelech; that the former

[a] De loc. Heb. fol. 88. L.
[b] T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 5. 2.
[c] Apud Ben Melech in loc.
[d] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 1, 4.

made himself king, and the latter owned him to be so, since inquiry by Urim and Thummim was not made for a private person, but for a king[*]: *and gave him victuals;* hallowed bread, loaves of shew-bread, which none but priests might eat of; such was his kindness to him: *and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine;* which David took from him, and slew him with it. All this was true, but then he acted the deceitful part, with which he is charged in the above psalms, in not declaring how David had imposed upon the priest, by pretending he was sent in haste on the king's business; which was the reason he was so ill provided with servants, food, and armour; which if Doeg had reported faithfully, as he ought to have done, would have saved the credit and life of the priest, and of his family.

Ver. 11. *Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub,* &c.] Sent messengers to him, and summoned him to appear before him: *and all his father's house:* the family of Eli, which God had threatened to destroy, and now the time was hastening on: *the priests that were in Nob:* in which dwelt none but priests, at least these were the chief of the inhabitants, and therefore called the city of the priests, ver. 19. *and they came all of them to the king;* not being conscious of any evil they had committed, or that could be charged upon them; or otherwise they would not have appeared, but would have fled to David for protection.

Ver. 12. *And Saul said, hear now, thou son of Ahitub,* &c.] The charge exhibited against him; in contempt of him, he does not so much as call him by his name, nor give him the title of his office, as high-priest; though he was the second person in the kingdom, and to whose office a few years ago the civil government was annexed: *and he answered, here I am, my lord:* giving due honour to Saul, though he received none from him, and appearing with great boldness, as having a clear conscience, and so ready to hear what was to be said unto him.

Ver. 13. *And Saul said unto him, why have ye conspired against me, thou, and the son of Jesse?* &c.] No less than treason and rebellion is he charged with, in conjunction with David; the proof follows: *in that thou hast given him bread and a sword;* the shew-bread, and the sword of Goliath, and so had furnished him with food and arms; one that he suggests was in rebellion against him, and therefore he must be involved in the same crime; but the stronger proof follows: *and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait as at this day;* inquired of the Lord for him by Urim and Thummim, to know his mind in this affair, and thereby encouraged him to rise up in rebellion against him, and to lie in wait, as he did at the present time, watching for an opportunity to seize his crown and kingdom.

Ver. 14. *Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said,* &c.] First with respect to David, and then with regard to himself; with respect to David as follows, *and who is so faithful amongst thy servants as David:* I considered him, as if he should say, as a servant of thine, upon an errand of thine, and doing thy business; and as a faithful one, none more so, and as such I valued and regarded him, not as a rebel to thee, having no such thought of him: *which is the king's son-in-law;* who has behaved himself so well, and thou hast entertained such an opinion of him, as to take him into thy family, and marry thy daughter to him; wherefore shewing him favour, and doing him honour, was doing honour to thee and thy family, and surely there can be no blame in that: *and goeth at thy bidding;* has always been ready to execute thy commands, and obey thine orders, let them be what they will; as to go out against an enemy, and fight Saul's battles for him: *and is honourable in thine house?* behaved honourably there, and highly esteemed by all, as well as had the honour bestowed upon him to be the king's son-in-law, and made captain of a thousand; and therefore who could think that shewing respect to such a man could be deemed treason and conspiracy, or he be thought to be a traitor to the king? and then with respect to himself he answers,

Ver. 15. *Did I then begin to inquire of God for him?* &c.] Was this the first time of inquiring of God for him? no; I have done this many a time, when he has been going upon the king's business, engaging in war with his enemies; he has then consulted the Lord by me, and I have inquired of the Lord for him, as I now did; and which I did as innocently, and as much for the king's service, as ever I did any. Kimchi observes it may be read without the interrogation, *that day I began to inquire of God for him;* it was the first time I ever did, and I did not know it would have been grievous to thee, or have given thee any disturbance or uneasiness. I did not know that he fled from thee, or was not in thy service, and upon thy business; had I known it, I would never have done it, and as it is the first time it shall be the last: *be it far from me;* from doing such a thing, had I known it to be disagreeable to thee, or how David stood with thee: *let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father;* charge me or them with the crime of treason, or conspiracy against him, or with aiding, assisting, and abetting traitors and conspirators: *for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more;* was entirely ignorant of this affair; which plain, honest, account of things, one might have thought, would have been satisfying to Saul; but it seems it was not by what follows.

Ver. 16. *And the king said, thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech,* &c.] He pronounces the sentence himself, without taking the opinion and advice of others, or further time; which was an act of arbitrary power, and upon an innocent person, which was an act of great injustice: *thou, and all thy father's house;* more unrighteous still; but God suffered him to do this to fulfil his will, and execute his threatenings against the house of Eli, which was this priest's father's house, for former wickedness; but this is no excuse for, nor extenuation of the sin of, Saul.

Ver. 17. *And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him,* &c.] Or the *runners*[f]; the running

[*] Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 5.

[f] לרצים cursoribus, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

footmen, that used to run before him when he went out from place to place, and were here waiting on him, ready to set out whenever he should give the orders to go elsewhere. The tradition of the Jews is, that these were Abner and Amasa[g]; but, as Kimchi observes, they were not footmen, but princes, captains in the army, and the first of them the general of it: *turn and slay the priests of the Lord*; he owns them to be the priests of the Lord, and calls them so, and yet gave orders to put them to death, though innocent; one would have thought this their character would have flown in his face, and stung his conscience, and deterred him from so foul a fact: *because their hand also is with David*; as well as Ahimelech; which did not at all appear, nor that they had so much as seen him at Nob, only Ahimelech; and still less that they had entered into a conspiracy with him: *and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me*; which also was false; they knew nothing of the flight of David, and therefore could not discover it to the king: *but the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord*; their consciences would not suffer them to do it; they refused to obey the king's orders, and chose rather to expose themselves to his resentment, than to be guilty of such a crime. Saul's footmen had more sense of honour, justice, and truth, than he himself had, and were worthy of praise; but they would have been deserving of more, if they could not have prevailed upon him by entreaties and remonstrances to have forborne such a bloody execution, instead of being the tame spectators of it, they had taken him, and bound him as a madman, and so facilitated the escape of the priests, and prevented this shocking scene of wickedness.

Ver. 18. *And the king said to Doeg, turn thou and fall upon the priests*, &c.] For determined he was they should die; if one would not put them to death, another should, and who so fit for this bloody work as the false accuser of them, and false witness against them? *and Doeg the Edomite turned*; immediately, he at once obeyed the king's orders, as brutish as they were: *and fell upon the priests*; with his sword in hand: *and slew on that day* 85 *persons that did wear a linen ephod*; not the ephod of Urim and Thummim, which was only worn by the high-priest, but a garment wholly linen, worn by common priests; the Targum is, "who are fit to be clothed with a linen ephod;" not that they were clothed with it, but were deserving of it; or it designs the great and more honourable among the servants of the Lord, as Kimchi observes, for such were clothed with this garment, as Samuel and David; and he thinks it suggests, that more were slain than these; and the Septuagint version makes them to be 305, and Josephus[h] 385; in the slaying of whom, as the same writer says, Doeg was assisted by some wicked men like himself; and the slaughter did not end here, as the next verse shews.

Ver. 19. *And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword*, &c.] Either Doeg or Saul; who, as Josephus[i] says, sent men thither to slay all the inhabitants of it: *both men and women, children and sucklings*; not sparing sex nor age: *and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword*; Saul, who was so tender-hearted and merciful in the case of the Amalekites, when his orders from the Lord were utterly to destroy them, that he spared their king, and the best of their cattle, yet now so cruel to a city of the priests, as to destroy all the inhabitants of it, and cattle in it; and yet this bloody affair of Saul's is not taken notice of afterwards, only his slaughter of the Gibeonites, 2 Sam. xxi. 1. and Abarbinel is of opinion, that the inhabitants of this place were Gibeonites, who were hewers of wood, and drawers of water, to the house of the Lord here. Now Saul was the more severe on this city, to deter others from joining with David, who, if they did, must expect the same treatment.

Ver. 20. *And one of the sons of Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped*, &c.] Who very probably was left by his father to take care of the sanctuary, and the holy things in it, when he and the rest of the priests were summoned to appear before Saul; who having heard of his bloody execution of them, before his messengers could get to Nob, took the ephod, with the Urim and Thummim, and made his escape, as appears from ch. xxiii. 6—9. this man succeeded his father in the high-priesthood, and continued in it until the times of Solomon: *and fled after David*; who was now removed, or removing from the forest of Hareth to Keilah, whither Abiathar followed him, and came to him there, ch. xxiii. 6. and with whom only he could be safe, and therefore it was right to flee unto him.

Ver. 21. *And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the Lord's priests.*] Of which perhaps he had not as yet heard; though tidings of such a nature generally fly swiftly; and a sorrowful shocking account he had to give, and which was so to David.

Ver. 22. *And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day*, &c.] That is, he thought in his mind at that time: *when Doeg the Edomite was there* at *Nob*; in the tabernacle, at the same time that David was there: *that he would surely tell Saul*; that he saw David there, and what passed between him and Ahimelech; he knew he was a spiteful mischievous man; that he was a true Edomite, though a proselyte, and bore hatred and enmity in his mind against an Israelite, and especially an Israelite indeed, as David was: *I have occasioned* the death *of all the persons of thy father's house*; or have been the cause of all the evils that befell them, and the death they were put unto, not with design, but by accident; and it grieved him that he should be any ways an accessory thereunto, though without intention.

Ver. 23. *Abide thou with me, fear not*, &c.] He appeared to be in a fright; which is not to be wondered at, as not knowing what to do, and where to go and provide for his safety; when, to allay his fears, and make him easy, David invites and encourages him to stay with him, and not be afraid of Saul, nor any other: *for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life*; or, as Kimchi observes, it may be interpreted, *my life he seeks who seeks thy life*; we are in the same circumstances,

[g] Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel. in loc.
[h] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 6.
[i] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 6.

and have the same common enemy, and therefore it is best and safest to be together; as the Targum, "he that seeks to kill me seeks to kill thee;" and as Jarchi adds, he that loves me will love thee, and he that keeps my life will keep thine: *but with me thou shalt be in safeguard:* intimating, that he would be as careful of him as of himself; and that for this reason, as Ben Gersom suggests, because he brought the ephod with the Urim and Thummim with him, by which he could inquire of God for him; but this was the thing David was confident of, that God would preserve him, and raise him to the kingdom, and therefore Abiathar might be sure of safety with him: at this time he penned the 52d psalm, which shews the frame of spirit he was now in.

CHAP. XXIII.

THIS chapter gives an account of David's relieving Keilah, when it had like to have fallen into the hands of the Philistines, ver. 1—6. and of Saul's design to surprise him there, which David having notice of, and inquiring of the Lord, departed from thence; which when Saul heard of, he forbore to come forth, ver. 7—13. and of David's being in the wilderness of Ziph, where, in a wood there, he had an interview with Jonathan, ver. 14—18. and of the Ziphites offering to deliver him up to Saul, for which he commends them, and gives them instructions how they should behave to him in that affair, ver. 19—23. and of his seeking him in the wilderness of Maon, where David and his men were in great danger of being taken; which was prevented by the news of the Philistines invading the land coming to Saul just at the nick of time, ver. 24—29.

Ver. 1. *Then they told David,* &c.] Either the men of Keilah sent to him, being near them, or some well-wishers of theirs, and of their country, acquainted him with their case: *behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah;* had laid siege to it, being a fortified place, ver. 7. it was a city in the tribe of Judah, on the borders of the Philistines; of which see the note on Josh. xv. 44. *and they rob the threshing-floors;* took away the corn upon them, which they were threshing and winnowing, which were usually done without the city for the sake of wind, see Judg. vi. 11. Ruth iii. 2, 15. it was harvest-time when the three mighty men came to David in the cave of Adullam, and so now it might be the time of threshing, harvest being over, see ch. xxii. 1. compared with 2 Sam. xxiii. 13.

Ver. 2. *Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, shall I go and smite these Philistines?* &c.] For though David was well disposed to serve his country, and was desirous of freeing them from their enemies the Philistines, he might have some doubts in his mind whether it would be right for him to engage with them now; partly because he could not act under a commission from his prince, Saul the king; and partly because he had such a small number of forces with him, that it might be hazardous for him to attack the armies of the Philistines with them, and attempt to raise the siege of Keilah; and therefore he thought it advisable, as doubtless it was, to inquire of the Lord what was his mind and will in this matter: how and by what means he inquired it is not said, very probably it was by the prophet Gad, who was with him, ch. xxii. 5. for as for Abiathar, he was not yet come with the ephod, the Urim and Thummim, to inquire by them, ver. 6. though some think that is observed there to shew in what way David did inquire, namely, by Urim and Thummim; and so Kimchi and Abarbinel understand it; and it is supposed that he came to David when he was about Keilah, and near unto it, and so before he came thither, and time enough for him to inquire by him whether he should go thither or no: *and the Lord said unto David, go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah;* which was not only giving him leave to go, and signifying it was his mind and will he should; but that he should be successful, and rout the Philistines, and raise the siege of Keilah, and save the city from falling into their hands.

Ver. 3. *And David's men said unto him, behold, we be afraid here in Judah,* &c.] Of Saul and his army falling upon them, and crushing them, though they were in the tribe of Judah, where they had many friends, and in the heart of that tribe: *how much more then if we come to Keilah:* which, though in the same tribe, yet in the further parts of it, and on the borders of the Philistines: and there engage *against the armies of the Philistines?* too numerous and powerful for them, and so by this means be driven out of their place of safety, the forest of Hareth, where they could hide themselves upon occasion; to be exposed not only to the Philistines, before them, on the edge of their country, from whence they could have succours easily, but to Saul and his army behind them; and so, being between two fires, would be in danger of being cut off.

Ver. 4. *Then David inquired of the Lord yet again,* &c.] Not for his own sake, who firmly believed it was the will of God he should go and succeed, but for the sake of his men, and to remove the doubts and fears that hung on their minds: *and the Lord answered him, and said, arise, go down to Keilah;* immediately, make no stay, nor hesitate about it, but go with all haste to the relief of the place: *for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hands;* which is still more explicit, and is a promise not only of delivering Keilah out of the hands of the Philistines, but of delivering them into David's hands, and so of an entire victory; and therefore none of David's men had any thing to fear after such a declaration of the will of God.

Ver. 5. *So David and his men went to Keilah,* &c.] Animated by a commission from God, and a promise of success by him: *and fought with the Philistines;* encamped before Keilah: *and brought away their cattle;* which they had brought with them for the support of their army; or having routed them, they pursued them into their own country, and brought off their cattle from thence: *and smote them with a great slaughter;* killed great numbers of them, and put the rest to flight:

so David saved the inhabitants of Keilah: from falling into the hands of the Philistines, by timely raising the siege of the city.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David to Keilah,* &c.] Either when he was there, or near the place: that *he came down with an ephod in his hand*: not with a linen ephod on his back, which the priests in common wore, but the ephod with the Urim and Thummim in his hand, which was peculiar to the high-priest; and his father the high-priest being dead, it belonged to him, and therefore he took care to bring it with him; though the words may be literally rendered, *the ephod came down in his hand*[k], as it were by chance, and not with design; and so some Jewish interpreters[l] understand it, that in his fright and flight, among his garments and other things he took hold of to carry with him, and not minding well what he took, this happened to be, being so ordered by the providence of God; though the Targum renders it, "the ephod he made to descend in his hand," or brought it in his hand; and so Kimchi and Abarbinel observe it may be interpreted, though they seem to incline to the other sense.

Ver. 7. *And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah,* &c.] No doubt it was told him what he came thither for, to relieve it, and deliver it out of the hands of the Philistines, and what success he had; which one would have thought would have reconciled his mind to him, and made him think well of them; but instead of that, it only led him to contrive mischief against him: *and Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand*; as if the success he had given to David was against him, and in favour of Saul: *for he is shut in, by entering into a town that hath gates and bars*: whilst he betook himself to caves, and fields, and woods, he had no great hopes of finding him out, and coming up with him, and seizing him; but now he had got into a fortified place, enclosed with walls, and that had gates to it, kept bolted and barred; when he brought his army against it, and surrounded it, he imagined he would not be able to get out, and escape his hands.

Ver. 8. *And Saul called all the people together to war,* &c.] Or *caused* them *to hear*[m], summoned them by an herald, whom he sent into all parts of the kingdom to proclaim war, and require them in his name to attend him; which was the prerogative of a king to do: *to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men*: that was what he privately intended, but the pretence was to make war against the Philistines.

Ver. 9. *And David knew that Saul secretly practised mischief against him,* &c.] That is, plotted and contrived it, formed schemes in order to do him mischief, giving out one thing, and designing another; so he pretended war against the Philistines, but his intention was to come against Keilah, and take David there: *and he said to Abiathar the priest, bring hither the ephod*; not for David to put on, but for the priest himself, that being clothed with it, and the Urim and Thummim in it, he might inquire for him of the Lord.

Ver. 10. *Then said David,* &c.] By the priest, for it was he that put the questions for and in the name of the inquirer: *O Lord God of Israel*; the great Jehovah, the covenant-God of his people, who always has a merciful regard unto them: *thy servant hath certainly heard*; had good information of it, on which he could depend: *that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah*; that was his intention and resolution: *to destroy the city for my sake*; to besiege it, and demolish it, if that was necessary, in order to take him.

Ver. 11. *Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hands? will Saul come down, as thy servant hath heard?* &c.] That is, if David continued there, which is the supposition all proceeds upon. The questions are not orderly put, as may easily be observed, the last should have been first; which shews some perturbation of mind David was in upon hearing the design of Saul against him: *O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant*; give an answer by Urim and Thummim, as he did: *and the Lord said, he will come down*; if David abode there; that was in his thoughts, in his purpose and design, which the Lord, being omniscient, full well knew, who knows all future contingencies: hence the Jews[n] gather, that two things are not to be asked together; and if they are asked, only answer is made to one, and the answer is only made to that which it was proper to ask first; and that which is asked out of order should be asked again, which was the case here, as follows.

Ver. 12. *Then said David, will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?* &c.] That is, the lords and great men of the place, the governor of the city, and the heads of it, the chief magistrates in it: *and the Lord said, they will deliver thee up*: that is, provided he stayed there; for the Lord knew the dispositions and affections of their minds, that they were inclined to do it, and would do it, if he continued among them till Saul came down; which shewed the great ingratitude of this people to their deliverer.

Ver. 13. *Then David and his men*, which were *about* 600, &c.] Having had an increase of 200 since he was at the cave of Adullam, and upon his relief of Keilah; so that he sustained no loss of men by fighting with the Philistines, but had an addition to his small forces: *arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go*; not knowing whither they should go, having no particular place in view; but went where they thought they could be safest, or that appeared the most proper place for them; so the Targum, "they went to a place which was fit to go unto;" which was fittest for their purpose, and most for their safety and security, be it where it would: *and it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah*; very likely some of the inhabitants informed him of it, since they were disposed to deliver David to him, had he stayed among them, and Saul had come down: *and he forbore to go forth*; from the place where he was, in order to come to Keilah.

Ver. 14. *And David abode in the wilderness in strong holds,* &c.] In the wilderness of Ziph, in high and strong rocks there, as it seems to be explained by what

[k] אפוד ירד בידו ephod descendit in manu sua, Pagninus, Montanus; ephod descenderat in manu sua, Munsterus; so Tigurine version and Piscator.

[l] Kimchi & Ben Melech.

[m] ישמע fecit audire, Montanus, Piscator.

[n] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 73. 1, 2.

follows: *and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of Ziph:* which had its name from a city in the tribe of Judah, of which see the note on Josh. xv. 55. *and Saul sought him every day:* for though he did not go forth from the place where he was to Keilah, yet hearing which way he went, and whereabout he lurked, he sought after him continually, if haply he might find him: *but God delivered him not into his hand:* which suggests, that it was only the providence of God that secured him, or, in all probability, such was the diligence of Saul, that he would have found him out, and he must have fallen into his hands, as he expected.

Ver. 15. *And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life,* &c.] Either he saw him with his bodily eyes from the top of the mountain where he was, ver. 14. or he perceived, he understood by informations given him by his friends, it may be by Jonathan, or by spies he sent to observe his motions: *and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood:* where he and his men could hide themselves among the trees in it; sometimes he was in a mountain in this wilderness, and sometimes in a wood, where he thought himself the safest; thus was this great man obliged to shift about for his safety.

Ver. 16. *And Jonathan, Saul's son, arose,* &c.] And came from Gibeah, which, according to Bunting [n], was 22 miles from the place where David was: *and went to David into the wood:* having had intelligence where he was, this being a proper place to have an interview with him privately: *and strengthened his hand in God:* and his heart too, his hand of faith to lay hold on God, as his covenant-God, and lean and rely upon him; he strengthened him in his power, and in his providence, and in his promises to him; the Targum is, "he strengthened him in the "Word of the Lord;" not only in his word and promise, but in Christ the essential Word of God, who should spring from him according to the flesh.

Ver. 17. *And he said unto him, fear not,* &c.] Distrust not the power, providence, and promises of God, nor dread the wrath of Saul, or fear falling into his hands: *for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee:* to lay hold on him, seize him, and do him any hurt: *and thou shalt be king over Israel;* meaning after the death of his father; which he knew either by some special revelation made to him; or rather by being informed he had been anointed by Samuel, and which he had either from Samuel or from David himself; and this he most firmly believed, though David was now in so low a condition: *and I shall be next unto thee:* not succeed him in the kingdom, but if living when he came to the throne, he should be the second man in civil affairs, as he now was, and that he should be content with: *and that also Saul my father knoweth:* having knowledge of the anointing of David by Samuel; or he might, and did conclude this from various circumstances, that David was his neighbour Samuel had told him of, God had given his kingdom to, ch. xv. 28.

Ver. 18. *And they two made a covenant before the Lord,* &c.] Renewed the covenant they had before made in the name and fear of God, and before him as a witness of it. Kimchi and Abarbinel interpret this phrase, *before the Lord,* of the covenant being made before Abiathar, with the Urim and Thummim in his hand; and so Jerom [p], before Gad the prophet, and Abiathar who wore the ephod: *and David abode in the wood;* being a proper place for him for secrecy and safety: *and Jonathan went to his house;* in Gibeah; and these two dear and cordial friends never saw one another more, as is highly probable.

Ver. 19. *Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah,* &c.] Who though he had been out in quest of David, yet was now returned to Gibeah, the place of his residence, and where he kept his court; and hither came the Ziphites, the inhabitants of Ziph, in the wilderness of which David hid himself, with a proposal to deliver him to Saul; for though they were of the same tribe with David, yet being terrified with what Saul had done to Nob, they thought it best for their own security to inform Saul where he was, and make an offer to deliver him to him. Some interpreters, as Kimchi, think that this was done before Jonathan was with Saul, and should be rendered, *the Ziphites had come up to Saul;* and hence it is before said, *and David saw,* &c. for he had heard that the Ziphites should say to Saul, that David had hid himself there; and at this time it was that David wrote the 59th psalm: *saying, doth not David hide himself with us in the strong holds in the wood;* which is in the wilderness of Ziph, in their neighbourhood; they were informed he had hid himself there, and they thought it their duty to let the king know of it: and particularly *in the hill of Hachilah, on the south of Jeshimon?* Hachilah is by Jerom [q] called Echela; and he speaks of a village of that name seven miles from Eleutheropolis, and of Jeshimon as ten miles from Jericho to the south, near the dead sea; on the top of this hill, which was an ascent of 30 furlongs, Jonathan the high-priest built a castle, and called it Masada, often spoken of by Josephus; who says [r], that Herod built a wall about it of seven furlongs, twelve cubits high, and eight broad, and thirty-seven towers of fifty cubits stood in it.

Ver. 20. *Now therefore, O king, come down,* &c.] From Gibeah to Ziph, and the wilderness of it, where David was: *according to all the desires of thy soul to come down:* to seize such a prey which he was greatly desirous of, and of nothing more so than of that. According to Abarbinel, the sense is, that the thing was ready in whatever way he should desire it; if he chose to come down himself, and lay hold on him, they invite him to come down; but if he did not choose to come down himself, they would seize him, and bring him to him, and deliver him up into his hand, and so he would be under no necessity of going down after him: *and our part* shall be *to deliver him into the king's hand:* this we will take upon us to do, and save the king the trouble of coming down.

Ver. 21. *And Saul said, blessed be ye of the Lord,* &c.] He highly commends them for the offer they made to him, blesses God for them, and desires the blessing of God upon them for it: *for ye have compassion on me:* pitied him on account of the troubles

[n] Travels, &c. p. 134.
[p] Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 76. K.
[q] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. C.

[r] De Bello Jud. l. 7. c. 8. sect. 3. Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum T. S. p. 38. 2. & 39. 1.

he met with from his son-in-law, were sorry for him, and sympathized with him, which others did not, of which he complained, ch. xxii. 8.

Ver. 22. *Go, I pray you, prepare yet*, &c.] That is, go home, return to their habitations, and get things in a greater readiness for him; inquire more diligently after David, get more intelligence of him, and inform themselves more exactly about him: *and know and see his place where his haunt is*; or *foot* [*] is, where that steps and walks most frequently, not only get knowledge of it by information, but if they could get sight of it with their own eyes, that they might describe it more exactly: and *who hath seen him there*; not only seen the place, but him in the place, and that often, that it may be certain it is the place he usually resorts to: *for it is told me* that *he dealeth very subtilly*; sometimes he is seen in one place, and sometimes in another; he is here to-day, and elsewhere to-morrow; and by such crafty methods it is not easy to know where the place is, and where to be found; this Saul had information of from some, who knew the methods David took to keep it unknown where it was; or *it says to me*; my heart says so to me, as R. Isaiah interprets it; my mind suggests this to me, knowing the man, that he uses such wiles as these: or *he said to me*, so Kimchi; when he was with me, and we were intimate, when I used to ask him how he smote the Philistines, so and so, and preserved himself from them; his answer was, *that he dealt very subtilly*, he used a good deal of craftiness; and so I imagine he does now.

Ver. 23. *See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking-places where he hideth himself*, &c.] Which he most frequents, that ye may be able to describe them, and the way to them, and easily find them when necessary: *and come ye again to me with the certainty*; of time and place, when and where he may be certainly found: *and I will go with you*; upon such certain intelligence: it is very much he did not seize this opportunity, and go directly with them; for by this delay, David being informed of the Ziphites coming to Saul to betray him, had time to depart elsewhere: *and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land*; in the land of Israel, or rather in the land that is in the tribe of Judah: *that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah*; through all the divisions of that tribe, which, as others, were divided into thousands, see Mic. v. 2.

Ver. 24. *And they arose, and went to Ziph, before Saul*, &c.] Not before his person, as if he went with them, and they before him leading the way; but they went thither before he went, to prepare things more exactly, and with more certainty, before he came, and in order to return to him again and go with him: *but David and his men* were *in the wilderness of Maon*; for by the time the Ziphites returned home, David had intelligence of their design, and therefore removed from the wilderness of Ziph to the wildesness of Maon; which, though in the same tribe, was a distinct place; see the note on Josh. xv. 55. *in the plain on the south of Jeshimon*; the same as in ver. 19. only David was now further to the south of it, and in a plain, whereas before he was on an hill.

Ver. 25. *And Saul also and his men went to seek* him, &c.] Whether the Ziphites returned to him with better intelligence, or sent him word where David was, is not said, however Saul with his army came out in search of him: *and they told David*; or it was told him, that Saul was come in quest of him: *wherefore he came down into a rock*; either into a cave in it, or he came down from the hill Hachilah to a plain or valley, in order to go up to a rock, the same with the mountain in the next verse: *and abode in the wilderness of Maon*; in which was the rock or mountain he came to: *and when Saul heard* that, *he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon*; for upon the intelligence of the Ziphites, he came out to seek for him in the wilderness of Ziph, but hearing that he was removed to the wilderness of Maon, he pursued him there.

Ver. 26. *And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain*, &c.] Saul with his army came to the very mountain where David and his men were, the one was on one side of it, and the other on the other side; there was only one mountain between them: *and David made haste to get away for fear of Saul*; he fled on one side of the mountain, whilst Saul was pursuing him on the other, and hastening to get round unto him: *for Saul and his men compassed David and his men round about to take them*; he took methods by dividing his troops, and sending them different ways, to surround David and his men, and had very near effected it.

Ver. 27. *But there came a messenger unto Saul*, &c.] From his court, by order of his council there; though the Jews [t] say it was an angel from heaven; but be it which it will, it was certainly the providence of God that directed this affair, that a messenger should come to Saul just at that very time that David was like to fall into his hands: *saying, haste thee, and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land*; were come into it, and spread themselves in it, as the word signifies, which expresses their numbers they had poured in, the force they came with, and the possessions they had already got; perhaps they had taken the advantage of Saul's departure in quest of David, to penetrate into the tribe of Benjamin, where his patrimony, residence, and court were, and which were liable to fall into their hands; and therefore his presence was immediately required, and haste was necessary.

Ver. 28. *Therefore Saul returned from pursuing after David*, &c.] Stopped short at once, as soon as ever he received the message: *and went against the Philistines*; to stop them in their progress, and drive them out of his country: *therefore they called that place Selah-hammah-lekoth*; which signifies *the rock of divisions*. David and his men, very probably, gave it this name, not only because it divided between Saul and his men, and David and his men, when they were one on one side of it, and the other on the other side of it; but because Saul was, by the providence of God, divided and separated from David here, whereby he escaped falling into his hands. The Targum is, "therefore they called that place the rock of division, "the place where the heart of the king was divided to "go here and there:" he was divided in his own

[*] רגלו pes ejus, Pagninus, Montanus.

[t] Midrash apud Yalkut in loc.

mind, and at a loss what to do; he was in two minds, as Jarchi says, and did not know which to follow, whether to return and deliver his country from the hands of the Philistines, or to pursue and take David; and others represent the soldiers of Saul as divided, some saying that since the son of Jesse was just falling into their hands, they should not leave him; others, that the war of Israel should be regarded before him, who might be found at any time [v].

Ver. 29. *And David went up from thence, &c.*] From the wilderness of Maon, having had a narrow escape for his life: *and dwelt in strong holds in En-gedi;* another place in the tribe of Judah, and which lay in the wilderness of Judah, and from whence that is called the wilderness of En-gedi; and here Dr. Lightfoot [w] thinks he penned the 63d psalm, the wilderness about En-gedi being the most desert of all other places, that being upon the borders of the dead sea; of this place, see the note on Josh. xv. 62.

CHAP. XXIV.

SAUL being returned from following the Philistines, renews his pursuit after David, ver. 1, 2. and they meeting in a cave, where David had the opportunity of taking away the life of Saul, which his men pressed him to, yet only cut off the skirt of his robe, ver. 3—8. which, calling after him, he held up to him to convince him he had his life in his hands, but spared it, ver. 9, 10. upon which he very pathetically reasons with him about the unreasonableness and unrighteousness of his pursuit after him, to take away his life, ver. 11—15. which so affected Saul, that he confessed he was more righteous than he, and owned that the kingdom would be his, and only desired him to swear to him not to cut off his offspring, which David did, and so they parted, ver. 16—22.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, &c.*] Having, as it should seem, got the victory over them, and driven them out of his country, and pursued them to their own: *that it was told him, saying, behold, David is in the wilderness of En-gedi;* in the strong holds of it, the high rocks and mountains in it, ch. xxiii. 29.

Ver. 2. *Then Saul took 3,000 chosen men out of all Israel, &c.*] Out of his army, with which he had been pursuing the Philistines: *and went to seek David, and his men, upon the rocks of the wild goats;* which were in the wilderness of En-gedi; those rocks were exceeding high and terrible to look at, full of precipices, and so prominent, that to travellers they seemed as if they would fall into the adjacent valleys, that it even struck terror into them to look at them [x]; called the rocks of wild goats, because these creatures, called from hence *rupicapræ*, or rock-goats, see Job xxxix. 1. delighted to be there; and are, as Pliny [y] says, of such prodigious swiftness, that they will leap from mountain to mountain, and back again at pleasure; these mountains David and his men chose for safety, and the height and craggedness of them did not deter Saul and his men from seeking him there.

Ver. 3. *And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave, &c.*] For the sheep to be led into at noon, to shelter them from the heat: such was the cave of Polyphemus, observed by Bochart [z], in which sheep and goats lay down and slept: see the note on Zeph. ii. 6. *and Saul went in to cover his feet:* the Targum is, to do his necessaries; and so Josephus [a]; and the Jewish commentators generally understand it of easing nature; and as the eastern people used to wear long and loose garments, these, when they performed such an action, they used in modesty to gather them close about them, that no part of the body, their feet, and especially the parts of nature which should be concealed, might be seen; but the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, *and there he lay* or *slept;* which suggest, that his going into the cave was in order to take some sleep and rest, when it was usual to cover the feet, both to prevent taking cold, and the private parts of the body being exposed to view; and this accounts better for Saul not hearing David's men in the cave, and for his being insensible of David's cuttings off the skirt of his garment, and best agrees with the use of the phrase in Judg. iii. 24. the only place besides this in which it is used; see the note there: *and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave;* unseen and unobserved by Saul, even 600 of them; nor need this seem strange, since in those parts of the world there were caves exceeding large, made so either by nature or art. Vansleb [b] speaks of a cave in Egypt so extraordinary large, that, without hyperbole, 1,000 horse might there draw up in battle array, and of another larger than that; and Strabo says [c], that towards Arabia and Iturea are mountains difficult to be passed, and in which are deep caves, one of which would hold 4,000 men: and as the mouths of these caves were generally narrow, and the further parts of them large, and also dark, persons at the entrance of them could be seen, when those in the more remote parts could not; and this cave is said to be extremely dark [d]; which accounts for Saul's being seen when he came into the cave, whereas David and his men could not be seen by him.

Ver. 4. *And the men of David said unto him, &c.*] Some of his principal men, who were about him, and near him, such as Joab and Abishai: *behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee;* now the time was come that he spoke of to him by Samuel, or Gad, or to himself directly: *behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand;* and such was Saul, as appeared by his

[v] Midrash apud Yalkut in loc.
[w] Works, vol. 1. p. 58.
[x] Adrichom. Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 47. & Brocard. ib.
[y] Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 53.
[z] Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 45. col. 467, 468.

[a] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 4.
[b] Relation of a Voyage, p. 227.
[c] Geograph. l. 16. p. 520.
[d] Le Bruyn's Voyage to the Levant, ch. 51. p. 199.

seeking to take away his life; and now he was in the hand of David to take away his life, if he pleased: *that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee:* an opportunity of this kind now offered: *then David arose;* from that part of the cave in which he was, the further part of it: *and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily;* unawares to him, and unobserved by him, which might be easily done, if Saul was asleep, and it is probable he was; and by the same way it may be accounted for that he did not hear the discourse that passed between David and his men.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him,* &c.] His conscience accused him, and he repented of what he had done: *because he had cut off Saul's skirt;* which though less than what his servants put him upon, and he might have thoughts of doing, yet was considered by him as a great indignity to his sovereign, and therefore sat uneasy on his mind.

Ver. 6. *And he said unto his men,* &c.] When he returned and brought the skirt of Saul's garment in his hand; or else he said this before that, though here mentioned, when they moved it to him to dispatch him, as he had a fair opportunity of doing it: *God forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed;* and which he could not think of but with detestation and abhorrence, since he was his sovereign lord and master, and he a subject of his, and was anointed by the order of God, and his person sacred: *to stretch forth my hand against him;* to take away his life; to cut off the skirt of his garment gave him uneasiness; but to slay him, the thought of it was shocking to him: *seeing he is the anointed of the Lord;* anointed by Samuel to be king, by order of the Lord.

Ver. 7. *So David stayed his servants with these words,* &c.] Or pacified them, as the Targum, and made them quiet and easy in that he had not slain him, and reconciled their minds to his conduct, and restrained them from laying hands on him, by observing to them, that he was the anointed of the Lord: *and suffered them not to rise against Saul;* to take away his life; he not only argued with them, but laid his commands on them that they should not slay him: *but Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way;* he rose from his sleep, and went out of the cave unhurt, and proceeded on in the way he came to the sheepcotes, and which led on further, ver. 3.

Ver. 8. *David also arose afterward,* &c.] After Saul was gone: *and went out of the cave;* where he had been all the time that Saul had been in it: *and cried after Saul;* with a loud voice: *my lord the king;* by which titles Saul would know that he was called unto: *and when Saul looked behind him;* to see who it was that called unto him: *David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed;* giving reverence and honour to him as a king; see the note on ch. xx. 41.

Ver. 9. *And David said to Saul, wherefore hearest thou men's words,* &c.] The false charges and accusations, that some of Saul's courtiers brought against David, as Doeg the Edomite, and such like sycophants and flatterers, to whom Saul hearkened, and believed what they said, and acted upon it. David chose rather to lay the blame on Saul's courtiers than on himself; and he began with him in this way, the rather to reconcile him to him, and cause him to listen to what he had to say: and represents them as *saying* to him, *behold, David seeketh thy hurt?* seeks to take away thy life, and seize upon thy crown and throne; than which nothing was more foreign from him.

Ver. 10. *Behold, this day thine eyes have seen,* &c.] Or may see; there is full proof and evidence of it, and which will be presently shewn: *how that the Lord had delivered thee to-day into mine hand in the cave;* from whence they were both just come: *and some bade me kill thee;* some of the men that were with David, some of his officers or principal friends put him upon it, having a fair opportunity, and thinking it no evil, since he was his enemy, and sought his life; or *it said, kill thee;* my heart prompted me to it, that said so at first, as Ben Gersom interprets it; some refer it to God, who in his providence said so, or so it might be understood by David, as if Providence directed him to it, by giving him such an opportunity of doing it: *but mine eye spared thee;* had pity on him, and notwithstanding the suggestions of friends, and of his own heart at first, or the seeming direction of Providence, yet he had mercy on him, and forbore slaying him: *and I said, I will not put forth my hand against my lord;* and king, whose subject I am: *for he is the Lord's anointed;* the Lord has raised him to this dignity; invested him with the office of a king, and as such I regard him, and therefore have refrained mine hand from him, from hurting him.

Ver. 11. *Moreover, my father,* &c.] So he was in a natural sense, as having married his daughter; and in a civil sense, as he was a king, and was, or ought to have been, the father of his country, and to treat his subjects as his children, and David among the rest: *see, yea see, the skirt of thy robe in my hand;* look on it again and again; view it with the eyes of thy body intently, that thou mayest be satisfied of it, and behold with the eyes of thy mind and understanding, and consider that I could as easily have had thine head in my hand as the skirt of thy robe; and here see an instance and proof of the integrity and sincerity of my heart, and cordial affections to thee, and an evidence against all the charges and accusations of my enemies, and that I have no ill design upon thy person and life, and am far from seeking thy hurt, as they say: *for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not;* not only did that to shew that he was in his power, but did not cut off his head, as he could: *know thou, and see, that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand;* this might be a full conviction to him that he had no ill, neither in his heart nor hand, to do unto him: *and I have not sinned against thee;* done nothing to offend him, never acted against his will, nor disobeyed any of his commands, or had been guilty of one overt-act of treason or rebellion, but all the reverse: *yet thou huntest my soul to take it;* pursued him from place to place, hunted him in the wildernesses of Ziph and Maon, and upon the rocks of En-gedi, as a partridge on the mountains; and lay in wait for him to kill him, as the Targum: he may be thought to have penned the *seventh* psalm at this time, or on this occasion; at least there are some passages in it, which seem to refer to his present circumstances.

Ver. 12. *The Lord judge between me and thee,* &c.] And make it appear who is in the right, and who in

the wrong: *and the Lord avenge me of thee:* if he continued thus to persecute him: *but mine hand shall not be upon thee:* to kill thee, though it may be in my power again to do it, as it has been; but this I am determined upon, let me suffer what I will, I will not lay hands on thee to do thee any hurt, but leave thee with God to requite all the evil done to me by thee.

Ver. 13. *As saith the proverb of the ancients,* &c.] It is an old saying, has been long in use, and may be applied to the present case; or the *proverb of the ancient one:* of the oldest man, the first man Adam, and of all others after him, so Kimchi; or of the Ancient One of the world, the Ancient of days, the Lord himself; so in the Talmud[a]: *wickedness proceedeth from the wicked:* as is a man, so are his actions; if he is a wicked man, he'll do wicked things; a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruits, an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil things; and as if David should say, if I had been the wicked man as I am represented, I should have committed wickedness; I should have made no conscience of taking away thy life when it was in my power; but my heart would not suffer me to do it: *but* or *and my hand shall not be upon thee:* as it has not been upon thee, because of the fear of God in me, so neither shall it be hereafter: or the sense of the proverb may be, the wickedness that comes from a wicked man, that will kill him, or be the cause of his ruin, or he will be slain by wicked men such as himself; and this may be thy case, O king, unless thou repentest: but be that as it may, which I leave with the righteous Judge, this I am determined on, *mine hand shall not be upon thee;* to take away thy life.

Ver. 14. *After whom is the king of Israel come out?* &c.] From his court and palace, with an army of men, and at the head of them: *after whom dost thou pursue?* with such eagerness and fury: *after a dead dog;* as David was in the opinion, and according to the representation of his enemies, a dog, vile, mean, worthless, of no account; a dead dog, whose name was made to stink through the calumnies cast upon him; and if a dead dog, then as he was an useless person, and could do no good, so neither could he do any hurt, not so much as bark, much less bite; and therefore it was unworthy of so great a prince, a lessening, a degrading of himself, as well as a vain and impertinent thing, to pursue after such an one, that was not worthy of his notice, and could do him neither good nor harm: *after a flea?* a little contemptible animal, not easily caught, as it is observed by some, and when caught good for nothing. David, by this simile, fitly represents not only his weakness and impotence, his being worthless, and of no account, and beneath the notice of such a prince as Saul; but the circumstances he was in, being obliged to move from place to place, as a flea leaps from one place to another, and is not easily taken, and when it is, of no worth and value; signifying, that as it was not worth his pains to seek after him, so it would be to no purpose, he should not be able to take him.

Ver. 15. *The Lord therefore be Judge, and judge between me and thee,* &c.] Signifying he did not desire to be judge in his own cause, but leave it with God to determine it for him in his providence: *and see, and plead my cause:* look with pity upon him, take his cause in his hand, plead it, and do him justice: *and deliver me out of thine hand:* which was a prayer of faith, believing he would do it in due time, see Psal. vii. 6, 8, 9, 10, 11.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul,* &c.] And wonderful it is that Saul, so full of wrath and fury, and so eager of David's life, should stand still and hear him out, and not fall upon him; this must be owing to the restraining providence of God, and to the surprise Saul was in at the sight of David coming out of the cave, whom he expected not; and especially what awed and quieted him was the sight of the skirt of his robe in his hand, which was a sure token he had his life in his hand, and spared it, which made him listen attentively to all he said: *that Saul said, is this thy voice, my son David?* he changes his language; before, when he spoke of David, it was only the son of Jesse, now my son David, as he was by marriage to his daughter, and as appeared by his filial affection to him; and though he was at such a distance from him, that he was not able to discern his countenance, yet he knew his voice, at least supposed it to be his, as his question implies, and which he might conclude from the whole of his discourse: *and Saul lifted up his voice and wept:* being affected with the kindness of David to him, and with his deliverance from the danger he was in, and yet without true repentance of his sins; for there may be many tears shed where there is no real repentance, as in the case of Esau.

Ver. 17. *And he said to David, thou* art *more righteous than I,* &c.] By which it appears he thought himself righteous, though David was more so; the righteousness of David was so glaring, that his enemy himself being judge acknowledges it, but will not confess his own wickedness, having no true sense of sin, nor real sorrow for it: *for thou hast rewarded me good;* in times past, and now; heretofore in killing Goliath, fighting his battles for him against the Philistines, driving the evil spirit from him, by playing on the harp before him, and now by sparing his life, only cutting off the skirt of his garment, when he could with equal ease have cut off his head: *whereas I have rewarded thee evil:* in seeking to take away his life at various times, by casting a javelin at him more than once, sending messengers to kill him, and hunting after him from place to place, to take him and slay him.

Ver. 18. *And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me,* &c.] The cutting off of the skirt of his robe only, when his life was in his hand, was a clear proof and full demonstration of his dealing well with him, and might sufficiently convince him he had no ill design upon him: *forasmuch as when the Lord had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not:* this was a plain proof and evidence of his kindness to him, which he owns, and also the providence of God in this affair, which had delivered him into the hands of David; by which he might see the Lord was

[a] T. Bab. Maccot, fol. 10. 2.

for David, and against him, and might have deterred him from seeking David's hurt hereafter; but it did not.

Ver. 19. *For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away?* &c.] Or *in a good way*[e], in peace and safety, without doing him any hurt; this is not usual among men, and yet this was the present case; David had found his enemy Saul, which Saul tacitly owns, and yet had let him go well away from him, without hurting him: *wherefore the Lord reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day:* he does not promise to reward him himself, but prays the Lord to reward him; and had he been sincere in it, he could not have done better for him. Some connect the former clause with this, after this manner, *if a man find his enemy, and let him go away, the Lord will reward him, the Lord reward thee,* &c. so the Syriac and Arabic versions.

Ver. 20. *And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king,* &c.] Not merely by the common report, that he was anointed by Samuel, to which yet he might give credit; but by the providence of God prospering and preserving him, and by his princely spirit and behaviour, and by calling to mind what Samuel had said to him, that his kingdom should be given to a neighbour of his better than he, and so David was by his own confession, ver. 17. and the cutting off the skirt of his garment might put him in remembrance of the rending of the skirt of Samuel's mantle, upon which he told Saul his kingdom should be rent from him; though some think that was Saul's skirt, and so now he knew thereby, when David cut off his skirt, that the kingdom would be his; and it is a tradition of the Jews[f], that Samuel said to him at that time, that he that cut off the skirt of his garment should reign after him: *and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand;* and not be rent from him; and yet notwithstanding after this he sought to destroy him.

Ver. 21. *Swear now therefore unto me by the Lord,* &c.] By the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; *that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me;* as was usually done in despotic governments in the eastern countries, and is at this day, when one is advanced to the throne of another, by whom issue is left, who may be rivals and competitors with him: *and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house;* by cutting off his seed, the same thing in different words repeated, for the confirmation of it; children bear the names of their fathers, and by them their memory is perpetuated, and cutting off them is destroying the name of their parents.

Ver. 22. *And David sware unto Saul,* &c.] That he would not cut off his posterity; which oath he religiously observed, in sparing Mephibosheth, and in punishing the murderers of Ish-bosheth; and as for the seven sons of Saul, delivered up to the Gibeonites, it may be questioned whether they were his genuine legitimate offspring; and if they were, it was by the appointment and command of God, and according to his will and pleasure they were executed, who is not bound by the oaths of men, and to whom they must be submitted, 2 Sam. xxi. 1, 14. *and Saul went home;* to his palace in Gibeah: *but David and his men got them up unto the hold;* in En-gedi, ch. xxiii. 29. not trusting to Saul, whose inconstancy, perfidy, cruel hatred, and malice, David full well knew; and therefore thought it not safe to return to his own house, nor to dwell in the open country, but in the wilderness, and among the rocks, and in the caves there, such as were in the wilderness of En-gedi; and here, and at this time, he penned the 57th psalm.

CHAP. XXV.

THIS chapter gives an account of the death of Samuel, and of the ill treatment David met with from Nabal; it begins with the death of Samuel, which was greatly lamented in Israel, ver. 1. it draws the character of Nabal, and his wife, ver. 2, 3. records a message of David to him, by his young men, desiring he would send him some of his provisions made for his sheep-shearers, ver. 4—9. and Nabal's ill-natured answer to him reported by the young men, which provoked David to arm against him, ver. 10—13, 21, 22. and this being told Abigail, the wife of Nabal, and a good character given of David and his men, and of the advantage Nabal's shepherds had received from them, and the danger his family was in through his ingratitude, ver. 14—17. she prepared a present to pacify David, went with it herself, and addressed him in a very handsome, affectionate, and prudent manner, ver. 18—31. and met with a kind reception, ver. 32—35. and the chapter is closed with an account of the death of Nabal, and of the marriage of Abigail to David, ver. 32—44.

Ver. 1. *And Samuel died,* &c.] In the interval, when Saul and David were parted, and before they saw each other again; according to the Jewish chronology[g], Samuel died four months before Saul; but other Jewish writers say[h] he died seven months before; Abarbinel thinks it was a year or two before; which is most likely and indeed certain, since David was in the country of the Philistines after this a full year and four months, if the true sense of the phrase is expressed in ch. xxvii. 7. and Saul was not then dead; and so another Jewish chronologer[i] says, that Saul died two years after Samuel, to which agrees Clemens of Alexandria[k]; and according to the Jews[l], he died the 20th of Ijar, for which a fast was kept on that day: *and all the Israelites were gathered together,*

[e] בדרך טובה in via bona, Pagninus, Montanus.
[f] Midrash Tillim apud Abarbinel. in loc.
[g] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 37.
[h] In Kimchi & Abarbinel in loc.

[i] Juchasin, fol. 11. 1.
[k] Stromat. l. 1. p. 325.
[l] Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.

and lamented him: his death being a public loss, not only to the college of the prophets, over which he presided, but to the whole nation; and they had reason to lament his death, when they called to mind the many good offices he had done them from his youth upwards; and when the government was in his hands, which was administered in the most prudent and faithful manner; and after that they had his wise counsel and advice, his good wishes and prayers for them; and the rather they had reason to lament him, since Saul their king proved so bad as he did, and at this time a difference was subsisting between David and him: *and buried him in his house at Ramah*: where he lived and died; not that he was buried in his house, properly so called, or within the walls of that building wherein he dwelt; though the Greeks[m] and Romans[n] used to bury in their own dwelling-houses; hence sprung the idolatrous worship of the Lares, or household gods; but not the Hebrews, which their laws about uncleanness by graves would not admit of, see Numb. xix. 16, 18. but the meaning is, that they buried him in the place where his house was, as Ben Gersom interprets it, at Ramah, in some field or garden belonging to it. The author of the Cippi Hebraici says[o], that here his father Elkanah, and his mother Hannah, and her two sons, were buried in a vault shut up, with monuments over it; and here, some say[p], Samuel's bones remained, until removed by Arcadius the emperor into Thrace; Benjamin of Tudela reports[q], that when the Christians took Ramlah, which is Ramah, from the Mahometans, they found the grave of Samuel at Ramah by a synagogue of the Jews, and they took him out of the grave, and carried him to Shiloh, and there built a large temple, which is called the Samuel of Shiloh to this day: *and David arose and went down to the wilderness of Paran*; on hearing of the death of Samuel, there to indulge his mourning for him; or rather that he might be in greater safety from Saul, being further off, this wilderness lying on the south of the tribe of Judah, and inhabited by Arabs, and these called Kedarenes; and now it was that he dwelt in the tents of Kedar, Psal. cxx. 5.

Ver. 2. *And there was a man in Maon*, &c.] A city of the tribe of Judah, from whence the wilderness had its name before mentioned; of which place, see Josh. xv. 55. though Ben Gersom takes it to signify a dwelling-place; and that this is observed to shew, that he did not dwell in a city, but had his habitation where his business lay, which was in Carmel, where his fields, gardens, and vineyards were: wherefore it follows, *whose possessions were in Carmel*; not Carmel in the tribe of Issachar, but in the tribe of Judah, not far from Maon, and are mentioned together, Josh. xv. 55. see the note there; his cattle were there, his sheep particularly, for they are afterwards said to be shorn there; or *his work*[r]; his agriculture, his farming, where he was employed, or employed others in sowing seed, and planting trees: *and the man was very great*; in worldly substance, though not in natural wisdom and knowledge, and especially in true religion and piety: *and he had 3,000 sheep, and 1,000 goats*: so the substance of men in those times was generally described by the cattle they had, whether of the herd or flock, in which it chiefly lay: *and he was shearing his sheep in Carmel*; which was the custom in Judea and Syria, and was a very ancient one, as early as the times of Judah, yea, of Laban, see Gen. xxxi. 19. and xxxviii. 12, 13. though the old Romans used to pluck off the wool from the sheep's backs; hence a fleece of wool was called *vellus a vellendo*, from the plucking it off; and Pliny says[s], in his time, that sheep were not shorn everywhere, but in some places the custom of plucking off the wool continued; and who elsewhere observes[t], that the time of shearing was in June or July, or thereabouts; at which times a feast was made, and it is for the sake of that this is observed.

Ver. 3. *Now the name of the man was Nabal*, &c.] Which signifies a *fool*; one would think his parents should not give him this name, though it is a name proper enough to men in common; and Kimchi thinks this was a nick-name, which men gave him agreeably to his genius and conduct, and which is not improbable: *and the name of his wife Abigail*: which signifies *my father's joy*, he delighting in her for her wit and beauty, as follows: *and she was a woman of good understanding, and of a beautiful countenance*; she was not only of a good understanding in things natural, civil, and domestic, but in things spiritual, as her speech to David shews, and which, with her external form, completed her character, and greatly recommended her; which is the character Ælianus[u] gives of Aspasia, wise and fair: *but the man was churlish and evil in his doings*; morose and ill-natured in the temper and disposition of his mind, and wicked in his conversation, and fraudulent and oppressive in his dealings with men: *and he was of the house of Caleb*; or he was a Calebite[w], a descendant of that great and good man Caleb the son of Jephunneh; which was an aggravation of his wickedness, that he should be the degenerate plant of such a noble vine: some interpret it, *he was as his heart*, as his heart was bad, so was he; some men, their outside is better than their inside; but this man was no hypocrite, he was as bad outwardly as he was inwardly: the word Caleb sometimes signifies a dog; hence the Septuagint version renders it, a doggish man, a cynic; and to the same purpose are the Syriac and Arabic versions; and so some Jewish writers interpret it; but the Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, supply it as we do, that he was of the house or family of Caleb, and so of the tribe of Judah, as David was.

Ver. 4. *And David heard in the wilderness*, &c.] In the wilderness of Paran, where he was, and a wilderness it was to him, being in want of food, as the following relation shews: *that Nabal did shear his sheep*;

[m] Plato in Minoë.
[n] Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 6. p. mihi, 1013.
[o] P. 00.
[p] Heidman. apud Hottinger. in ib.
[q] Itinerar. p. 50.
[r] מעשהו opus ejus, Montanus, Vatablus; cujus opus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[s] Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 48.
[t] Ibid. l. 18. c. 27.
[u] Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 1.
[w] כלבו keri כלבי Calibita, Pagninus, Montanus; Calebita, Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

when there was generally good living, and so a proper person, and a proper time, for David to apply for the relief of his wants.

Ver. 5. *And David sent out ten young men*, &c.] Such persons, and such a number of them, he sent to shew honour and reverence to Nabal: *and David said unto the young men, get ye up to Carmel;* which lay higher than the wilderness, in which he was: *and go to Nabal, and greet him in my name;* ask him of his peace and welfare, as the Targum; wish all health and happiness in my name, present my service and best respects to him.

Ver. 6. *And thus shall ye say to him that liveth in prosperity*, &c.] That lives, whilst others, as David and his men, might be rather said to starve than live; they lived in great meanness, but he in great abundance, and therefore in a capacity to give to others, and particularly to relieve them: or the sense is, they should say to him, *thus* shall it be, or may it be *for life;* for the time of life, for the year to come; at this time next year, at next sheep-shearing, mayest thou be in as great prosperity then as now, and even all the days of thy life: *peace* be *both to thee, and peace* be *to thine house, and peace* be *unto all that thou hast;* that is, all prosperity to thy person in soul and body, to thy family, wife, children and servants, and let the same attend thy estate, cattle, farms, fields, vineyards, and all that belong to thee; and wish for a blessing on him, and his, and all that were his, or he had; a more extensive one could not well be made.

Ver. 7. *And now I have heard that thou hast shearers*, &c.] Men employed in shearing his sheep, which was a time of feasting and gladness, and therefore David sent his young men to him at this time with his compliments upon it; and in order to obtain what he intended by this message to him, he observes the favours he and his men had done to his servants, and the advantages which they had received from them: *now thy shepherds which* were *with us;* feeding their sheep near the wilderness of Paran, which was not far from Carmel and Maon: *we hurt them not;* by taking any of their sheep and lambs from them, or by abusing, beating them, or giving them ill language; or *did not put them to shame*[x], by denying them any thing they asked of them, which was in their power to grant, nor mocked and scoffed at them, and jeered them on account of their occupation: *neither was there ought missing unto them;* they did not steal a sheep or lamb from them, as was common for soldiers to do; nor did they suffer any of the Arabs, that dwelt in the wilderness of Paran, to rob them, who lived upon plunder, or any of the wild beasts to hurt them, as much as in them lay; so careful were they of them, and were a wall unto them by night and day, as Nabal's servants owned, ver. 16. and this was the case, *all the while they were in Carmel;* or in the fields, ver. 15. which were joining to the wilderness of Paran.

Ver. 8. *Ask thy young men, and they will shew thee*, &c.] The shepherds before mentioned, who kept their flocks hard-by them: *wherefore let the young men find favour in thine eyes;* the ten young men David sent to Nabal: *for we are come in a good day;* a day in which Nabal made a feast for his shearers, as was usual then, and still is, see 2 Sam. xiii. 23—28. and at such times as persons are generally cheerful and merry, so free and liberal, and as there were plenty of provisions, not only enough for the guests and shearers, but to spare, and there was no need for an increase of expense, it might upon the whole be concluded it was a proper time for David to apply for accommodations for himself and his men: *give, I pray thee, whatsoever cometh to thine hand unto thy servants, and to thy son David;* he did not request any thing extraordinary of him, or to put him to any expense, but what was at hand, and he could spare, he prayed him to deliver to the young men he sent, for their use, and the use of other his servants, and particularly David, who styled himself his son, being of the same tribe with Nabal, and Nabal his senior.

Ver. 9. *And when David's young men came*, &c.] To Carmel: *they spake to Nabal according to all those words in the name of David;* they delivered their message punctually and exactly, in the very words, or however according to the purport of them, in David's name, as he enjoined them: *and ceased;* from speaking, waiting for Nabal's answer; or *they rested*[y], from the fatigues of their journey; which they did not until they had delivered their message to Nabal, and then they took the liberty to sit down and rest themselves; but the former sense seems best, and is preferred by Maimonides[z].

Ver. 10. *And Nabal answered David's servants, and said*, &c.] In a very haughty manner, in great wrath, just as churlish covetous persons do, when they don't care to give what is asked of them: *who is David? and who is the son of Jesse?* his two questions, which relate to the same person, don't well agree together, since by both he would suggest as if he knew not the person they came from, and whose name they made use of: had he stopped at the first question, it might have gone so, but his second question betrays him, and plainly shews he did know him, though he speaks with contempt of him, calling him the son of Jesse, as Saul often did. Abarbinel, of all interpreters, is of opinion only, that Nabal did not say this disrespectfully of David, and to his dishonour; he knew he was the Lord's anointed, and the king's son-in-law; but the sense, according to him, is, *who is David? and who is the son of Jesse?* are they not one man? but though he is the son of Jesse, and prides himself, saying, I shall be king, I should not regard that, but would send him corn, and bread, and food, as much as is needful for his own use; but what can I do when there are so many servants? for they are 600 of them, and they are too many to relieve: *there be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master;* which words also the same writer thinks have no reference to David, only to his men; but they seem plainly to strike at David himself, and suggest that he had revolted from and rebelled against Saul his master, as well as received and protected fugitives and runagates, such as fled from their masters and from their creditors, see ch. xxii. 2.

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[x] לא הכלמנום non affecimus verecundia eos, Montanus; so some in Vatablus.

[y] וינוחו & quieverunt, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster.

[z] Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 67.

Ver. 11. *Shall I then take my bread, and my water,* &c.] Which include all food and liquors, every thing eatable and drinkable; and *water* may be particularly mentioned, because very scarce in the wilderness, and so precious; though the Septuagint version has *wine* instead of water: *and my flesh which I have killed for my shearers;* whether oxen, or sheep, or lambs, as there might be of each sort, for an entertainment made on such an occasion: *and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?* which is another argument Abarbinel makes use of, that he meant not David, but his men only, because he did not know who and from whence they were.

Ver. 12. *So David's young men turned their way,* &c.] Their backs on him, without making any reply; and though they did not return railing for railing, they treated him with silent contempt; and though they did not offer to do any injury to his person, nor to take any thing away by force, yet they were determined to report this usage to David, who they doubted not would avenge the affront put on him and them: *and went again;* to the wilderness from whence they came: *and came and told him all these sayings;* rude and reproachful ones, just as they were delivered.

Ver. 13. *And David said unto his men,* &c.] Provoked to the last degree to have such a rude churlish answer returned to such a civil and humble message as he had sent: *gird you on every man his sword;* and prepare to march and chastise Nabal for his insolence: *and they girded on every man his sword;* in obedience to David, and in vindication of his honour and their own: *and David also girded on his sword;* in order to march at the head of them, fired with indignation at the affront given him: *and there went up after David about 400 men;* out of the 600 he had with him, ch. xxiii. 13. *and 200 abode by the stuff;* the baggage in their camp; the Targum is, they "were left to watch the vessels;" the things necessary for their use, for the dressing of their food, their bedding, &c.

Ver. 14. *But one of the young men told Abigail, Nabal's wife,* &c.] Not one of David's young men, as what follows shews, but one of Nabal's young men or servants, one of those David directs him to for the truth of what he said, ver. 8. this was one of those that had been employed in feeding sheep in the wilderness, where David was, and knew him, but was now at Carmel, and was present when David's messengers came to Nabal, and was privy to what passed: *saying, David sent messengers out of the wilderness to salute our master;* in a very kind and handsome manner, to ask of his peace and welfare, and to wish him all happiness and prosperity; or *masters*[t], master and mistress, including both Nabal and Abigail: *and he railed on them;* gave them very abusive language, represented David and his men as a parcel of scoundrels, fugitives, and runaway servants; or *he flew at them*[u]; or *upon* them, in great wrath and fury, calling them hard names, bidding them begone about their business; the allusion is to a ravenous bird, which will fly at persons when it apprehends its young in any danger.

Ver. 15. *But the men were very good unto us,* &c.] Very kind and civil, yea, very useful and serviceable, even all the messengers David sent and Nabal railed on, yea, all David's men, and therefore deserved better treatment than they met with from Nabal: *and we were not hurt;* neither by them nor others: *neither missed we any thing;* of our flocks, or any thing belonging to us; they neither robbed us themselves, nor suffered others to rob us: *as long as we were conversant with them, when we were in the fields;* feeding the sheep by them: thus he confirms every thing that David said of himself and his men, ver. 7. see the note there: and says even more of them to their commendation, as follows.

Ver. 16. *They were a wall unto us both by night and day,* &c.] Protecting and defending them against the Philistines, who, as they robbed the threshing-floors of Keilah, would have plundered the flocks of Nabal: or it may be rather against the incursions of the Arabs in the wilderness of Paran, the posterity of Ishmael, who lived by plunder, and against the wild beasts of the desert, who otherwise would have carried off many of their sheep and lambs, by night or by day: *all the while we were with them keeping the sheep;* all which shewed how reasonable it was that Nabal should have used them well, and given them a portion of his entertainment at his sheep-shearing; for had it not been for them, he would not have had so many sheep to shear as he had.

Ver. 17. *Now therefore know and consider what thou wilt do,* &c.] For the preservation of her family: *for evil is determined against our master, and against all his household;* which he concluded, either from something that dropped from David's messengers, as they turned away from Nabal; or from the martial spirit of David himself, who would never put up such an affront and indignity cast upon him; or from some intelligence he had of David's arming his men, and marching to take vengeance: *for he is such a son of Belial, that a man cannot speak to him;* meaning Nabal, who was such a worthless, passionate, and ill-natured man, such a lawless and imperious one, that he would not suffer a man to speak to him about any thing; and it was to no purpose to attempt it, which was a reason this servant did not choose to speak to him about this affair, but to Abigail; and suggests, that it would signify nothing for her to speak to him about it, but it would be most advisable for her to consider with herself what was to be done immediately, without consulting him: the words may be rendered, *for he is a son of Belial that speaks unto him*[w]; or when *he speaks unto him,* or it is told him; meaning not the servant that reported to David what Nabal said; for Abarbinel observes there were ten of them, and therefore it could not be said of them, he is a son of Belial; but rather David himself, as he and Kimchi observe it may be interpreted of; that though he was so good and upright a man, yet when it should be told him how Nabal had treated him, he would be so provoked at it, that he would become and act like a son of Belial; storm and rage, and vow destruction to Nabal and his family,

[t] אדנינו dominos nostros, Malvenda.

[u] ויעט בהם & involavit in eos, Coccei Lex. col. 607.

[w] מדבר אליו loquens ad eum.

and come out with his whole army to destroy them; but the first sense is best.

Ver. 18. *Then Abigail made haste, &c.*] As the case required, her family being in imminent danger: *and took 200 loaves*; of bread; of what bigness or weight they were is not said; though it may be reasonably concluded they were pretty large, since they are not called cakes, but loaves, and since they were to be a present to David and his men, who were numerous: *and two bottles of wine*: not such as ours are, which would have borne no proportion to the rest of the provision; but these were leathern bags which held a large quantity, in which they put and carried wine in those times and countries; the Septuagint version is, two vessels or casks of wine: *and five sheep ready dressed*: killed and dressed by the butcher, or made ready by the cook, boiled or roasted; the word which the Targum uses, according to the interpretation of Jarchi, from one of their Rabbins, signifies such as were stuffed with small pieces of meat, and eggs in them, or, as it should seem, made into pasties: *and five measures of parched corn*: or five seahs, a measure which held, according to Bishop Cumberland[b], two wine-gallons, four pottles, and a little more; of this parched corn, see the note on ch. xvii. 17. where mention is made of an ephah of it; and the Septuagint version has the same measure here, and calls them five ephahs of flour: *and 100 clusters of raisins*; or dried grapes, as the Targum; the Septuagint is, one omer of them, which was the tenth part of an ephah: *and 200 cakes of figs*: which were dried, and pressed, and made into lumps, and she took 200 of these; or, as the Targum, 200 pound weight of them: *and laid* them *on asses*: one not being sufficient to carry all this provision.

Ver. 19. *And she said to her servants, go on before me, &c.*] With the present, the sight of which she wisely considered would in a great measure pacify David, and prepare him to hear patiently what she had to say to him: *behold, I come after you*; signifying it would not be long ere she came up to them, and overtook them: *but she told not her husband Nabal*; neither the danger he and his family were in through his conduct, nor the preparations she had made to prevent it; knowing his perverse and obstinate disposition, that it would take up too much time to reason with him, and persuade him, and bring him into proper measures; and which may be observed to excuse the conduct of Abigail in doing what she did, and taking and disposing of her husband's goods, without his knowledge and leave; the case required haste, and it was done to preserve him and his family from imminent ruin; and besides, he might not be in a fit condition to be spoken to, being drunk with passion, or with wine, or both, see ver. 36. and no doubt she was directed by the spirit of God to do what she did; and this being an extraordinary case, is not to be drawn into an example.

Ver. 20. *And it was so, as she rode on the ass, &c.*] After her servants: *that she came down by the covert of the hill*; by the side of it, which was covered with bushes, and she rode among them, in a way that led through them, and so was not seen by David and his men; or by the shadow of the hill, toward the bottom of it, where by reason of that, and the opposite hill, it was darkish, and they could not see each other: *and, behold, David and his men came down against her*; came down a hill opposite to that she came down: *and she met them*; in the valley between two hills.

Ver. 21. *Now David had said, &c.*] When the messengers returned and told him how they had been used by Nabal; or he *said*[c], or was saying within himself, or to his men, what follows, just as Abigail met him: *surely in vain have I kept all that this* fellow *hath in the wilderness*; which shews that he was in a violent passion, and had Nabal in the utmost contempt and indignation, in that he mentions not his name, only says *this*, this man or fellow; leaving a blank to be filled up with the most ignominious name and character that could be thought of; and repents that he had taken so much care of his flocks when they were feeding by him in the wilderness: *so that nothing was missed of all that* pertained *unto him*; and seems to have wished he had suffered his flocks to have been robbed by the Arabs, or worried by wild beasts, since he had been such an ungrateful wretch to him: *and he hath requited me evil for good*; he had requited evil to him by denying to send him any of his provisions, and by abusing him and his men with opprobrious language; and this was done in return for the good deeds he had done in protecting his servants and his flocks in the wilderness, and for the good words and respectful message he had sent unto him.

Ver. 22. *So and more also do God unto the enemies of David, &c.*] Give them as much health and prosperity, as much wealth and riches, as Nabal has, and much more: *if I leave of all that* pertain *to him, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall*; which is generally understood of a dog, that he would not leave him so much as a dog; but it is better, with Ben Gersom, to interpret it of the males in his house, himself, his sons, and servants; and so the Targum paraphrases it of reasonable creatures, of such "that "know knowledge," or are knowing and understanding creatures; it seems to have been towards the evening of the day when David was marching towards Nabal's house, designing to fall upon him and his, amidst their jollity that night, and cut them all off before morning. This must be imputed to the sudden and violent passion David was thrown into when off his guard, through the necessity he was in, the disappointment he met with, and the opprobrious language he was treated with; but in this his conduct was not as it used to be, and as it was towards Saul his enemy. Nor is his rage and passion to be vindicated, or the rash vow he made to destroy Nabal and his family; his crime, though great, yet not to be punished with death; his ingratitude and insolence deserved resentment, but were not capital crimes worthy of death, and especially of the destruction of his whole family; the Jews indeed make him to be guilty of treason, in that he knew that David was anointed king, and yet both abused him, and disobeyed his commands, and therefore being guilty of overt-acts of treason, he and

[b] Of Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 3. p. 86.

[c] אמר ait, V. L. dixit, Pagninus, Montanus; dicebat, Vatablus.

his were deserving of death; but David was not yet king.

Ver. 23. *And when Abigail saw David, &c.*] Whom she either knew personally, or rather supposed who he was by the number of men that followed him: *she hasted, and alighted off the ass;* on which she rode: *and fell before David on her face, and bowed herself to the ground;* in respect to, and reverence of, so great a person as David was.

Ver. 24. *And fell at his feet, &c.*] As an humble supplicant, having a favour to ask of him; it is very probable David was on foot: *and said, upon me, my lord,* upon *me* let this *iniquity* be; which her husband had been guilty of; she desires it might be transferred from him to her, and be reckoned as if done by her; she would have it imputed to herself, and all the blame lie upon her, and the punishment for it be inflicted on her; for iniquity may be put for the punishment of iniquity: this was very artfully said, as well as expressed great affection for her husband, and care of his life; for she knew, if she could get the fault removed from him to her, she would be able to vindicate herself, and her innocence would soon appear; nor would this strong affection for her husband fail of answering some good purpose, as she full well knew: *and let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak in thine audience, and hear the words of thine handmaid:* as it was but reasonable she should be heard, since she stood now as the criminal, taking all the blame of her husband's conduct on herself.

Ver. 25. *Let not my lord, I pray thee, regard this man of Belial,* even *Nabal, &c.*] He is a worthless man, it must be owned, a weak foolish man, rather to be despised than regarded by him; what either he says or does is unworthy of the notice of any, and much less of so great a person as David was: *for as his name is, so is he:* his natural disposition, genius, and conduct, agree with his name; when any one knows his name, he may judge what is to be expected from him: *Nabal is his name;* which signifies a fool: *and* Nebalah, *folly is with him;* attends all his words and actions. This character of her husband, though no doubt a just one, yet it would not have been right in her to have given it, whose folly she should rather have concealed, but that it was his well-known character; and she observes it not to reproach him with it, but to excuse his sin, his rudeness and ingratitude, and preserve his life; and suggests that what he had done was not to be imputed to malice in his heart, but to his stupidity and folly, and so not to be regarded, and was not a peculiar single action of his, but what he was daily more or less guilty of; his folly was with him wherever he went, and appeared in every thing he said or did, and therefore to be overlooked and despised: *but I thine handmaid saw not the young men of my lord, whom thou didst send;* as she had taken the blame upon herself, now she answers for herself, and pleads ignorance of his messengers, and their message; she had not so much as seen them with her eyes, and much less heard their message when reported; had she, she would have taken care, she intimates, that it should have been attended to; having so much interest in her husband, that she could have prevailed on him to have used them with civility, and granted their request.

Ver. 26. *Now therefore, my lord,* as *the Lord liveth, and* as *thy soul liveth, &c.*] Which is an oath, and respects either what goes before, that she never saw the young men that were sent to Nabal, or to what follows, the providence of God in preventing David from shedding blood, which she was sure of, by an impulse on her own mind, and by observing a change in David's countenance: *seeing the Lord hath withholden thee from coming to shed blood, and from avenging thyself with thine own hand:* she does not impute this to her prudence, and the provision she made to appease David, and prevent him from shedding the blood he intended, and taking the vengeance he had resolved on; but to the Lord, and the interposition of his providence, which she knew would have its weight on the mind of so good a man as David was; who upon reflection would be thankful that he had been prevented from shedding innocent blood, as the Targum calls it: *now let thine enemies, and they that seek evil to my lord, be as Nabal;* meaning Saul, and those with him, wishing they might be as inconsiderable as Nabal; as unable, as weak, and impotent as he to do him any hurt, and as short-lived, and cut off by the hand of God, as he would be; for, according to Jarchi, she prophesied under the direction of the Holy Spirit. It may be observed that in this, and the preceding verses, she frequently gives David the title of *my lord,* in reverence of him, and to atone for the rudeness and insolence of her husband, in speaking of him as a runaway servant.

Ver. 27. *And now this blessing, which thine handmaid hath brought unto my lord, &c.*] The present, consisting of the things mentioned in ver. 18. which came as a blessing from God, and with good will from her: *let it even be given unto the young men that follow my lord;* the servants of David: in the original it is, *that walk at the feet of my lord;* and which the Targum paraphrases, *who minister before my lord;* and so Abigail's damsels are called *pedissequæ,* or *that walked at her feet,* ver. 42. and with the Romans, in after-times, servants were called *a pedibus* and *pedissequi*[d]. This also is very artfully said, as if the present was not good enough for David, and worthy of his acceptance, but might be agreeable to his men, and of service to them.

Ver. 28. *I pray thee, forgive the trespass of thine handmaid, &c.*] The trespasses, as the Targum, either the sin of her husband, she had taken upon herself, or her boldness in troubling him with her petitions and solicitations, and even with the present she had brought: *for the Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house;* or a firm kingdom, as the Targum; would raise him to the kingdom of Israel, and establish it in his posterity, that it should not be taken from him, as it would be from Saul: *because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord;* the battles of the people of the Lord, as the Targum, of the people of Israel against the Philistines; which he had often done with success, the Lord being with him, and prospering him, and therefore would firmly settle him on the throne, and continue the kingdom in his posterity: *and evil hath*

[d] Vid. Pignorium de Servis, p. 140, 243, 293.

not been found in thee all *thy days;* no unjust action had been committed by him against his king and country, however he had been reproached and calumniated; and she hoped that therefore none would be done by him now to stain so fair a character.

Ver. 29. *Yet a man is risen to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul,* &c.] His life, to take it away, meaning Saul, whom she chose not to name, because he was king: *but the soul of my lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God;* should be dear unto the Lord, precious in his esteem, and be carefully preserved by him, among other his chosen ones, and should be safe with him, in his hands, and under his care and keeping; the Jews refer this to eternal life in the world to come, and the safety and security of his soul hereafter: so the Targum, "the soul of my lord shall be "treasured up in the treasury of eternal life, before the "Lord thy God:" hence they speak of the souls of the righteous being laid up under the throne of glory [e], in proof of which they produce this text; and so Maimonides [f] understands it of what should be after death, see Rev. vi. 9. Col. iii. 3. *and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out,* as out *of the middle of a sling:* that is, remove them swiftly and suddenly, and with force, out of the world, as a stone is slung out of the middle of a sling; see Jer. x. 18.

Ver. 30. *And it shall come to pass, when the Lord shall have done to my lord according to all the good that he hath spoken concerning thee,* &c.] Performed his promise, especially with respect to his kingdom, as follows: *and shall have appointed thee ruler over Israel;* that is, actually raised him to be, and settled him as king upon the throne of Israel; for he was both appointed and anointed already; and this Abigail knew, and was now well known in Israel, and the common talk of the people.

Ver. 31. *This shall be no grief unto thee, nor offence of heart unto my lord,* &c.] It would give him no trouble, nor distress of mind, or sit uneasy on his conscience: *either that thou hast shed blood causeless, or that my lord hath avenged himself;* which she suggests it might do, if he had shed the blood of Nabal's family, his children and servants, who were no ways concerned with him in his rudeness and ingratitude; or had avenged himself on him for the same, by taking away his life, which such crimes, however great and aggravated, did not deserve; but, on the contrary, it would be a satisfaction and pleasure to him to reflect upon it, that he had passed over such an offence, and shed no blood on account of it: *but when the Lord shall have dealt well with my lord;* by delivering him out of the hands of all his enemies, and have raised him to, and settled him on the throne of Israel, of which she made no doubt: *then remember thine handmaid;* the advice she gave not to shed blood, and take vengeance, for which he would then be thankful, and gratefully remember: some, as Ben Gersom, think she said this under a spirit of prophecy, that Nabal should die quickly, and she should be David's wife; but rather her meaning is, that when he should be king, and she should apply to him on any account, to have justice done her, and to be assisted and relieved when oppressed, that he would then remember her, and shew her favour.

Ver. 32. *And David said to Abigail,* &c.] Having heard her out, and being overcome with her rhetoric and powerful arguments: *blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me;* who put it into her heart to come out and meet him, and endeavour to avert him from his bad design, which his heart was set upon; he saw plainly the hand of God in it, and in the first place acknowledges the goodness of divine Providence, in directing her to take the step she did.

Ver. 33. *And blessed* be *thy advice,* &c.] Thanks be to God, and to thee for it, being wise, good, and seasonable; or *thy taste* [g], thy good sense, knowledge, as the Targum, discretion, prudence, and understanding: *and blessed* be *thou which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood;* he came out with a full resolution to shed the blood of Nabal, and of all the males in his house, but was stopped by Abigail; who by her arguments so prevailed upon him as to cause him to desist from his design, and thankful he was to God for it; for though he had vowed he would destroy Nabal and his family, yet being a rash sinful vow, he saw it was better to break it than to keep it: *and from avenging myself with mine own hand;* which to do would have been sinful, vengeance only belonging to God; and now he leaves it to him, and is very thankful that he was prevented doing it himself.

Ver. 34. *For in very deed,* as *the Lord God of Israel liveth,* &c.] An oath for the confirmation of what he was about to say: *which hath kept me back from hurting thee;* from doing any ill to her family, as he intended, though not to her person, his resolution being only to slay the males; but that would have been an hurt, an evil, an affliction to Abigail, from which the Lord in his providence restrained him, and that through her good advice: *except thou hadst hasted, and come to meet me;* if she had not made quick dispatch in preparing her present, or had stayed to persuade her husband into her measures; if she had delayed a little longer, David would have been at Nabal's house, executing his vengeance on him and his: *surely there had not been left unto Nabal, by the morning light, any that pisseth against the wall:* see the note on ver. 22.

Ver. 35. *So David received of her hand that which she had brought him,* &c.] Her present, ver. 18. and which he kindly took for his own use, as well as for his men; for it was a present for a prince: *and said to her, go up in peace to thine house;* in peace of mind, having her request granted, and nothing to fear from David and his men, and so might return home with the greatest safety in her own person, with those that were with her, and be under no apprehensions of danger and destruction to Nabal and his family: *see, I have hearkened to thy voice;* to her arguments and reasonings, which were powerful; to her petitions, which were granted; and to her good counsel and advice, which he took: *and have accepted thy person;* done as she desired, forgave the offence, and so lifted her up, as the word signifies, and made her countenance cheerful; received

[e] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 152. 2.

[f] Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 41.

[g] טעמך sapor tuus, Piscator; discretio tua, Montanus.

her present kindly, and took well all she said and did; and promised to grant her, for the future, any thing that lay in his power, whenever she should apply to him, see Job xlii. 8, 9.

Ver. 36. *And Abigail came to Nabal*, &c.] Having sped with David, and taken her leave of him, she returned home to her husband Nabal: *and, behold, he held a feast in his house like the feast of a king*; both for the number of dishes on his table, and of guests at it, though only on the account of sheep-shearing; but very probably there were others that were invited to this entertainment besides the shearers; covetous men are generally very profuse when they make feasts: *and Nabal's heart was merry within him, for he was very drunken*; which was a very ill example for the master of the feast to set, and was one instance among others of his folly, and of his conduct answering to his name: *wherefore she told him nothing less or more until the morning light*; where she had been, and what she had been about, the danger that he and the whole family were in through his rude and churlish behaviour towards David and his men, and how she had prevented it by a timely application to David, meeting him when in full march, and in a great passion, and with a firm resolution to destroy him and his; but finding Nabal in such a condition, bereaved of his reason, and incapable of attending to what she should say, said not one word about it till the next morning.

Ver. 37. *But it came to pass in the morning, when the wine was gone out of Nabal*, &c.] When he had slept, and was become sober, and so capable of attending to and understanding what might be related to him: *and his wife had told him these things*; recorded in this chapter, before observed: *that his heart died within him, and he became as a stone*; he swooned away, became as cold as a stone, and remained as senseless, spoke not a word, but lay in a stupor; the Jewish writers generally say this was occasioned by the distress and uneasiness the present his wife carried to David gave him; but it is more likely the sense of the danger that was impressed upon his mind, which he had been exposed to through his carriage to David and his men; who, he feared, notwithstanding all his wife said, would return and take vengeance on him.

Ver. 38. *And it came to pass, about ten days after*, &c.] After he had lain in this stupid and senseless manner for ten days: *that the Lord smote Nabal, that he died*; with some disease, or increased the grief of his heart, and the fears of his mind, that he died therewith.

Ver. 39. *And when David heard that Nabal was dead*, &c.] As he soon might, Maon and Carmel not being far from the wilderness where David was: *he said, blessed be the Lord, that hath pleaded the cause of my reproach from the hand of Nabal*; not that he rejoiced at the death of Nabal, simply considered, or from a private spirit of revenge; but because of the glory of divine justice, which he had shewn to him in vindicating him from the reproach Nabal had cast upon him, and particularly was thankful for what follows: *and hath kept his servant from evil*; from slaying Nabal with his own hand, and doing hurt to his family: *for the Lord hath returned the wickedness of Nabal upon his own head*; and upon no other, none of his family suffered but himself, and which was another cause of thankfulness to David; had he been suffered to have done as he in his wrath determined, not only Nabal, but all the males in his house, had been cut off; but now, through the righteous judgment of God, only Nabal suffered, and not any of his family: *and David sent and communed with Abigail*; by his messengers to her; or *concerning* her[h], about marrying her: *to take her to him to wife*; for being both a beautiful and wise woman, he thought her a proper person to be his wife; which she might lawfully become, Nabal being dead, and Michal, David's wife, being taken from him, and given to another man, with whom she lived in adultery; or as divorced by David, as the Jews say, David by the law of God was free from her. These messengers were sent by David at a convenient time, at a proper distance from the death of Nabal; and he chose rather to send messengers than to go himself, lest being denied he should be put to shame, she being a rich widow, and he a poor persecuted man, and that her answer might be entirely free and unawed by him, and that it might appear that she was not taken to him by force; and besides, such a method has been always reckoned most honourable with great personages.

Ver. 40. *And when the servants of David were come to Abigail to Carmel*, &c.] For though Nabal lived in Maon, yet having possessions in Camel, he had no doubt an house there also; and here Abigail was, and perhaps chose to be after his death, rather than at Maon: *they spake unto her*; delivered the message to her they were sent with by David: *saying, David sent us unto thee, to take thee to him to wife*; that is, to treat with her about his marriage to her, to propose it to her, and, if they could prevail upon her, to bring her with them, that David might espouse her.

Ver. 41. *And she arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth*, &c.] As she did before David, ver. 23. and did as she would have done had he been present, considering his messengers as personating him, and therefore shewed the same respect and reverence, and did the same honour, as if he had been there in person: *and said*; expressed herself in such language as if David had been before her: *behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord*; which she said through her great humility, this being one of the meanest services she could be put to; intimating, that she was so far from being worthy to be the wife of such a man, that she was only fit, and it would be honour enough to her, to perform the meanest services to those that waited upon him; or her sense is, that it would be enough for her to be the wife of one of David's servants, and not his; it being the business of a wife, as Ben Gersom observes, to wash the feet of her husband.

Ver. 42. *And Abigail hasted and arose*, &c.] She had no objection nor hesitation in her mind about marrying David, but at once consented, and immediately prepared for her journey, having as high an opinion, and as great an esteem of David, as he of her; and though she was rich, and he poor, this was no obstacle in the way, she knew and believed he would

[h] באביגיל περι Αβιγαιας, Sept. de Abigail, Vatablus.

be king of Israel, ver. 30, 31. and though he could not support her, she had enough to support herself, and supply him, till he came to the throne: *and rode upon an ass, with five damsels of her's that went after her:* whom she took with her, partly to wait upon her, and partly for her honour, and the honour of David, whom she was going to marry: *and she went after the messengers of David:* not following them directly, but some time after they were gone; partly for the sake of decency, and partly that they going before might acquaint David with the success of their message, and he might prepare to receive Abigail when she came: *and became his wife:* he espoused and married her according to the custom of the times.

Ver. 43. *And David also took Ahinoam of Jezreel,* &c.] A city in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 56. that is, he took her to wife, and as it seems before Abigail became his wife; see 2 Sam. iii. 2, 3. *and they were also both of them his wives:* polygamy, though not agreeably to the law of nature, nor the law of God, was a custom which prevailed in those times, which good men gave into, though not to be commended for it.

Ver. 44. *But Saul had given Michal his daughter, David's wife, to Phalti the son of Laish,* &c.] Or for Saul, &c.[1]; which is a reason for his marrying again, but no reason for marrying more wives than one. Michal was his first wife, and they lived lovingly together, until David was obliged to flee from Saul, and then he gave her to another; partly to vex David, and partly if he could to break the relation between him and David, that he might not be thought to be his son-in-law, and he to persecute one in such a relation to him; and that this might not give David any shew of claim, or be the means of his rising to the throne. This Phalti, to whom he gave her, is called Phaltiel, 2 Sam. iii. 15. *which* was *of Gallim:* which very probably was a city in the tribe of Benjamin, since it is mentioned with several cities of that tribe, and as near Gibeah of Saul, Isa. x. 29, 30.

CHAP. XXVI.

THIS chapter relates that Saul, upon the information of the Ziphites, went out again with an armed force to seek David, ver. 1, 2, 3: of which David having intelligence, and of the place where he pitched, came with one of his men and recomnoitred his camp, and finding Saul and his men asleep, took away his spear, and the cruse of water at his head, and departed, without taking away his life, though solicited to it by his servant, ver. 4—12. which spear and cruse of water he produced to the reproach of Abner, Saul's general, and as a testimony of his sincere regard to Saul, and that he had no design upon his life, ver. 13—20. of which Saul being convinced, blessed David, and returned home again, ver. 21—25.

Ver. 1. *And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah,* &c.] Of Benjamin, called sometimes Gibeah of Saul, because it was the place of his birth and residence; hither Saul had returned after his last interview with David; whether, notwithstanding what had passed between him and David, he had privately encouraged the Ziphites to watch David, and give him information of him where he was, and when it was a proper opportunity to seize him; or whether the Ziphites were so officious as of themselves to acquaint him with it, is not certain; the latter is probable, since having attempted to betray David, they might fear, that should he come to the throne, he would remember it, and therefore they might be desirous of having him cut off by the hand of Saul: *saying, doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah,* which is *before Jeshimon?* the same place where he was when the Ziphites before gave information of him, ch. xxiii. 10. here he might choose to be, supposing that the Ziphites now would not meditate any thing against him, since Saul had declared he would be king after him, and had made him swear that he would not cut off his posterity; and as he thought it his wisdom to provide against the worst, knowing the inconstancy of Saul, he might judge this the most proper place of safety, and from whence he could, on occasion, easily retreat into the wilderness; and it may be also, because it was near to Abigail's estate and possessions, which were now a good resource for him.

Ver. 2. *Then Saul arose,* &c.] Immediately, glad of an opportunity to seize on David, having the same disposition towards him as ever; and perhaps had repented he had not laid hold on him when he followed him out of the cave: *and went down to the wilderness of Ziph:* or towards it: *having* 3,000 *chosen men of Israel:* young men, so called, because usually chosen for business, and for war particularly, rather than old men; the same number he took with him when he sought him at En-gedi, ch. xxiv. 2. *to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph:* where or whereabouts he was informed by the Ziphites he was.

Ver. 3. *And Saul pitched in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way,* &c.] To the wilderness; the very same place where the Ziphites suggested David was: *but David abode in the wilderness;* not in the hill of Hachilah, but in the wilderness of Ziph itself: *and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness:* he understood, by some information he had, that Saul had set out from Gibeah, and was coming to seek for him in the wilderness of Ziph; perhaps Jonathan had given him intelligence; however, he was not quite certain, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 4. *David therefore sent out spies,* &c.] To observe if he was coming or come, and where he was, that he might not be surprised by him; for though David knew the Lord was and would be his protection, he thought proper to be upon his guard, and to make use of means for his safety: *and understood that Saul was come in very deed:* that he was most certainly come, and come to some certain place; which

[1] לשאול Saul enim, Tigurine version; nam Saul, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Pool and Patrick.

he himself went to reconnoitre, as in the following verse.

Ver. 5. *And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched,* &c.] Came near it, within sight of it; so that he could take a view of it with his naked eye, and observe where and in what manner he was encamped: *and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host;* where he and his general had their quarters in the camp: *and Saul lay in the trench;* or circuit; not in the foss or ditch thrown up, in which an army sometimes lies intrenched; but this is to be understood either of the camp itself, so called, as Ben Gersom, Abarbinel, and Ben Melech think, because it lay in a circular form, that all comers to it on every side might be seen; or else a sort of fortress all around the camp, made of carriages joined together; and as the word signifies a carriage, cart or chariot, it may design the chariot in which Saul slept, as kings have been used to do when not in their houses; and to this the Septuagint agrees, which uses a word that Procopius Gazæus says signifies one kind of a chariot, and is used of a chariot drawn by mules, in the Greek version of Isa. lxvi. 20. Grotius observes, kings used to sleep in chariots where there were no houses; see ch. xvii. 20. though he rather seems to have slept, *sub die,* in the open air: *and the people pitched round about him;* both for the sake of honour, and for his greater security; this shews it could not be the foss he laid in, for then they could not pitch around him.

Ver. 6. *Then answered David,* &c.] Or addressed himself to the two following persons: *and said to Ahimelech the Hittite;* who was either an Hittite by birth, but was become a proselyte, or he was an Israelite that had dwelt among the Hittites, and so had this name given him: the former seems most probable; some say[k] this was Uriah the Hittite: *and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother to Joab:* Zeruiah was the sister of David, 1 Chron. ii. 15, 16. and these were two sons of her's, who very probably joined David at the cave of Adullam, ch. xxii. 1. *saying, who will go down with me to Saul to the camp?* that is, which of you two? *and Abishai said, I will go down with thee:* the other being timorous, or Abishai being most forward spoke first.

Ver. 7. So *David and Abishai came to the people by night,* &c.] Josephus[l] wrongly says, that he took with him both Abishai and Ahimelech; he chose to have but one, for the greater secrecy. This was a bold enterprise, for two men to go into a camp of 3,000 men, though it was in the night; when though they might suppose the greater part of them were asleep, yet they could not well suppose this of all, and especially of the guards or sentinels; but no doubt David was moved to this, not merely by the dint of his natural courage, but by the spirit of God, by whom he might be assured of protection, and that Saul and the people were cast into a deep sleep by the Lord, as they were, ver. 12. and this the Lord moved him to, that he might have an opportunity a second time to convince Saul of his innocence, and that he had no design upon his life: *and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench;* see the note on ver. 5. *and his spear stuck in the ground at his bolster;* ready to take up and defend himself, should he be surprised; or this was his sceptre, which he always carried about with him, as an ensign of royalty, and by which very probably David knew which was Saul's tent or couch, where he slept: *but Abner and the people lay round about him;* as in ver. 5.

Ver. 8. *Then said Abishai to David,* &c.] Seeing Saul fast asleep, and a spear so near him: *God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day;* or at this time, properly it was night: *now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear;* with Saul's own spear, which was stuck in the ground at his bolster. He remembered that David would not put forth his hand to slay him before, when he had an opportunity; and since now another offered, he did not move it to him to do it, but begged leave to do it himself; which he might think would be granted, since there was such a remarkable hand of Providence in it, which seemed to direct to such a step: *even to the earth at once, and I will not* smite *him the second time:* signifying, that he would give such a home blow or thrust, that the spear should pierce through him, and fasten him to the ground, that there would be no need to repeat it.

Ver. 9. *And David said to Abishai, destroy him not,* &c.] He laid his commands upon him not to hurt him: *for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?* since Saul was king, and appointed to that office by the Lord, and was anointed by his order for it, and invested with it by him, his person was sacred, and not to be touched; nor could his life be taken away by any without being guilty of a very great crime indeed, which it might be justly expected the Lord would resent and punish.

Ver. 10. *And David said furthermore,* &c.] In order to make Abishai easy, and prevent his doing what he proposed: *as the Lord liveth;* which was the form of an oath, made to assure Abishai of the truth of what follows, and therefore he need not be hasty to put Saul to death, since it would not be long ere he should die, in one or other of the three following ways: either *the Lord shall smite him;* suddenly, which the Jews call cutting off, or death by the hand of heaven, by the immediate hand of God: *or his day shall come to die;* the time appointed for him to die a natural death, of some disease common to men: *or he shall descend into battle, and perish;* which was commonly reckoned death, casual or accidental, and in which last way Saul did die, ch. xxxi. 3, 4.

Ver. 11. *The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed,* &c.] Or suffer any about him to do it: he speaks of it with the utmost detestation and abhorrence: *but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his bolster;* not to smite him with, as he desired, but to carry off, and was no other than his sceptre; see the note on ch. xx. 33. *and the cruse of water;* which stood in the same place, as appears by the next verse. Some take this to be a pot to make water in; others an hour-glass, to know the time of night, in which not sand, but water, flowed for that purpose: but rather this was for his refreshment, should he be hot and thirsty in the night, or to purify

[k] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 75. M.

[l] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 12. sect. 9.

him from any nocturnal pollution that might happen; for, according to Clemens of Alexandria[m], it was a custom of the Jews often to purify themselves in bed: though Fortunatus Scacchus[n] thinks Saul had this pot or cup for a religious use; which he had with him, and with it gave thanks to God, the author of all good, whenever he sat down to a meal; such as the golden cup Philip king of Macedon always had under his pillow when he slept[o]: *and let us go;* and do nothing more; which would be sufficient to convince they had been there, and to shew what was in their power to do, had they been so inclined.

Ver. 12. *So David took the spear, and the cruse of water, from Saul's bolster,* &c.] Abishai either refusing to take them, since he might not take away his life; or it may be rather David thought better of it, and took them himself, lest Abishai should be tempted, when so near to Saul, and his spear in his hand, and should thrust him with it; though David may be said to take them by the hands of Abishai: *and they gat them away;* with the above things along with them: *and no man saw* it, *nor knew* it; saw them in the camp, or knew what they did: *neither awaked,* at their talking together, at the motion of their feet, and taking away the spear and cruse: *for they* were *all asleep;* which was very extraordinary, that among 3,000 men none should be awake, not even the sentinels; which might seem impossible in a natural way, but it is accounted for by what follows: *because a deep sleep* from *the Lord was fallen upon them;* or *a sleep of the Lord*[p]; a very great one, an uncommon one; so great trees, mountains, *&c.* are called trees and mountains of God; or, according to our supplement, it was from the Lord, he was the cause and author of it; he cast them into this sleep, or caused it to fall upon them, and locked them up in it, that they might not hear David and his servant when they came among them.

Ver. 13. *Then David went over to the other side,* &c.] To a hill on the other side, opposite to Hachilah, where Saul lay encamped; or *passed over the passage*[q], the valley that lay between the two hills, and perhaps passed over a brook that ran in the valley, which is not unusual; so Josephus[r] says, that he went over a brook and came to the top of a mountain: *and stood on the top of an hill afar off:* he chose the top of an hill, that his voice might be heard at a distance, as it might in a clear air, and still night; and to be afar off, that he might the better make his escape, should an attempt be made to pursue him: *a great space being between them:* a large valley lying between the two hills.

Ver. 14. *And David cried unto the people,* &c.] To the army of Saul with a loud voice, that he might be heard: *and to Abner the son of Ner:* particularly to him, because he was general of the army: *saying, answerest thou not, Abner?* it seems he had called to him more than once, and he had returned no answer; perhaps not being thoroughly awake, or not knowing whose voice it was, and from whence it came: *then Abner answered and said, who* art *thou* that *criest to the king?* but it does not appear that David called to the king, only to the people, and to Abner their general, and therefore may be better rendered, *by the king*[s]; that is, near him, or *before him*[t], in his presence. Kimchi and Ben Melech explain it, upon the king, or over him; and the Targum is, at the head of the king; the meaning is, how he could act such a part as to call so loud within the king's hearing, as to disturb the king's rest, and awake him out of his sleep.

Ver. 15. *And David said to Abner,* art *not thou a valiant man?* &c.] Or *a man*[u], a man of great fame for courage and valour, a man of great authority, who had the next post in the army under Saul, but had not behaved like a man, worthy of his character and office: *and who is like to thee in Israel?* none that bare so great a name, or was in so high an office, who therefore should have been careful to have acted according to both: *wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king?* took care to have set a guard about his person while he slept; which perhaps was neglected through a contempt of David and his men, as being in no fear of them: *for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord:* that is, there had been one in the camp that night, who had entered there with that view to have destroyed him, had he an opportunity, and which did offer; this was true of Abishai, who no doubt went down with David into the camp with that intent, though David did not, and therefore he says, *one of the people,* not more; for though two went in, only one with that view: David observes to them the danger the king was in, his carefulness of him to preserve his life, to whom only it was owing, and the negligence of Abner, and those under his command.

Ver. 16. *This thing is not good that thou hast done,* &c.] Yea, it was very bad, a great fault, and very blameworthy, if he had neglected to set a watch over the king, whose business it was as a general; the words are expressed in a figure called *meiosis,* in which less is said than was intended: as *the Lord liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed;* if a watch was set, and these had fallen asleep, and neglected their duty, or had deserted their post; which to do was a capital crime, and deserving of death; wherefore he does not say this of Abner, but of the watch: *and now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster;* which he then held up as proofs and evidences of the truth of what he said, that one had been in the camp and had carried off these, and who could as easily have destroyed the king as to have taken these away; and as he came hither with an intent to destroy him, would have done it, had he not been prevented by David; all which likewise plainly proved the negligence of Abner, in not setting a watch about his master, or the negligence of the watch that was set.

Ver. 17. *And Saul knew David's voice,* &c.] Though Abner at first did not, as appears by his words, but Saul did, by being this time thoroughly awake through the discourse that passed between David and

[m] Stromat. l. 4. p. 531.
[n] Elæochrism. Myrothec. l. 1. c. 44. col. 224.
[o] Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 3.
[p] תרדמת יהוה sopor Domini, V. L. Montanus, Munsterus; altus sopor Jehovæ, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[q] ויעבר העבר & transivit transitum, Montanus.
[r] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 9.
[s] אל המלך juxta regem, Vatablus.
[t] Coram rege, Noldius, p. 59. No. 284.
[u] איש vir, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.

Abner: is *this thy voice, my son David?* the same question he put before, when he followed him out of the cave, ch. xxiv. 16. see the note there: *and David said*, it is *my voice, my lord, O king;* he not only owns him to be king, whom he sought not to depose, but his own liege lord and sovereign, whose commands he was ready to obey.

Ver. 18. *And he said, wherefore doth my lord thus pursue after his servant?* &c. Suggesting that it was both below him to do it, and against his interest; for David was his servant, and he would gladly have continued in his service, and done his business, but he drove him from it, and pursued him as a traitor, when he had not been guilty of any offence to his knowledge: and therefore puts the following questions: *for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand?* what crime had he committed, that he was pursued after this manner, and his life sought for? what had he done worthy of death? having a clear conscience, he could boldly ask these questions.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant,* &c.] Whether David waited for an answer to his question is not certain; probably he did, and observing none returned, desired audience of what he had further to say: *if the Lord have stirred thee up against me;* if he had put it into his heart to persecute him after this manner, for some sin he had committed against him, though not against Saul: did that appear to be the case, *let him accept an offering;* my offering, as the Targum; or my prayer, as Jarchi; I would offer a sin-offering according to the law, to make atonement for my offence, and might hope it would be accepted; or I would make my supplication to God, and entreat him to forgive mine iniquity, and so an issue be put to these troubles; or should it be a capital crime deserving of death he was guilty of, he was content to die, and satisfy for his fault in that way; or if both of them had sinned, in any respect, he proposed to join in an acceptable sacrifice to God, and so reconciliation be made, and matters adjusted in such a religious way; if it was the evil spirit from the Lord that had entered into Saul, or God had suffered a melancholy disorder to seize him, which had put him upon those measures, let an offering agreeable to the will of God be offered, or supplication made for the removal of it: *but if* they be *the children of men;* that incited him to such violent methods, as Abner his general, or Doeg the Edomite, and others: *cursed* be *they before the Lord;* an imprecation of the vengeance of God upon them: *for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord;* meaning not from his own house and family, nor from the palace of Saul, but from the land of Canaan the Lord had given to his people Israel for an inheritance, and from the worship of God in it, which made it dear and precious to him; he knew if Saul went on pursuing him in this manner, he must be obliged to quit the land, and go into a foreign country, as he quickly did; so the Targum renders it the inheritance of the people of the Lord: by being driven out of the land which was their inheritance, he should be deprived of their company and conversation, and of all social worship; the consideration of which was cutting to him, and caused the above imprecation from him on those who were concerned in it, and who in effect by their actions were *saying, go, serve other gods;* for by being forced to go into an idolatrous country, he would be in the way of temptation, and be liable to be corrupted by ill examples, and to be persuaded and enticed into idolatrous practices; and if he was kept from them, it would be no thanks to them, they did all they could to lead him into them; and if he was preserved, it would be owing to the power and grace of God; the Targum is, "go David among the people "that worship idols;" the Jews have a saying, that he that dwells without the land of Israel, it is as if he had no God, and as if he served an idol[q].

Ver. 20. *Now therefore let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord,* &c.] For should it be spilled, God, who is omniscient, will see it, and take notice of it; and being righteous, and to whom vengeance belongs, he will avenge it: some render it, *my blood shall not fall to the earth before the face of the Lord*[r]; I am continually under his eye and care, and he will protect and defend me; and in vain is it for thee to pursue after me; I shall never fall into thine hands, though I may be obliged to quit my country, and go into an idolatrous nation, against my will: *for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea;* which leaps from place to place, and is not easily taken: or this may denote what a mean, poor, weak, insignificant person David was; and how much it was below Saul to come out with an army of chosen men in pursuit of him; so the Targum, "the king of Israel is come out "to seek one that is weak or feeble:" *as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains;* as kings for their delight used to do, as Abarbinel observes; but this being a business of pleasure, and this a bird of worth, some other is thought to be here intended. Indeed the partridge is represented as worth no more than an *obolus*, or five farthings, though 50 drachmas or drachms were ordered to be paid for one[s]; the Septuagint renders the word an *owl;* the word is *kore*, and from the etymology of it one would think it was the raven or crow. Jarchi on Jer. xvii. 11. takes it to be the cuckoo, though here the partridge, as others; Bochart[t] will have it to be the woodcock, snipe, or snite. Some choose to read the words, "as the kore or partridge "on the mountains hunts;" which, it is said, hunts and seeks after the nests of other birds, and sits on their eggs[u]; see Jer. xvii. 11. so Saul hunted after David, though he could not take him; several naturalists[w] observe, that the partridge is very difficult to be taken by the hunter.

Ver. 21. *Then said Saul, I have sinned,* &c.] Which is more than he acknowledged before, and yet it is to be feared he had no true sense of his sin, and real repentance for it; but, like Pharaoh, his guilty conscience for the present forced this confession from him: see Exod. ix. 27. *return, my son David;* meaning to his

[q] T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 110. 2.
[r] אל יפל דמי non effundetur, Martyr. and to this sense are Syr. Ar. vers.
[s] Laert. l. 2. in Vita Aristippi.
[t] Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 12. col. 81.
[u] T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 140. 2. Jarchi & Abarbinel in loc.
[w] Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 8. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 33. Ælian. Hist. Animal. l. 3. c. 16.

own house, or rather to his palace, since he had disposed of his wife to another man: *for I will no more do thee harm*: or seek to do it by pursuing him from place to place, as he had done, which had given him a great deal of trouble and fatigue: *because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day*; and therefore spared, when he could have taken it away; which shewed that his life was dear to him, of great worth and value in his account; and therefore he would neither take it away himself, nor suffer another to do it: *I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly*; in seeking after his life, and pursuing him again, when he had such a convincing proof of his sincerity and faithfulness, and of his cordial affection for him, when he only cut off the skirts of his garment in the cave, and spared his life.

Ver. 22. *And David answered and said, behold the king's spear*, &c.] And which perhaps was his sceptre, and which David therefore would not keep, lest it should be thought or said that he had deprived him of an ensign of his royalty, and be interpreted as a token of his design to seize his crown and throne: *and let one of the young men come over and fetch it*: for notwithstanding the acknowledgment Saul had made of his sin and folly, David did not choose to carry the spear to him; not caring to trust him, and put himself into his hands, lest the evil spirit should return and come upon him suddenly, and alter his disposition and carriage; nor would he send any of his men with it, whose lives were dear to him, lest they should be seized as traitors, but desires one of Saul's men might be sent for it.

Ver. 23. *The Lord render to every man his righteousness, and his faithfulness*, &c.] Or recompence every man that deals justly and faithfully with others, as he had done with Saul; or the Lord, who is just and faithful to his promises, reward the men that act the good and upright part; and this was a prayer of faith; for David doubted not that, though Saul might fail, yet God could not: *for the Lord delivered thee into my hand this day*; or, *into an hand*[x]; into the hand of Abishai, who had it in his power to slay him, when he went and took the spear that was at his bolster, and would have done it, but David suffered him not: *but I would not stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed*; nor suffer another to stretch forth his hand against him; so careful and tender was he of his life.

Ver. 24. *And, behold, as thy life was much set by this day in mine eyes*, &c.] Or *magnified*[y]; and made great account of, as being the life of the king of Israel, and the Lord's anointed, and so spared: *so let my life be much set by in the eyes of the Lord*; he does not say in the eyes of Saul, as it should have been by way of retaliation, and as it might have been expected he would have said; but he had no dependence on Saul, nor expected justice to be done him by him; but he prays that his life might be precious in the sight of the Lord, and taken care of, and protected by him, as he believed it would: *and let him deliver me out of all tribulation*; for as yet he did not think himself quite out of it, notwithstanding all that Saul had said, but believed the Lord would deliver him in due time; from him alone he looked for it, and on him he depended.

Ver. 25. *Then Saul said to David, blessed be thou, my son David*, &c.] He desired God to bless him, and pronounced him blessed himself, believing he would be a happy and prosperous man: *thou shalt both do great things*; he had done great things already, in slaying Goliath, obtaining victories over the Philistines, and escaping the hands of Saul, and keeping out of them with so small a force; and he should do greater things yet: *and also shalt still prevail against Saul*; and all his enemies; the Targum is, "even in "reigning thou shalt reign, and even in prospering "thou shalt prosper;" he believed he would be king, so he had said before, ch. xxiv. 20. *so David went on his way*: to the wilderness again very probably, putting no trust and confidence in Saul, knowing how fickle and unstable he was: *and Saul returned to his place*: to Gibeah, where his palace was.

CHAP. XXVII.

DAVID, fearing he should perish by the hand of Saul at one time or another, went into the land of the Philistines, which Saul hearing of, sought no more after him, ver. 1—4. and finding favour in the eyes of the king of Gath, desired a place in his country might be given him to reside in; and accordingly Ziklag was given him, ver. 5, 6, 7. from whence he made excursions into the land of the Amalekites, and others, and utterly destroyed them; but imposed on the king of Gath, pretending he had made his road into the southern parts of Judah, ver. 8—12.

Ver. 1. *And David said in his heart*, &c.] Within himself, and to himself; whilst he was pondering things in his own mind, and considering the circumstances in which he was, and things appearing very gloomy to him, he falls into a fit of unbelief, and thus addresses himself: *I shall now one day perish by the hand of Saul*; for though he was returned to his palace, he knew he was restless and uneasy, very inconstant and unstable, and not at all to be depended on; yea, he might conclude that Saul, observing that God was with him in protecting and defending him, and by delivering him into his hands once and again, he would be the more jealous of him, and envious at him, and seek all opportunities and advantages against him; and he feared that one time or another such would offer, and would be taken, and so he should perish by him: this was a strange fit of unbelief he was sunk into, and very unaccountable and unreasonable it was, had he but considered his being anointed king by the Lord, the promise of God to him, which could not fail, and the providence of God that watched over him from time to time: there is *nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the*

[x] ביד in manum, Pagninus, Montanus.

[y] גדלה magnificata est, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

Philistines: which may seem strange, when he was advised by the Prophet Gad to depart from the land of Moab, and go into the land of Judah, and where he had been so wonderfully preserved; and when he was in so much danger, when in the land of the Philistines before, insomuch that he was obliged to feign himself mad; and seeing this also was the very thing he lately dreaded, and cursed the men that should be the cause of his going out of his own land into an idolatrous one: *and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel;* hearing that he was gone into a foreign country, would seek for him no more in any part of the land of Israel, and so despair of ever getting him into his hands, would lay aside all thoughts about him for the future: *so shall I escape out of his hand;* and be for ever safe: these were the carnal reasonings of his mind, under the prevalence of unbelief; and shews what poor weak creatures the best of men are, and how low their graces may sink as to exercise, when left to themselves.

Ver. 2. *And David arose,* &c.] From the place where he was: *and he passed over;* the borders of the land of Canaan: *with the* 600 *men that were with him;* having neither lost any, nor had any added to him, since he was at Keilah, ch. xxiii. 13. *unto Achish, the son of Maoch, king of Gath;* whether this was the same Achish David was with before, ch. xxi. is not certain; it seems as if he was not the same, since he is described as the son of Maoch, as if it was to distinguish him from him; though it is not improbable that he was the same person. Some think [*] that he is described not from his father, but from his mother, whose name was Maacha. The circumstances of David were now very much altered from what they were when he went to Gath before; then he went secretly, now openly; then as a person unknown, now as well known; then alone, now with 600 men; then when discovered he was seized by the princes of Gath, and brought before the king, and was driven from his presence; but now he came either at the invitation of Achish, hearing how he had been treated by Saul, and thinking to attach him to his interest, and make him more and more the enemy of Saul, and so free himself from a very powerful one, and of whose wisdom and prudence, and military skill, and courage, and valour, he might hope to avail himself; or David sent an embassy to him, to treat with him about his coming into his country, and settlement in it, and terms to mutual satisfaction were agreed upon.

Ver. 3. *And David dwelt with Achish at Gath,* &c.] The metropolis of his kingdom, called, ver. 5, the royal city: *he and his men, every man with his household;* or family; which they brought with them, to secure them from the malice of Saul; who in their absence might have destroyed them, as being the families of traitors and fugitives, and might be the more readily received by Achish, as he might hope for some advantage from them; and besides were pledges of their fidelity to him, and of their design to continue with him: even *David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife;* who had been the wife of Nabal; of these see ch. xxv. 43.

Ver. 4. *And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath,* &c.] Who very probably had his spies out to watch his motions, and report to him where he was, and what he was doing: *and he sought no more again for him;* by which it seems as if he would have sought after him again, had he continued in the land of Israel; but now being gone, and in an enemy's country, and having nothing to fear from him whilst there, he laid aside all thoughts of seeking after him.

Ver. 5. *And David said unto Achish,* &c.] After he had been some time with him: *if I have now found grace in thine eyes;* or was in favour, as he thought himself to be, by various instances of respect shewn him: *let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there;* he does not ask for a city or town, but a place in one of them, though one was given him; but of whom he asks it, it is not easy to say; though it is certain that Achish gave it him, ver. 6. Perhaps he might desire it might be given him by Achish, with the consent of his princes and nobles, or at least of his privy-council; that so it might be to general satisfaction, and the grant more authentic; though it may be impersonally read, as in the Vulgate Latin version, *let there be given me,* &c. David's view in this might be partly to prevent the envy of the courtiers of Achish, who might think that David was too near the king, and might have too great an interest in him, and receive too many of his favours, and become his chief confident and prime minister; and partly to preserve himself and people from all temptations to idolatry, and corruptions in religion; as also that he might have an opportunity, without the knowledge of Achish, to fall upon the enemies of Israel; though the excuse he made was as follows: *for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee?* for so Gath was; and 600 men and their families might seem to crowd the city; and this reasoning of his might suggest, that he and his men were a straitening of him, and a burden on him; and it might seem as if he was a rival with him in state and dignity, when he was no other than a servant of his.

Ver. 6. *Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day,* &c.] A city which in the division of the land was given to the tribe of Judah, and after that to the tribe of Simeon, Josh. xv. 31. and xix. 5. though it seems not to have been possessed by either of them, at least not long, but soon came into the hands of the Philistines, who kept it till this time, and now it returned to its right owners; according to Bunting [†] it was 12 miles from Gath: *wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day;* not to the tribe of Judah, though it originally belonged to it, but to the kings of it, it being granted to David, who quickly after this became king of Judah; and this was annexed to the crown-lands, and ever after enjoyed by the kings of the house of Judah; for this was not given for a temporary habitation, but for perpetual possession. This clause seems to be added by the continuator of this history, after the death of Samuel; who might be Gad or Nathan; some say Ezra, and Abarbinel that Jeremiah, was the writer of it.

Ver. 7. *And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines,* &c.] At Gath and Ziklag: *was a*

[*] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 78. E.

[†] Travels, &c. p. 136.

full year and four months; or *days and four months:* days being sometimes put for a year, Judg. xvii. 10. though some interpret it not of a year, but of some few days out of the fifth month, besides the four months; so Jarchi and Kimchi; and Josephus[h] makes his abode to be 4 months and 20 days; but, according to the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, it was only four months; and so it may be rendered, *days, that is, four months:* for according to the Jewish chronology[i] Samuel died 4 months before Saul, and this flight of David was after the death of Samuel, and when Saul died he left the land of the Philistines, and took the throne of Judah; see the note on ch. xxv. 1.

Ver. 8. *And David and his men went up,* &c.] From Ziklag, where they dwelt: *and invaded the Geshurites;* some of the old inhabitants of the land of Canaan, the remains of the Amorites, whose land was given to the half-tribe of Manasseh, but could never be expelled; and therefore David had a just right to invade them, and, if he could, either expel or destroy them; see Deut. iii. 14. Josh. xii. 5. and xiii. 11, 13. these are the Geshurites which are joined with the Philistines, Josh. xiii. 2. *and the Gezrites;* the inhabitants of Gezer, which place fell to the tribe of Ephraim; but that tribe could not drive out the inhabitants of it, and therefore David now fell upon them as the enemies of Israel, and seized on their country, as belonging to them, Josh. xvi. 3. Judg. i. 29. *and the Amalekites;* the sworn and implacable enemies of Israel, and whose memory they were laid under obligation to root out. These were such as had escaped the sword of Saul, and had fled to the more distant parts, against whom David now went; and perhaps these had fled to and mixed themselves with the people here mentioned: *for these* nations were *of old the inhabitants of the land;* of the land of Canaan; *as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt;* see ch. xv. 7.

Ver. 9. *And David smote the land,* &c.] In which the above-mentioned people dwelt, that is, the inhabitants of it: *and left neither man nor woman alive;* for these being the old Canaanites and Amalekites, according to the law of God were not to be spared, but utterly destroyed; which may be observed to take off the charge of cruelty that might be brought against David on this account, Deut. vii. 2. and xxv. 19. though this must be understood of such that came within his reach; for it is certain there were people of these several names after this; see ch. xxx. 1. 2 Sam. iii. 3. 1 Kings ix. 15. *and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish;* at Gath, to make a report of what he had been about and done; and what he brought was a good booty for the support of his men and their families.

Ver. 10. *And Achish said, whither have ye made a road to-day?* &c.] Or whither had they rushed in, or poured in and spread themselves? or where had they made their excursion to fetch in the prey and booty they now brought? *and David said, against the south of Judah;* he meant against some people that lay to the south of the land of Judah, without it; but expressed himself so, that Achish might think he meant the southern parts of Judah within the country; which, though not a downright lie, was an equivocation, and made with a design to deceive; and was by no means agreeably to the character of David, nor to be defended nor imitated: *and against the south of the Jerahmeelites;* these were the descendants of Jerahmeel, the son of Hezron, the grandson of Judah, and so inhabited in the tribe of Judah, and very probably in the southern part of it, 1 Chron. ii. 9, 25, 26. *and against the south of the Kenites;* the posterity of Jethro; these, at least some of them, at the first seating of the children of Israel in the land of Canaan, went with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth in the south of Arad, Judg. i. 16.

Ver. 11. *And David saved neither man nor woman alive to bring* tidings *to Gath,* &c.] How David had fallen upon these people, and destroyed great numbers of them, and carried off their substance; which would have given great offence to Achish, and caused him to have driven him out of his country once more; though Abarbinel is of opinion that these Geshurites, &c. were haters and enemies of Achish, and therefore were smitten and spoiled by David; or otherwise it would have been such a piece of perfidy, rebellion, and ingratitude, as must have made the name of David to stink, since it could not but be known sooner or later; but being the enemies of Achish, no notice was taken of it afterwards, nor inquiry made about it, nor complaint made of it, by any of their neighbours: nor does he suppose they were all cut off, and much less that this was done that it might not be told in Gath what destruction he had made; but that the sense is, that he did not carry the captives to Gath, to be disposed of there; for they would have told from whence they came, and so have contradicted what David said, and what he would have Achish understand, as if he had been out against and smote some of the cities of Judah, that he might place the greater confidence in him; which end would not have been answered, if he had brought any of them to Gath; and so the words may be read without the supplement we make, *spared neither man nor woman alive to bring to Gath;* and so could tell no tales. Though Josephus expressly says[k] that David spared the men, and abstained from the slaughter of them, fearing lest they should declare to the king what he had done in plundering them: *saying, lest they should tell on us, saying, so did David;* in such and such places, such numbers of people he destroyed, and such quantities of cattle and goods he carried off: *and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines;* this is what may be expected will be done by him in one place or another, as long as he stays here; nothing will be heard of but desolation and destruction, in some part of the country of the Philistines or another; or among those that were tributaries to them; so that it was not safe that he should be allowed to abide in it.

Ver. 12. *And Achish believed David,* &c.] As he would have him understand his story; imposing upon

[h] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 10.
[i] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 13. p. 37.

[k] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 13. sect. 10.

him by ambiguous terms, insinuating he had been against the southern parts of Judah, when he had been against foreign nations that lay to the south of Judah: *saying, he hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him;* they'll never forgive him the destruction of their cities, and the inhabitants of them, and the plunder of their goods and cattle; his name will be had in the utmost detestation and abhorrence, and he must never return thither any more: *therefore he shall be my servant for ever;* would be glad to continue with him as a servant, and be obliged to serve him faithfully and truly, since his own people, and even those of his own tribe, would never more receive him; it being, as he understood it, the south of Judah that he had been plundering.

CHAP. XXVIII.

THE Philistines gathering together, to fight with Israel, Saul trembled at it, not being able to get any answer from the Lord about it in any way whatever, ver. 1—6. upon which he applies to a woman that had a familiar spirit to bring him up Samuel, which she did, ver. 7—14. and what passed between Saul and Samuel, or at least the apparition in his form, is recorded, ver. 15—19. which so struck him, as to make him strengthless, and so melancholy, that he refused to eat until persuaded, or rather compelled, by the woman and his servants, ver. 20—25.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass in those days,* &c.] That David was in the country of the Philistines: *that the Philistines gathered their armies together:* out of their five principalities or lordships: *for warfare to fight with Israel;* with whom they were continually at war, and though sometimes there was a cessation of arms, yet never any settled peace; and the Philistines took every opportunity and advantage against them, as they now did; when David was among them, and so had nothing to fear from him, but rather expected his assistance; and Samuel was dead, and Saul in a phrensy: *and Achish said unto David;* who seems to have been at the head of the combined armies of the Philistines: *know thou assuredly that thou shalt go with me to battle, thou and thy men;* against Israel; which was a trying thing to David, and whereby he was like to be drawn into a dilemma; either to fight against his country, which he could not do conscientiously; or be guilty of ingratitude to Achish, and incur his displeasure, and be liable to be turned out of his country, or treated in a worse manner, even he and his men, to be seized on and cut to pieces by the forces of the Philistines, should he refuse.

Ver. 2. *And David said to Achish, surely thou shalt know what thy servant can do,* &c.] By which he would have Achish understand, and so he did, that he would exert himself in favour of the Philistines, and against Israel, and do great and brave things, of which Achish would be made sensible, through his heroic courage and valour; though he meant rather what he could and should do for Israel against the Philistines, if he had an opportunity; but it seems best of all to consider David as quite undetermined, and at a loss what to do, hoping that God in his providence would extricate him out of this difficulty, and direct him what he should do, which then Achish would know; and accordingly he was delivered out of it: *and Achish said to David;* putting confidence in him on account of his answer, and believing he was hearty in engaging in the war with the Philistines against Israel: *therefore will I make thee keeper of mine head for ever;* the captain of his body-guard, which post he should hold for life; or he proposed to put him into this post, that he might be with him, near his person, and under his eye, that he might observe how he behaved himself; which may shew some suspicion of him.

Ver. 3. *Now Samuel was dead,* &c.] Had been so for some time, which is mentioned before, ch. xxv. 1. and here repeated, partly to observe the reason of the Philistines renewing the war, and partly to account for the conduct of Saul, in seeking to a witch to raise Samuel, and for the sake of that story: *and all Israel lamented him;* as they had great reason to do; see the note on ch. xxv. 1. *and buried him in Ramah, even in his own city;* there being two Ramahs, as Kimchi observes, it is added, *in his own city,* to shew that he was buried in that Ramah which was his native place, and where his constant residence was; though, as he says, it may mean that he was buried within the city, and not without it; but the Targum gives a different sense, "and they buried him in Ramah, and mourned "for him every man in his city:" *and Saul had put away those that had familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land;* out of the land of Israel; had by an edict banished them, or had given orders that neither witches nor wizards should abide in the land; but should be taken up, and prosecuted according to the law of God; which he had done either at the instigation of Samuel; or, as some think, from a conceit that the evil spirit he had been troubled with was owing to them; or to make some appearance of a zeal for religion, and the honour and glory of God: this is observed to shew the inconstancy of Saul, and his folly in applying after this to a person of such a character, and to account for the fears of the woman when applied to, and afterwards when she was engaged, when she found it was by Saul.

Ver. 4. *And the Philistines gathered themselves together,* &c.] From different parts, and formed a considerable army: *and came and pitched in Shunem;* a city in the borders of the tribe of Issachar, of which see the note on Josh. xix. 18. *and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa;* a range of mountains, near Jezreel, and which Jerom [b] calls the mountains of the Philistines, six miles from Scythopolis, where there is a large village called Gelbus.

Ver. 5. *And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines,*

[b] De loc. Heb. fol. 92. D.

&c.] From the mountains of Gilboa, where he had pitched his camp: *he was afraid, and his heart greatly trembled*: on sight of the numbers of them, and thinking perhaps of the death of Samuel, and of the loss of David; who was now among the Philistines, and might possibly fight against him, and for the Philistines, of which he might be informed; however, he was not with him, and his conscience might accuse him of various sins he had been guilty of, for which he might fear the Lord would now reckon with him.

Ver. 6. *And when Saul inquired of the Lord*, &c.] And this being not done truly and heartily, nor continued in, it was as if he had not inquired, and especially after he had inquired of one that had a familiar spirit, as Kimchi observes; for so it is said, 1 Chron. x. 14. *the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams*: which he dreamed himself, from whence he could not conclude any thing relating to the will of God; so the Targum, "the Lord did not receive his prayer even by dreams;" or by dreamers, diviners, who pretended to give answers by dreams: *nor by Urim*; there being no priest to consult in this way, Abiathar having fled with the ephod, in which were the Urim and Thummim, to David; though some think that he sent to Abiathar, who was with David, to inquire for him; and others that he made another ephod with Urim, and appointed another priest to consult by them; neither of which are probable: *nor by prophets*; of which there was a school not far from him, even at Naioth in Ramah, of which Samuel in his life-time was president; but neither by the one nor the other could Saul get an answer from God, who for his sins had departed from him.

Ver. 7. *Then said Saul unto his servants*, &c.] That waited upon him, to some of them, to such as he could place most confidence in to keep a secret; perhaps only the two after mentioned: *seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her*; that was mistress of the bottle, a ventriloquist, that spoke out of her belly, or seemed to do; who had the spirit of Python or divination, conversed with the devil, and by his assistance pretended to bring up a dead person, and thereby foretel things to come; see the note on Deut. xviii. 11. a woman is pitched upon, because such were most addicted to those wicked arts, and being of the weaker sex, were more easily imposed upon by Satan; and Saul shewed himself to be as weak, to seek after such persons; but being left of God, he acted the part of a madman, as well as of a bad man: *and his servants said to him, behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor*: a city in the tribe of Manasseh, of which see Josh. xvii. 11. it was not far from Gilboa. Mr. Maundrell speaks[c] of it as near Nain, at the foot of Mount Hermon; and turning a little southward, he says, you have in view the high mountains of Gilboa. It is a tradition of the Jews[d] that this woman was the mother of Abner, the wife of Zephaniah; some say her name was Zephaniah; but, as Abarbinel observes, if so she would have known Saul, and also Saul would have known her, and what she was, if, as they say, she was spared because of her relation to him; nor needed he to have inquired of his servants for such a woman.

Ver. 8. *And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment*, &c.] Stripped himself of his royal robes, or military apparel, as supreme commander, and clothed himself in the habit of a peasant or a common soldier; and this not only that he might not be known by the woman, but that he might pass from his army incognito, and it might not be known that he was gone, and especially whither he was gone: *and he went, and two men with him*; these, according to the tradition of the Jews[e], were Abner and Amasa; but it is not probable that Saul should leave his army destitute of their general at such a time as this: *and they came to the woman by night*: not only that they might not be seen, but because it was a work of darkness they were going about, and it was only in the night-season that such persons exercised their black art; though the Jews[f] say it was day, only because of their distress it was like to night with them; but the literal sense is best: *and he said, I pray thee divine unto me by the familiar spirit*; exercise her art of divination, by the assistance of the familiar spirit she conversed with: *and bring me up whom I shall name unto thee*; that is, from the dead; for necromancy was the kind of divination she professed; and such persons pretended to have a power to bring up a deceased person, and consult with him about secret and future things.

Ver. 9. *And the woman said unto him*, &c.] Not knowing who he was: *behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done*; for by his speech and habit she perceived he was an Israelite, and so must be acquainted with what had passed in the nation, especially of a public nature, and which made a great noise, as doubtless this did: *how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land*; as many of them as he had knowledge of, or information about; and by this it appears that he did not merely expel them his dominions, but he put them to death, according to the law of God, Exod. xxii. 18. Lev. xx. 27. so the putting them out of the land, ver. 3, was putting them to death, and the woman's after-reasoning confirms this: one should think for Saul to be told this to his face must fill him with shame and confusion, and his conscience must accuse him of sin and folly to make this attempt; and he must stand self-convicted and self-condemned; and it was enough to have deterred him from pursuing his scheme, had not his heart been strangely hardened: *wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die?* she suspected that Saul and his men were persons that came to trepan her; that when they had prevailed upon her to exercise her art, would turn informers against her, to the taking away of her life, it being death to practise it.

Ver. 10. *And Saul sware to her by the Lord*, &c.] By the Word of the Lord, as the Targum: it is much that Saul, being about such a work of darkness and wickedness, could take the name of the Lord into his mouth, and swear by him in such a solemn manner; which must surely put him in mind of his omniscience, from

[c] Journey from Aleppo, p. 115.
[d] Pirke Eliezer, c. 33. fol. 35. 2. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 1. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 77. B.
[e] Vajikra Rabba, sect. 26. fol. 167. 1. Shalshalet ib.
[f] Tanchuma apud Jarchium in loc.

whom this wicked action could not be hid: *saying, as the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing:* the tenour of the oath was, and so the woman understood it, that he would never make any discovery of what she did, and so she would be safe from punishment; though as he was the supreme governor, and a very arbitrary prince, had it been discovered, he could have screened her from justice, though contrary to the law of God; however, he could not secure her from eternal punishment.

Ver. 11. *Then said the woman, whom shall I bring up unto thee?* &c.] For such persons, according to their profession, pretended they were able to bring up any of the dead, that he who inquired of them should name: *and he said, bring me up Samuel;* the prophet Samuel he meant, and no doubt the woman so understood him, whose name was well known; he had been an old acquaintance and friend of Saul's, his counsellor and adviser in many things; and though he greatly neglected him in the latter part of his life, was very desirous of an interview with him now dead, that he might be advised by him how to get out of the straits and difficulties in which he was involved; but it argued extreme folly and madness in him to imagine, that the manes of this great and good man was at the beck of a witch, and he to be called out of the state of the dead by her enchantments; or that God would permit him to appear to him, and by him give an answer, when he would not answer him by living prophets, nor any other way.

Ver. 12. *And when the woman saw Samuel,* &c.] The appearance of him whom she took for Samuel; no mention is made of the methods she used to raise him, to check the curiosity of such as might be desirous to know them, and to prevent the imitation of them; though some think that Samuel, or the apparition, was seen before she made use of any, which surprised her; but this seems not so probable, and is only observed for the sake of an hypothesis; though it must be owned the word *when* is not in the text: *she cried with a loud voice;* not so much frightened at what she saw, and the manner of his appearing, and as thinking the resurrection of the dead was come, as say the Jews[b], as what she feared would be the consequence to her, even death by the hand of Saul; for though he had sworn no punishment should come upon her, she might begin to fear she was not safe, perceiving who he was: *and the woman spake to Saul, saying, why hast thou deceived me? for thou art Saul;* how she knew this is a question; it could not be by the appearance of Samuel, for it was Samuel she was to bring up; unless with Ben Gersom it can be thought that she understood him of another man, whose name was Samuel, and not Samuel the prophet; and so when she saw him, concluded he was Saul, because of the intimacy between them in his life-time; but this is not probable, nor does it appear that she as yet knew who it was, but rather she was told by her familiar spirit, or by the apparition, so Josephus[c], that it was Saul that inquired of her; or she guessed at it by some gesture of the apparition to Saul, by way of homage and honour; and so Abarbinel thinks that the clause in ver. 14 respects not Saul's bowing to Samuel, but Samuel bowing to Saul; and so by this means the woman knew who he was.

Ver. 13. *And the king said unto her, be not afraid,* &c.] Meaning not of the apparition, but of him; since he had sworn no punishment should come upon her, and he should inviolably observe his oath: *for what sawest thou?* for as yet Saul himself saw not any thing, the woman being between him and the apparition; or she might be in another room with her familiar spirit performing the operations when Samuel appeared: *and the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth;* a great personage, one of a majestic form, like the gods, or judges and civil magistrates, sometimes so called, as Kimchi and R. Isaiah rightly interpret it; and so the Targum, "I saw an angel of the "Lord;" a person that looked like one; for not many came up with him, and particularly Moses, as say some Jewish writers[d].

Ver. 14. *And he said unto her, what form is he of?* &c.] Of what stature is he? or rather of what age does he seem to be? and what clothes has he on? as appears from the answer: *and she said, an old man cometh up, and he is covered with a mantle;* such as either priests or judges wore, and Samuel did in his life-time: *and Saul perceived that it was Samuel;* by the description she gave of him, by his age and apparel; for as yet it is not certain that he himself saw him, though it should seem as if he did by what follows: it is in the original, *that it was Samuel himself;* which seems to make for those who think the real Samuel appeared, and no doubt Saul thought it was really he himself: *and he stooped with his face to the ground, and bowed himself;* either in reverence to Samuel, and from whom he hoped relief, and therefore was all obeisance; or he put himself in this posture, that he might listen and hear what should be said; it being a general notion that such spirits gave their responses whispering and muttering, Isa. viii. 19. though Abarbinel, as before observed, is of opinion, that this is to be understood of Samuel, that he bowed to Saul in reverence of him as a king; which does not so well agree with the connexion of the words. Some have thought that it was the true Samuel, or the soul of Samuel, that appeared; so Josephus[e], and many other writers; but to this may be objected, that that would not have ascended out of the earth, but come down from heaven; and that it can't reasonably be supposed that it was in the power of the witch, by the assistance of the devil, to fetch it from heaven; nor be thought that God would send it from thence on such an errand, to give Saul an answer, when he would not answer him by any prophet on earth, nor in any other way; and especially it seems quite incredible that he should send it at the motion of a witch, and through her enchantments, who, according to a law of his, ought not to live; whereas nothing could have given greater countenance to such a wicked profession than this: nor would the true Samuel have admitted such worship and homage to be paid him, as is expressed in

[b] Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.
[c] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 2.

[d] T. Bab. Chagigah, fol. 4. 2. Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.
[e] Ut supra.

this last clause, which angelic spirits have refused, Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 9, 10. though perhaps no more than civil respect is intended: but rather this was a diabolical spectre, or apparition, or the devil, that appeared in the form and shape of Samuel, and mimicked him; and was one of those deceiving spirits Porphyry speaks[f] of, that appear in various shapes and forms, and pretend to be gods or demons, or the souls of the deceased. Some[g] think all this was the cunning and imposture of the woman alone, or that she was assisted with a confederate, who acted the part of Samuel; but this is not probable.

Ver. 15. *And Samuel said to Saul, why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?* &c.] This makes it a clear case that this was not the true Samuel; his soul was at rest in Abraham's bosom, in the state of bliss and happiness in heaven, and it was not in the power of men and devils to disquiet it; nor would he have talked of his being brought up, but rather of his coming down, had it been really he; much less would he have acknowledged that he was brought up by Saul, by means of a witch, and through the help of the devil: *and Saul answered, I am sore distressed*; in mind, being in great straits and difficulties, pressed hard upon by men, and forsaken of God, as follows: *for the Philistines make war against me*; so they had many times, and he had been victorious, and had no reason to be so much distressed, if that was all: but he adds, *and God is departed from me*; and therefore he feared he should be left to fall into their hands; and that he had forsaken him he concluded from hence, *and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams*; see the note on ver. 6. he makes no mention of Urim, either because they were not with him to inquire by, being carried away by Abiathar when he fled to David; or, as the Jews say[h], through shame, he said nothing of the Urim before Samuel, as he took this appearance to be, because he had slain the priests at Nob, and because of this shame, they say, his sin was forgiven him: *therefore have I called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do*; which was downright madness and folly to imagine, that since God had forsaken him, and would give him no answer, that a prophet of his should take his part; or when he could get no answer from a prophet of God on earth, that he could expect an agreeable one from one fetched down from heaven: one would be tempted to think that he himself believed it was the devil he was talking to, and whom he had called for under the name of Samuel, and expected to see; for from whom else could he expect advice, when he was forsaken of God, and his prophets?

Ver. 16. *Then said Samuel, wherefore then dost thou ask of me,* &c.] Whom thou knowest to have been a prophet of the Lord, and therefore can say nothing more or less than what comes from him, and is according to his will, if any thing at all; the *devil* personating Samuel, whom Saul had called for, and reasons in such language as might be thought to be his own, though sometimes he betrays himself: *seeing the Lord is departed from thee*; as Saul himself owned: to which he adds, *and is become thine enemy*; to make his case appear still more desperate; for his whole view is to lead him to despair, which shews what sort of spirit he was: though some understand this as spoken of David, and read the words, and *he is with thine enemy*[i]; is on his side, and favours his cause; so the Targum, "and he is for the help of a man, whose enmity thou "sharest in;" or who is at enmity with thee, meaning David; but now the true Samuel would never have said this, or suggested it, that David was an enemy to Saul, for he was not.

Ver. 17. *And the Lord hath done to him,* &c.] To David, Saul's enemy, as he insinuated he was: *as he spake by me*; pretending to be the true Samuel, and wearing the guise of him, he speaks his very words, which he was well acquainted with, and could deliver exactly as he did: *for the Lord hath rent the kingdom out of thine hand, and given it to thy neighbour*; which words are expressed by Samuel, ch. xv. 28. even *unto David*; which is added by the apparition, by way of explanation, interpreting the words of David; which he might safely venture to do, seeing such a train of circumstances had occurred since the delivery of these words, which plainly made it appear he was intended.

Ver. 18. *Because thou obeyedst not the voice of the Lord,* &c.] At Gilgal, as Abarbinel thinks; which is the first thing for which the kingdom was threatened to be taken from him, ch. xiii. 13, 14. *nor executedst his fierce wrath upon Amalek*; in sparing Agag, and the best of the cattle, ch. xv. 9, 28. *therefore hath the Lord done this thing unto thee this day*; forsaken him, rent his kingdom from him, and would deliver him into the hands of the Philistines, as follows: had he been the true Samuel, he would have told him of some other sins of his, provoking to the Lord; as his slaughter of the priests at Nob, his cruel persecution of David, and especially of his asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit at this time, of which not a word is said, and yet was the very transgression for which Saul died, 1 Chron. x. 13, 14.

Ver. 19. *Moreover, the Lord will also deliver Israel with thee into the hands of the Philistines,* &c.] Not a word of comfort does he speak unto him, it being the business of this foul spirit to drive him to despair by the permission of God; had he been the true Samuel, he would have directed him to have altered his course of life, and especially his behaviour toward David, and advised him in those difficulties to send for him, who might have been of singular use unto him; he would have exhorted him to repentance for his sins, and humiliation before God on account of them, and given him hope on this that God would appear for him, and work deliverance, as he had done; but instead of this tells him, that he and his army would be delivered into the hands of the Philistines, which he might make a shrewd guess at, and venture to say from the circumstances of things, and the situation Saul and his people were in; the armies of the Philistines were very numerous, and those of Israel comparatively weak; Saul was quite dispirited, and God had forsaken him: *and to-morrow shalt thou and thy sons be with me*: which if

[f] De Abstinentia, l. 2. apud Grotium in loc.
[g] See Webster's Displaying of supposed Witchcraft, &c. ch. 8. p. 166, &c.
[h] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 12. 2.
[i] ויהי ערך & est cum inimico tuo, Pagninus, Vatablus; so V. L.

understood in what sense it may, seems to be a lie of the devil, and at best an ambiguous expression, such as he has been wont to give in the Heathen oracles; if he meant this of himself as an evil spirit, it could not be true of Saul and all his sons, that they should be with him in hell, especially of Jonathan, who appears throughout the whole of his life to have been a good man; if he would have it understood of him as personating Samuel, and of their being with him in heaven, it must be a great stretch of charity to believe it true of Saul, so wicked a man, and who died in the act of self-murder; though the Jews[k], some of them, understand it in this sense, that his sins were pardoned, and he was saved; and if it is taken in the sense of being in the state of the dead, and in the earth, from whence he is said to ascend, and where the body of Samuel was, which seems to be the best sense that is put upon the phrase, *with me;* yet this was not true, if he meant it of all the sons of Saul, as the expression seems to suggest; for there were Ish-bosheth, and his two sons by Rizpah, which survived him; nor was it true of Saul and his sons that they were cut off, and that they died the next day; for the battle was not fought till several days after this, see ver. 23. ch. xxix. 1, 10, 11. and xxx. 1, 17. and xxxi. 8, 9. if it should be said, that *to-morrow* signifies some future time, and not strictly the next day, this shews the ambiguity of the expression used, and the insignificancy of it to the present purpose; for who knew not that Saul and his sons would die some time or another? *the Lord also shall deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines:* which is only a repetition of what is said in the first clause.

Ver. 20. *Then Saul fell straightway all along on the earth,* &c.] Fell at his full length at once, as if he had been thunderstruck, or pierced through with a dart or sword: *and was sore afraid, because of the words of Samuel;* as he supposed they were, whose words never failed: *and there was no strength in him:* to rise up again, he was quite dispirited and strengthless: *for he had eaten no bread all the day, nor all the night;* which contributed the more to his weakness; not only his fears, but not eating any food, occasioned his weakness, and that through want of an appetite, by reason of the great concern of his mind in his present troubles.

Ver. 21. *And the woman came unto Saul,* &c.] Having left him and the apparition in a room by themselves to converse together, and perhaps on hearing him fall to the ground came in: *and saw that he was sore troubled;* by his lying on the ground, and the agonies he seemed to be in, and the uneasiness that sat upon his countenance: *and said unto him, behold, thine handmaid hath obeyed thy voice;* in divining by her familiar spirit for him, and in bringing up Samuel to him, as he desired: *and I have put my life in my hand;* exposed it to the utmost danger, since a person of her profession, and taken in the exercise of it, was punishable with death; and especially she was in the greater danger, as it was Saul himself, who had by an edict expelled all such persons from his dominions, who now employed her, as she perceived: *and have hearkened unto thy words which thou spakest unto me;* to the oath he had taken, that no hurt should come to her, which she confided in, and relied upon, and to what he bid her do, according to her art of divination.

Ver. 22. *Now therefore, I pray thee, hearken thou also unto the voice of thine handmaid,* &c.] She argues, that as she had hearkened unto him to the endangering of her life, it was but reasonable, and might be expected, that he would hearken to her in a case that would be to the preservation of his life: *and let me set a morsel of bread before thee, and eat, that thou mayest have strength, when thou goest on thy way;* which she might urge, not merely out of respect to the king, but for her own sake, lest should he die in her house, she might be taken up, not only for a witch, but as being accessory to the death of the king; and therefore she moves, that he would take some food for refreshment of nature, that he might be able to depart her house, and go on his way to his army.

Ver. 23. *But he refused, and said, I will not eat,* &c.] Choosing rather to die with famine than by the sword of the Philistines; though perhaps his meaning is, he could not eat, his stomach loathed it, being overwhelmed with grief and trouble: *but his servants, together with the woman, compelled him;* not by force, but by arguments; they over-persuaded him, and prevailed upon him to try to eat: *and he hearkened unto their voice;* and agreed to eat, if he could; *so he arose from the earth;* on which he lay at his full length: *and sat upon the bed;* or couch, it being now the custom to recline on couches at eating; though some deny that this custom obtained so early.

Ver. 24. *And the woman had a fat calf in the house,* &c.] This was reckoned a very dainty dish in those countries, and fit for any guests, see Gen. xviii. 7. Josephus says[l], she vouchsafed to feed and take care of it in her house, and it was very familiar with her; and he highly commends the liberality of the woman, and as worthy of imitation: *and she hasted and killed it;* and dressed it in some way or another, and which in those times was done speedily: *and took flour and kneaded it, and did bake unleavened bread therewith;* which was soonest made, she not having time to leaven it.

Ver. 25. *And she brought it before Saul, and before his servants, and they did eat,* &c.] Of the fatted calf, and unleavened bread, which she set upon a table before them, in the best manner she could: *then they rose up, and went away that night;* that it might not be seen in what house they had been, and that they might get to the camp without being discovered by the Philistines, or known by the Israelites that they had been out.

[k] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 12. 2.

[l] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 3. 4.

CHAP. XXIX.

THIS chapter gives an account of David's going forth with the armies of the Philistines, ver. 1, 2. of his being objected to by the princes of the Philistines, who insisted upon his being sent back, ver. 3, 4, 5. of the report Achish made of it to David, and the discourse that passed between them upon it, ver. 6—10. whereby David had a way unexpectedly opened for him to be freed from this service, which he gladly embraced, ver. 11.

Ver. 1. *Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek*, &c.] Not the city in the tribe of Judah of that name, Josh. xv. 53. where the Philistines had a camp in the time of Samuel, ch. iv. 1. but rather that in the tribe of Asher, Josh. xix. 30. unless there was one of this name in the tribe of Issachar, not mentioned, since it seems to have been near Jezreel and Shunem, which were both in that tribe, Josh. xix. 18. *and the Israelites pitched by a fountain which is in Jezreel;* in the valley of Jezreel; of which see the notes on Josh. xix. 18. and Hos. i. 5.

Ver. 2. *And the lords of the Philistines passed on by hundreds, and by thousands*, &c.] Not that there were so many lords, for there were but five of them; but these marched, some at the head of hundreds with them, and others at the head of thousands: *but David and his men passed on in the rereward with Achish;* who being the generalissimo brought up the rear, and David, whom he had appointed captain of his life-guards, attended him with his men, which in point of gratitude he could not refuse; and yet was in the greatest strait and difficulty how to act, it being both against his conscience and his interest to fight against Israel, and was waiting and hoping for some appearance of Providence to deliver him out of this dilemma, and which was quickly seen; but Abarbinel thinks David had no other notion in going to the battle, but of being the body-guard of Achish, and accompanying him, and that he should not fight against Israel, nor for the Philistines: neither hurt the one, nor help the other.

Ver. 3. *Then said the princes of the Philistines*, &c.] To Achish; not those of the court of Achish, who were his subjects, but the confederate princes with him in this war, the lords of the other principalities, as appears by the freedom they took with him, ver. 4. *what do these Hebrews here?* or Jews, as the Targum; what hast thou to do with them, or they to be with thee? men of another nation and religion, and known enemies to the Philistines: *and Achish said unto the princes of the Philistines:* in order to soften them, and reconcile them to these men, and their being with him: *is not this David the servant of Saul the king of Israel;* between whom there had been a quarrel, and the former had fled from the latter to him: *which hath been with me these days, or these years:* had been with him many days, and he might say years, as he had been with him one whole year, and part of another, see ch. xxvii. 7. and he might have known him longer, if he was the same Achish David first fled to; Kimchi interprets it, that he knew him as well as if he had been with him as many years as days: *and I have found no fault in him since he fell unto me unto this day?* the affair of David's going against the Geshurites, &c. not being yet known by him, or, if it was, he approved of it, they being enemies of his; this shews that David behaved with a great deal of prudence to have such a character as this from a king of the Philistines.

Ver. 4. *And the princes of the Philistines were wroth with him*, &c.] With Achish, for giving such a character of David, and taking his part, in order to detain him, if possible: *and the princes of the Philistines said unto him, make this fellow return:* they speak of him with contempt, and insist on it that Achish order him to turn back, and go no further with them: *that he may go again to his place which thou hast appointed him;* to Ziklag, the place that Achish had given him for his residence; they did not desire to have him sent to his own country, and to Saul, since should a reconciliation be made between them, he would be of great service to Saul against them: *and let him not go down with us to battle;* into the valley of Jezreel, where the Israelites had pitched: *lest in the battle he be an adversary to us:* and fall upon them behind, being in the rear, whilst they were engaging in the front with Israel: *for wherewith should he reconcile himself unto his master?* to Saul he had offended, and fled from: should *it not be with the heads of these men?* the Philistines; or *unless by the heads of these men*[m]; he had no other way of making his peace with his master but by cutting off the heads of the Philistines; and therefore he was a dangerous man to take with them into the battle.

Ver. 5. Is *not this David, of whom they sang one to another in dances*, &c.] Long ago: *saying, Saul slew his thousands, and David his ten thousands:* so that he is an old sworn enemy of ours; and the more valiant and victorious he has been, the less is he to be trusted, see ch. xviii. 7. and xxi. 11.

Ver. 6. *Then Achish called David*, &c.] Being so near him, that he could call unto him himself, or he sent some person to him, to require his presence with him: *and said unto him, surely, as the Lord liveth;* or *Jehovah liveth;* an oath by the true God, of whom Achish might have some knowledge, as he also had of angels, from his conversation with David; though the Heathens had a notion of a supreme Being, and yet worshipped other gods, and whom they called Jove, from this name of Jehovah. Kimchi observes, that all confess a first cause; and therefore when he swore to David, he swore by him in whom David believed, perhaps out of complaisance to him, or that David might pay the greater regard to his oath: *thou hast been upright;* sincere, honest, faithful, and just in all his deportment; yet not so sincere as he thought him to be, witness the road he pretended he had taken

[m] הלא בראשי nisi per capita, Noldius, p. 257. No. 1147.

against the south of Judah, ch. xxvii. *and thy going out and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight*: his behaviour in the army, attending him as the keeper of his head, or captain of his life-guard, was exceeding agreeable to him, and he could wish to have him continued: *for I have not found evil in thee, since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day*: whatever he had done before to the Philistines, having greatly afflicted and distressed them in his wars with them, of which this seems to be an exception: *nevertheless, the lords favour thee not*: or thou art not acceptable to them, yea, very offensive and disagreeable.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore now return*, &c.] To Ziklag: *and go in peace*: not only in a peaceable manner, easy and satisfied, as David was at his very heart to hear this, but all prosperity and happiness attend thee: the Jews [a] distinguish between wishing persons to go in peace, and to go to peace; the former they observe has not issued happily, when the other has, and they instance in the wish of Jethro to Moses, and of David to Absalom; *that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines*: and what would be the consequence of that he could not say, but suggests it would be most for his peace and safety to depart.

Ver. 8. *And David said unto Achish, what have I done?* &c.] This question is anticipated by the speech of Achish, who had declared he had found no evil in him; but David must say something to put on an appearance of concern for being dismissed, when he was heartily glad of it: *and what hast thou found in thy servant, so long as I have been with thee unto this day, that I may not go fight against the enemies of my lord the king?* which cannot be excused of great dissimulation, since nothing was more foreign from his heart, and against his will, than fighting against the Israelites, and which he determined to avoid if possible; and glad at heart he was to be thus excused, and freed from the straits and difficulties he was involved in; but that the Philistines might have no cause of suspicion of him, and that he was warmly attached to their interest among whom he was still to continue, he put on these airs. Abarbinel is of opinion that the lords of the Philistines were only afraid of David, but not of his men, and therefore were not solicitous about their going, but his, which gave David a concern; and since he was particularly singled out, he desired to know what special evil had been found in him; but when he understood, by the following answer of Achish, that his servants were to go with him, he was content, and said no more; but the princes asked, *what do these Hebrews here?* ver. 3.

Ver. 9. *And Achish answered and said unto David*, &c.] In reply to the questions: *I know that thou art good in my sight as an angel of God*: for his great wisdom, and graceful behaviour, and inoffensive carriage: *notwithstanding the princes of the Philistines have said, he shall not go up with us to the battle*: though Achish had so good an opinion of him, and had declared it in council, yet an order had passed there that he should not go to battle with them; there were but five of them, and Achish was one of the five, so that there were four to one for the dismissing him; and Achish, though a king, was obliged to submit.

Ver. 10. *Wherefore now rise up early with thy master's servants that are come with thee*, &c.] Meaning his 600 men, who were considered as the servants and subjects of Saul, though with David: and which tacitly carried in it the objection of the Philistine lords unto them, that since they were the servants and subjects of Saul, they were not to be trusted in a battle with him; lest finding an opportunity, they should seize it, and thereby ingratiate themselves into his favour again: *and as soon as ye be up early in the morning, and have light, depart*: he advises them to get away as soon as they could, lest the Philistines should fall upon them, and force them, and he could not say what mischief might befall them; wherefore for their safety it was best to depart as soon as they could see their way.

Ver. 11. *So David and his men rose up early to depart in the morning*, &c.] Being as willing and ready to go as the Philistines were desirous they should: *to return into the land of the Philistines*: for now they were in the land of Israel, at Aphek, near Jezreel, from whence they went back to Ziklag, which was within the principality of Gath; and, according to Bunting [b], was 88 miles from the place where the army of the Philistines was; but it seems not very likely that it should be so far off: *and the Philistines went up to Jezreel*: where the army of the Israelites lay encamped, in order to fight them. By the dismission of David from the army of the Philistines, he was not only delivered from a sad plunge he was in, either of acting an ungrateful part to Achish, or an unnatural one to Israel; but also, by the pressing charge of Achish to get away as early as possible in the morning, he came time enough to rescue the prey the Amalekites had taken at Ziklag his city, as in the following chapter; and the providence of God in this affair is further observable, as by some represented, since if David had stayed in the camp of the Philistines, it would not have been so easy for him, on the death of Saul, to have got from them, and succeed in the kingdom, as he could and did from Ziklag.

CHAP. XXX.

THIS chapter relates the condition Ziklag was in when David and his men came to it, the city burnt, and their families carried captive by the Amalekites, which occasioned not only a general lamentation, but mutiny and murmuring in David's men, ver. 1—6. the inquiry David made of the Lord what he should do, who is bid to pursue the enemy; and being directed by a lad where they were, fell upon them, and routed them, and brought back the captives with a great spoil, ver. 7—20. the distribution of the spoil, both

[a] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 64. 1. Sepher Alphes, par. 1. fol. 421. 2.

[b] Travels, &c. p. 137.

to those that went with him, and to those who through faintness were left behind, ver. 21—25. and the presents of it he sent to several places in the tribe of Judah, who had been kind to him when he dwelt among them, ver. 26—31.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag, on the third day,* &c.] Either from their departure from thence, when they went out with Achish, or rather from the time of their leaving Achish, and the camp of the Philistines; so long they were upon their march homewards, see 2 Sam. i. 1, 2. and no wonder, if it was the distance of 88 miles, see the note on ch. xxix. 11. *that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag;* the southern parts of the land of the Philistines, and of Judah, as appears from ver. 14. taking the opportunity of the Philistines being gone into the land of Israel, and particularly of David's absence from Ziklag, to whom they bore a grudge for his invasion, destruction, and spoil of them not long ago, see ch. xxvii. 8. *and smitten Ziklag, and burnt it with fire;* not that they smote the inhabitants of it, there were no men in it, and the women and children they carried captive; but they demolished the buildings in it, pulled down the houses after they had rifled them, and burnt them with fire, that David and his men might dwell there no more.

Ver. 2. *And had taken the women captives, that* were *therein,* &c.] There being no other to take, the men were gone with David: *they slew not any, either great or small;* that is, of the women, whether married or unmarried, old, or maidens, or children; which was very much, since David destroyed all that came within his reach, men and women, when he invaded them, ch. xxvii. 9. but perhaps this was not owing to their humanity, but to their covetousness, designing to make an advantage of them by selling them for slaves; no doubt they were restrained by the providence of God: *but carried them away, and went on their way;* homewards with their captives.

Ver. 3. *So David and his men came to the city,* &c.] Or however to the place where it had stood, and where it now lay in ruins: *and, behold, it was burnt with fire;* the whole city was laid in ashes: *and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives;* as it appeared afterwards; for upon their first coming they knew not but they were all destroyed; and which they might reasonably suppose from their former treatment of them, unless there were any left upon the spot which could inform them how things were, which does not appear, and which must make their distress the greater.

Ver. 4. *Then David and the people that* were *with him lifted up their voice,* &c.] In doleful shrieks, and loud lamentations: *and wept, until they had no more power to weep;* till nature was quite exhausted, and no moisture left; so the Vulgate Latin version, *till tears failed in them;* they could shed no more.

Ver. 5. *And David's two wives were taken captives,* &c.] Which is observed as one cause of his particular distress, and another follows in the next verse: *Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite;* that is, who had been his wife; for he was now dead, and was so before she was married to David; both these came with him to Gath, and were left at Ziklag when he went with Achish, and here they were taken; see ch. xxv. 42, 43. and xxvii. 3.

Ver. 6. *And David was greatly distressed,* &c.] Partly for the loss of his two wives, and partly because of the mutiny and murmuring of his men: *for the people spake of stoning him;* as the Israelites did of Moses and Aaron, Numb. xiv. 10. the reason of this was, because, as they judged, it was owing to David that they went along with Achish, and left the city defenceless, and because he had provoked the Amalekites by his inroad upon them, who took this opportunity of avenging themselves. Abarbinel is of opinion that it was his excess of sorrow for his two wives, and his remissness and backwardness to take vengeance on their enemies, that provoked them, and put them on talking after this manner: *because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters;* as well as David; and they were very desirous of recovering them if possible, and of taking vengeance on those who had carried them captive: *but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God;* took all patiently, and exercised faith on his God; he encouraged himself in the power and providence of God; in the promises of God, and his faithfulness in keeping them; in a view of his covenant-relation to God; in remembrance of the grace, mercy, and goodness of God, and his former experiences of it; hoping and believing that God would appear for him in some way or another, and work salvation for him. The Targum is, "he strengthened himself in the Word of the Lord "his God;" in Christ the Word of God, and in the power of his might, and in the grace that is in him, Eph. vi. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 1.

Ver. 7. *And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son,* &c.] The son of Ahimelech, who was slain at Nob by the order of Saul; and Abiathar his son, who fled to David with the ephod, on the death of his father, was now high-priest in his room; and who it seems was with David when he went with Achish, and returned with him; for had he been left at Ziklag, he and his ephod, in all probability, had been carried off by the Amalekites, unless we can suppose him under the protection of a special providence: it is much David had not inquired of the Lord by him about his going with Achish; perhaps the present disaster brought to mind that neglect, and made him the more diligent now: *I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod;* not to put it on himself, but that the high-priest might put it on, and inquire by it before him of the Lord: *and Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David;* for the sake of David, that inquiry might be made before him of the Lord by Urim and Thummim.

Ver. 8. *And David inquired of the Lord,* &c.] That is, by Abiathar, who reported his questions to the Lord in his name: *saying, shall I pursue after this troop?* the large company of the Amalekites, as it appears by what follows they were: *shall I overtake them?* two questions are here put together, and answers returned to them, contrary to a notion of the Jews; see the note on ch. xxiii. 11. *and he answered him, pursue;* which respects the first question: *for thou shalt surely overtake* them; which is an answer to the second question, and a full one, giving full assu-

rance of overtaking; to which is added more than what was inquired about; *and without fail recover* all; their wives, sons, and daughters, and the spoil that was taken; or *in delivering thou shalt deliver* [p], out of the hands of the Amalekites, whatsoever they had taken.

Ver. 9. *So David went, he and the* 600 *men that* were *with him,* &c.] Encouraged by the oracle of the Lord: *and came to the brook Besor;* which Adrichomius [q] places in the tribe of Simeon; it is thought to be near Gaza. Aristæus [r] speaks of brooks that flowed by Gaza and Ashdod, places that belonged to the Philistines; some take it to be the river of the wilderness in Amos vi. 14. see the note there: *where those that were left behind stayed;* or a part of them were left, as the Targum; all the 600 came to this brook, but 200 of them were left here, as the following verse shews, and stayed here till the rest returned; for this is not to be understood of any that were left behind at Ziklag, for all came from thence to this brook.

Ver. 10. *But David pursued, he and* 400 *men,* &c.] Not discouraged with being obliged to leave a third part of his little army behind; though it was doubtless a trial of his faith, with these to pursue an enemy, whose numbers he knew not, which must greatly exceed his; for after the rout and slaughter of them, as many escaped on camels as David had with him, ver. 17. *for* 200 *abode behind, which were so faint;* through their grief and sorrow for the loss of their wives and children, and through their march from the camp of the Philistines to Ziklag, and from thence hither, that they looked like a corpse, as the word signifies; Procopius Gazæus has it only 70 men: *so that they could not go over the brook Besor;* being so weak and feeble; for this was not owing to fear of their enemies, and faint-heartedness on that account, then it would rather have been said, *they would not go over;* the Targum renders the word *faint* by *restrained* or prohibited, as if they were forbid by David to go over, but were ordered to tarry here by the stuff, whilst the rest pursued; and, according to the Syriac and Arabic versions, they were placed there, that none might go over the brook; and it seems, by ver. 22, that they had a good will to go over, but were made to abide there; or as all Gideon's army, but 300, were sent back, and not suffered to go with him, being too many.

Ver. 11. *And they found an Egyptian in the field,* &c.] As they passed along, lying there, having been sick, and was half-starved, almost dead: *and brought him to David;* to know what was to be done with him; being in the habit of a soldier, they concluded he might be one of the company they were in pursuit of; but whether they should kill him, or make use of him as an intelligencer and guide, could they bring him to himself, they knew not, and therefore brought him to David: *and gave him bread, and he did eat, and they made him drink water;* both which they had with them for their own use; had he been an Amalekite, and not an Egyptian, they might not have relieved or spared him, but must have destroyed him at once; see Deut. xxiv. 19.

Ver. 12. *And they gave him a piece of cake of figs,* &c.] That were dried and pressed together, and made into cakes: *and two clusters* of raisins; or dried grapes, as the Targum: *and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him;* he seemed to be quite dispirited, almost lifeless, but upon eating some food he was refreshed, and his spirits revived, and he was capable of conversing: *for he had eaten no bread, nor drank any water, three days and three nights;* that is, one whole day, and part of two days, as appears from the next verse.

Ver. 13. *And David said unto him, to whom* belongest *thou?* &c.] To what country or people? and to whom among them? *and whence* art *thou?* of what nation? where wast thou born? what countryman art thou? for his being called an Egyptian before seems to be by anticipation, unless it was guessed at by his habit; for until he had eaten and drank he could not speak, and so could not be known by his speech: *for he said, I* am *a young man of Egypt;* that was the country he belonged to, and came from; he was an Egyptian by birth: *servant to an Amalekite;* one of those that had invaded the country, and burnt Ziklag, as it follows: *and my master left me, because three days agone I fell sick;* which was very barbarous and cruel to leave him at all, when they had camels with them, ver. 17. and no doubt carriages for their arms, provision, and spoil, and men; and more so to leave him without any body with him to take care of him, and without any food, was he capable of eating any; but so it was ordered by the providence of God, that he should be left to be the instrument of the just ruin of his master, and of the whole troop.

Ver. 14. *We made an invasion* upon *the south of the Cherethites,* &c.] The Philistines so called, or at least one nation of them, such that dwelt to the south of the land, ver. 16. see the note on Zeph. ii. 5. *and upon the coast which* belongeth *to Judah;* the south of Judah, where David pretended he had been, and had spoiled, and which was now actually done by the Amalekites, ch. xxvii. 10. *and upon the south of Caleb;* that part of the tribe of Judah which belonged to Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and his posterity, and which was the southern part of it, Josh. xv. 19. *and we burnt Ziklag with fire;* and then departed.

Ver. 15. *And David said unto him, canst thou bring me down to this company?* &c.] That is, shew him, or direct him where they were: *and he said, swear unto me by God;* the Targum is, by the Word of the Lord; but it is highly probable this man had no notion of Jehovah, and his Word, or of the true God; only that there was a God, and that an oath taken by him was solemn, sacred, and inviolable, and might be trusted to and depended on: *that thou wilt neither kill me;* for he found now he was in the hands of those whose city he had been concerned in plundering and burning, and so might fear his life was in danger: *nor deliver me into the hands of my master;* who had been a cruel one to him, and therefore would gladly be clear of him; and if he had nothing else against him, his late usage of him was sufficient to raise his resentment of him: *and I will bring thee down to this company;* or shew him

[p] הצל תציל eruendo erues, Pagninus, Montanus; eripiendo ereepturus es, Piscator.

[q] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 133.

[r] Hist. 72. Interpret. p. 41.

where they were, having heard them say where they would stop, and make merry, and divide their spoil; and perhaps his master might tell him they would be at such a place at such a time, where, if he was better, he might come to them; the Vulgate Latin version adds, *and David swore to him*: which, though not expressed in the original text, was no doubt done by him; and the Syriac and Arabic versions begin the following verse thus, *when David had sworn to him*.

Ver. 16. *And when he had brought him down*, &c.] To the place where the company of the Amalekites were, or near it: *behold, they were spread abroad upon all the earth*: they were not in any regular order, and much less in any military form, but lay about in the fields, scattered here and there, were in detached parties: some *eating and drinking*; in one place: *and* others *dancing*; in another place, expressing their joy, and perhaps their thankfulness to their idols: *because of the great spoil they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah*: from Ziklag, and from the south of the Cherethites, and the south of Judah, they had invaded, ver. 14. and here they were in the greatest security; knowing that the armies of the Philistines were gone into the land of Israel, and were about to engage in battle with the Israelites, and David they supposed was with the Philistines, so that they had nothing to fear from any quarter; and thus it is often, that when men cry peace, peace, sudden destruction comes upon them.

Ver. 17. *And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day*, &c.] As there are two twilights, the twilight of the morning, and the twilight of the evening; this is differently understood; some take it for the twilight of the morning, and that it was night when David came to them, and let them alone till they were drunk and asleep, and then early in the morning fell upon them, and smote them until the evening; so Josephus[s] relates it; but others take it to be the twilight of the evening, and that he fell upon them that night, and continued the slaughter of them to the evening of the next day, with which agrees the Targum; nay, some take the next day, or the morrow, to be that which followed after the two evenings; so that this slaughter was carried on to the third day: *and there escaped not a man of them, save 400 young men that rode upon camels, and fled*; that sort of camels called dromedaries, according to Josephus[t], and which were very swift, and much used by the Arabians, near whom these people dwelt, see Isa. lx. 6. Jer. ii. 23.

Ver. 18. *And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away*, &c.] The wives and children of the Israelites, and their goods, excepting the provisions they had eaten: *and David rescued his two wives*: which is particularly observed, because a special concern of his.

Ver. 19. *And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters*, &c.] Not any of the least or youngest, nor any of them that were grown up; for as these were not slain, but carried captive, so they were brought back, and not one missing, see ver. 2. *neither spoil, nor any thing they had taken to them*: except the food they had eaten and the liquor they had drank, as before observed; and perhaps what they had ate and drank were none of theirs, but the Philistines'; so that *David recovered all*; taken in the utmost extent.

Ver. 20. *And David took all the flocks, and the herds*, &c.] Which they had taken from the land of the Philistines, or which belonged to the Amalekites properly: which *they drave before those other cattle*; which had been carried from Ziklag; first went the spoil taken from other places, and then those taken from David and his men, or what was found at Ziklag. Abarbinel supposes the meaning to be this, that the herds were driven before the flocks, that the oxen were led out first, and then the sheep followed, as being the weaker sort, and more easily to be driven, and carried off; but the former sense seems best: *and said, this is David's spoil*; either the whole of it, it being owing to him that it was got or brought back; or this may respect some peculiar part of it made a present of to him; or it may design what the Amalekites had taken from others, which was at the disposal of David, as distinguished from what was taken from Ziklag, and was restored, or to be restored to the proper owners: it may be taken in the first and more general sense, as being the song, or the burden of the song, sung by David's men as they returned with the spoil, giving him all the honour of it, of whom, but a little before, they talked of stoning.

Ver. 21. *And David came to the 200 men*, &c.] Left at the brook Besor: *who were so faint that they could not follow David*; or, as the Targum, were restrained from going over after him; either through faintness of spirits, and weakness of body, or through the order of David that they should not follow him; and which seems to receive some countenance from what follows: *whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor*; to guard the passage there, and to tarry by and keep the stuff: *and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that* were *with him*: to congratulate them upon the victory they had obtained, and to see and receive their wives and children, and what portion of the spoil might be divided to them: *and when David came near to the people, he saluted them*; asked them of their welfare, whether they were in better health, and recovered of their faintness and weakness, as it should seem they were, by their coming forth to meet him.

Ver. 22. *Then answered all the wicked men, and men of Belial, of those that went with David*, &c.] Who were ill-natured men, and of covetous dispositions, as what is called their answer shews; and it seems by that as if the 200 men had moved that they might have their share in the spoil, or that David had given some intimation that they should: *and said, because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered*; which was very unreasonable not to let them have what was before their own, which was recovered; and indeed it was but right they should have their share in the spoil that was taken, which was of others, as will appear hereafter: but they were of opinion, and were come to a resolution, they should have no more, *save to every man his*

[s] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 6.

[t] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 4. sect. 6.

wife and his children: which was very unkind and ungenerous: *that they may lead them away, and depart*: but whither? Ziklag was burnt, the land of Israel they would not return unto, where they must fall a sacrifice to Saul; these men cared not where they went, so that they were rid of them, that they might not have any share with them in the spoil.

Ver. 23. *Then said David, ye shall not do so, my brethren, &c.*] Though he saw through their wickedness, and disapproved of the bad sentiments they had embraced, yet he deals gently with them, calling them *brethren*, being of the same nation and religion, and his fellow-soldiers; yet at the same time keeps up and maintains his dignity and authority as a general, and declares it should not be as they willed, and gives his reasons for it, that it was not fit they should do as they pleased: *with that which the Lord hath given us*: what they had was given them, and therefore, as they had freely received, they should freely give; and what was given them, was not given to them only, but to the whole body, by the Lord: *who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand*: it was not by their own power and might that they got the victory over the enemy, and the spoil into their hands, but it was through the Lord only; and therefore, as they should not assume the honour of the victory to themselves, so neither should they claim the spoil as wholly belonging to them.

Ver. 24. *For who will hearken unto you in this matter?* &c.] No wise and just man will take on your side of the question, and join with you in excluding your brethren from a share in the spoil: *but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff*: as these 200 men did; they were placed to abide by and watch the carriages, the bag and baggage the rest had left there, that they might be the lighter, and make their pursuit more swiftly: besides, they guarded the pass here, and were also exposed to danger; for if the 400 had been cut off, and the enemy had returned, they must all have perished; and therefore as they had their post assigned them, and were liable to danger, it was but just and reasonable they should have the share in the spoil; especially since it was not want of will in them they did not go with them, but weakness of body: *they shall part alike*: this was David's determination and decision, and it was an equitable one: something similar to this was directed by the Lord in the war of Midian, Numb. xxxi. 25, &c. and was practised in the times of Abraham, Gen. xiv. 24. and is agreeable to the light of nature, and what has been practised by the Heathens, particularly the Romans, as Polybius[u] relates; who tells us, that every man brought booty into the camp, when the tribunes divided it equally to them all; not only to those which remained in battle, but to those that guarded the tents and the baggage, to the sick, and to those that were appointed to any service, see Psal. lxviii. 12. and so the Turkish historian says[w], that the Pisidians, who lived on spoil, gave a part not contemptible to those that abode at home with their wives.

Ver. 25. *And it was so from that day forward*, &c.] Or *upwards*[x], of old, formerly; and so may refer either to what was done at the war with Midian, Numb. xxx. 27. or in the times of Abraham, Gen. xiv. 23, 24. and so Jarchi observes, it is not said, *henceforward*, but *upwards*, it being a statute and custom in the days of Abraham; the same he notes on Gen. xiv. 24. where he, David, learnt this from thence; though Josephus[y] is express for it, that this law obtained from the time of David; and such was his authority, though as yet not king, but a wise and just commander: *that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day*: it appeared so reasonable and equitable, that it was always regarded and attended to.

Ver. 26. *And when David came to Ziklag*, &c.] Perhaps with an intention to rebuild it, and make it still the place of his residence; and it is possible there might be some houses that escaped the flames, and if not, tents might be pitched until the city was rebuilt, and it appears that he continued there some time: *he sent of the spoil to the elders of Judah*: of that part of it which belonged to himself as a general: even *to his friends*; such as had been kind to him when he sojourned among them; so that this was a piece of gratitude, as well as of policy in him, to make his way to the throne the easier, he perceiving the time drawing on for the expiration of the kingdom in the family of Saul; and besides, some in those parts he sent of the spoil to might have been sufferers by the Amalekites, so that it was but a point of justice to restore to them what had been taken from them; for they had invaded the south of Judea, and took spoils from thence, ver. 14—16. it was to his friends in those parts he sent, not to the inhabitants of Ziph and Keilah, which were places in the tribe of Judah; but these having attempted to betray him, were not entitled to his favours, though they were not the objects of his vengeance: *saying, behold, a present for you, of the spoil of the Lord's enemies*; or a *blessing*[z], which he sent them with a good will, wishing health and happiness to them; which they might without hesitation receive, seeing it was not the spoil of private enemies, or of what was taken from them in a way of private revenge, but the spoil of the enemies of the Lord, his and their common enemies; nor need they scruple eating and enjoying it, though the spoil of those that cursed the Lord, as Abarbinel observes, since this they had with the blessing of the Lord.

Ver. 27. *To them which* were *in Bethel*, &c.] One part of the spoil was sent to them; not to those in Beth-el, in the tribe of Benjamin, but in Kirjath-jearim, called Beth-el, or the house of God, because the ark was there, see ch. vii. 1. and x. 3. moreover, this place was also called Baalah, which some think is referred to here, see Josh. xv. 9. *and to* them *which* were *in south Ramoth*: a city of the tribe of Simeon, which lay within the lot of Judah; of which see Josh. xix. 8. *and to* them *which* were *in Jattir*: a city in the tribe of Judah, mentioned in Josh. xv. 48. see the note there.

Ver. 28. *And to* them *which* were *in Aroer*, &c.] Not

[u] Hist. l. 10. p. 268.
[w] Chalcocondyl. de reb. Turc. l. 5. p. 161.
[x] למעלה & supra, Pagninus, Montanus; & jam olim, Tigurine version.
[y] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 6.
[z] ברכה benedictio, Pagninus, Montanus.

Aroer in the tribe of Gad beyond Jordan, where David is never said to be, but some city of this name in the tribe of Judah; the Greek version of Josh. xv. 22, instead of Adadah, has Arouel: *and to* them *which* were *in Siphmoth:* which very probably was in the tribe of Judah, though nowhere else mentioned: *and to* them *which* were *in Eshtemoa;* a Levitical city given to the Levites by the children of Judah, Josh. xxi. 14.

Ver. 29. *And to* them *which* were *in Rachal*, &c.] Another city of the tribe of Judah, but nowhere else spoken of: *and to* them *which* were *in the cities of the Jerahmeelites;* which lay to the south of Judah, ch. xxvii. 10. *and to* them *which* were *in the cities of the Kenites;* who dwelt in the wilderness of Judah, in the south of Arad, Judg. i. 16.

Ver. 30. *And to* them *which* were *in Hormah*, &c.] This was a city also in the tribe of Judah; of which see Josh. xv. 30. *and to* them *which* were *in Chorashan;* or the lake of Ashan, which was in the same tribe, see Josh. xv. 42. *and to* them *which* were *in Athach;* nowhere else mentioned; the Greek version has Nombe instead of it, which some take to be the same with Nob; but that was in the tribe of Benjamin.

Ver. 31. *And to* them *which* were *in Hebron*, &c.] A noted city in the tribe of Judah, in the mountainous part of it, and a city of refuge, and where David was afterwards anointed, first king over Judah, and then over Israel, 2 Sam. ii. 4. and v. 3. *and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt;* where they had their walks, and went to and fro when persecuted by Saul; all such places, and the inhabitants of them, David had a grateful remembrance of, who sheltered and relieved him in the times of his distress.

C H A P. XXXI.

THIS chapter gives an account of the battle between the Philistines and the Israelites, which had been preparing for, and the issue of it; in which Saul, his three sons, and his servants, were slain, upon which his army fled, and several of his cities were taken, ver. 1—7. what the Philistines did with his body and his armour, ver. 8—10. the former of which, together with the bodies of his sons, the men of Jabesh-gilead rescued, and burnt them, and buried their bones under a tree at Jabesh, expressing great sorrow and concern, ver. 11—13.

Ver. 1. *Now the Philistines fought against Israel*, &c.] Being come to Jezreel, where Israel pitched, ch. xxix. 1, 11. they fell upon them, began the battle: *and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines;* at the first onset, as it should seem: *and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa;* which was near, and whither fleeing they were pursued and slain, at least great numbers of them.

Ver. 2. *And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul*, &c.] Stuck to him, pushed him close, bore hard upon him in that part of the army where he was, having a design upon his person: *and upon his sons;* who were with him: *and the Philistines slew Jonathan;* who is mentioned first, being the eldest son, and perhaps first slain; and this was so ordered by the providence of God, that David's way to the throne might be more clear and easy; for though Jonathan would not have opposed him himself, yet the people, fond of him, would, at least many of them, been for setting him on the throne; and though he would have refused it, knowing David was the Lord's anointed, and have made interest for him, this would have looked as if he had made him king, and not the Lord: *and Abinadab and Malchishua, Saul's sons;* these also were slain; the former of these is called Ishui, ch. xiv. 49. Ish-bosheth either was not in the battle, being left at home, as unfit for war, or to take care of the kingdom; or else he fled with Abner, and others, and escaped, and who was to be a trial to David.

Ver. 3. *And the battle went sore against Saul*, &c.] Pressed heavy upon him; he was the butt of the Philistines, they aimed at his person and life: *and the archers hit him;* or *found him*[a]; the place where he was, and directed their arrows at him: *and he was sore wounded of the archers;* or rather *he was afraid* of them, as the Targum, for as yet he was not wounded; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render it, and is the sense Kimchi and Ben Melech give of the word: he was not afraid of death, as Abarbinel observes, he chose to die; but he was afraid he should be hit by the archers in such a way that he should not die immediately, and should be taken alive and ill used; the Philistines, especially the Cherethites, were famous for archery; see the note on Zeph. ii. 5.

Ver. 4. *Then said Saul unto his armour-bearer*, &c.] Who, the Jews[b] say, was Doeg the Edomite, promoted to this office for slaying the priests: *draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith;* for if he was wounded, yet not mortally, and it is certain he did not so apprehend it. It is much the sword of the armour-bearer should be sheathed in a battle; but perhaps he was preparing for flight, and so had put it up in its scabbard: *lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me;* lest they should not dipatch him at once, but put him to a lingering and torturing death, and insult him, and mock at him, as they did Samson: *but his armour-bearer would not, for he was sore afraid;* to lay his hand on the king, the Lord's anointed, to take away his life, being more scrupulous of doing that, if this was Doeg, than of slaying the priests of the Lord; or he might be afraid of doing this, since, should he survive this action, he would be called to an account by the Israelites, and be put to death for killing the king: *therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it;* or rather *the sword*, the sword of his armour-bearer, and so was a self-murderer: the Jews endeavour to excuse this fact of Saul, because he knew he should die in battle from the words of Samuel; and being pressed sore by the archers, he saw it was impossible to escape

[a] וימצאהו & invenerunt eum, Pagninus, Montanus.

[b] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 77. B.

out of their hands, and therefore judged it better to kill himself than to fall by the hands of the uncircumcised; but these excuses will not do. Josephus[c] denies he killed himself; that though he attempted it, his sword would not pierce through him, and that he was killed by the Amalekite, and that that was a true account he gave to David in the following chapter; though it seems rather to be a lie, to curry favour with David, and that Saul did destroy himself.

Ver. 5. *And when his armour-bearer saw that Saul was dead*, &c.] By his own hands, and not by the hands of the Amalekite, which the armour-bearer would scarcely have suffered: *he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him*; some think that Saul, and his armour-bearer, died by the same sword, which was the armour-bearer's; and if he was Doeg, they fell probably by the same sword with which the priests of the Lord were murdered at Nob, ch. xxii. 18. and it is observed by an historian[d], that the murderers of Julius Cæsar slew themselves with the same dagger they destroyed him.

Ver. 6. *So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armour-bearer*, &c.] Only with this difference, his three sons died honourably in the field of battle, but he and his armour-bearer destroyed themselves. Josephus says[e] he reigned 18 years in the life of Samuel, and after his death 22 years, which make the forty years the apostle ascribes to him, Acts. xiii. 21. Eupolemus[f], an Heathen writer, makes him to reign 21 years; but of the years of his reign, both before and after the death of Samuel, chronologers are not agreed, see ch. xxv. 1. and the note on Acts xiii. 21. *and all his men that same day together*; not all the soldiers in his army; for many of them fled and escaped, and even Abner the general of the army, but his household servants, or those that were near his person, his body-guards.

Ver. 7. *And when the men of Israel that* were *on the other side of the valley*, &c.] The valley of Jezreel; of which see the note on Hos. i. 5. *and they that* were *on the other side Jordan*: or rather *on that side*; for the phrase will bear to be rendered either way, and so may mean that side of Jordan on which the battle was fought; for as for the other side, or that beyond it, the Israelites there could not be in such fear of the Philistines, nor do we ever read of their inhabiting any cities there; though as the phrase is used of the valley, as well as of the river, it may be rendered *about the valley*, and *about Jordan*[g], and so describes such that dwelt near to each of them: *saw that the men of Israel fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead*: that is, had information and intelligence of those facts, for it is not to be supposed they saw them with their eyes: *they forsook the cities, and fled*: fearing they should be put to the sword, or carried captive: *and the Philistines came and dwelt in them*; having nothing more to do than to come and take possession.

Ver. 8. *And it came to pass on the morrow*, &c.] The day after the battle, which perhaps was fought till night came on: *when the Philistines came to strip the slain*; of their clothes, and take from them whatever was valuable, as their booty: *that they found Saul and his sons fallen in Mount Gilboa*; to which they had betaken themselves, when the battle went against them in the valley; of which see ch. xxviii. 4.

Ver. 9. *And they cut off his head*, &c.] And fastened it in the temple of Dagon, 1 Chron. x. 10. perhaps that which was at Ashdod, one of the principalities of the Philistines, ch. v. 1, 2. *and stripped off his armour*; or *vessels*[h], his clothes as well as his armour, and what he had about him; as for his crown on his head, and the bracelet on his arm, the Amalekite took them before the Philistines came, 2 Sam. i. 10. *and sent into the land of the Philistines round about*; not his head and his armour, for they were placed in the temple of their idols; unless we can suppose these were first carried about for show, and as proofs of the victory: but rather messengers, who were sent express with the news, *to publish* it in *the house of their idols, and among the people*; that so they might be glad and rejoice, and give praise to their idols, to whom they ascribed the success they had.

Ver. 10. *And they put his armour in the house of Ashtaroth*, &c.] A temple dedicated to their deities, called by this name; of which see the note on Judg. ii. 13. Nothing was more common with the Gentiles than to place in their temples the arms they took from their enemies, as is strongly expressed by Homer[i] and Virgil[k]; and indeed the Jews did the same, as appears by the sword of Goliath being laid up in the tabernacle, ch. xx. 9. Here also the Heathens[l] hung up their own arms when the war was ended: *and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan*: which Josephus[m] says is the same which in his time was called Scythopolis, from the Scythians that possessed it, before called Nysa, according to Pliny[n]: it was given to the tribe of Manasseh, but they could not drive out the inhabitants of it, so that it was always in the possession of others, Josh. xvii. 11. Judg. i. 27. where it is called Beth-shean; to the wall of the city they fastened the body of Saul with nails, as it is commonly understood; but it is more likely they hung it on a gibbet without, and near the walls of the city; so the Targum, they hung his body; or, as Josephus[o], they crucified it there; and so they did also the bodies of his sons, as appears from ver. 12.

Ver. 11. *And the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead*, &c.] Who lived on the other side Jordan, about eight miles from Beth-shan, according to Fuller[p]: *heard of that which the Philistines had done to Saul*; not only that they had got the victory over him, and routed his army, but had abused his body, and hung it up by way of re-

[c] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 7.
[d] Sueton. Vit. Cæsar. c. 89.
[e] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 9.
[f] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.
[g] בעבר העמק—בעבר הירדן circa convallem illam—circa Jordanem, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Noldius, p. 203. No. 936.
[h] את כליו vasa ejus, Munster, Montanus.
[i] Τεύχεα συλήσας, &c. Iliad. 7. ver. 82.
[k] Multaque præterea sacris in postibus arma, &c. Æneid. 7. ver. 183. So Persius, Satyr. 6. ver. 45.
[l] Messal. Corvin. de August. Progen.
[m] Ut supra, l. 8.
[n] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18. Vid. Solin. Polyhistor. c. 49.
[o] Ut supra.
[p] Pisgah-Sight of Palestine, b. 2. ch. 2. p. 92.

proach and ignominy; which they could not bear to hear of, remembering with gratitude the kindness he had shewn to them, in delivering them out of the hands of Nahash the Ammonite, ch. xi.

Ver. 12. *All the valiant men arose*, &c.] Of the city of Jabesh-gilead, fired with indignation at the Philistines' ill usage of Saul and the bodies of his sons: *and went all night*; not only for secrecy, but for haste: *and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of Beth-shan, and came to Jabesh*; brought them with them thither, the Philistines either having no knowledge of it, or not daring to oppose them: *and burnt them there*; that is, the flesh of them, for the bones they buried, as in the next verse; and this they did, contrary to the common usage of the country, which was not to burn; but this they did, that if the Philistines should come to recover them, they would not be able to do it: though the Targum is, "they "burnt over them, as they burn over their kings there;" they made a burning for them of spices over them; or of their beds, and other household goods, as Kimchi and Ben Melech observe, though they prefer the other sense; see 2 Chron. xvi. 14. and xxi. 19. perhaps the true reason might be, because they were putrid and infectious.

Ver. 13. *And they took their bones, and buried them under a tree at Jabesh*, &c.] For though they burned the bodies, yet so as to preserve the bones; and these, together with the ashes of the parts burnt, they gathered up, and buried under a tree near this city; this tree is said to be an oak, 1 Chron. x. 12. so Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, was buried under an oak, Gen. xxxv. 8. The Jews generally interred their dead under some oak, as a fore-mentioned writer observes[a]; pleased perchance with the parallel, as he expresses it, that as these plants, seemingly dead in winter, have every spring an annual resurrection, so men's dry bones shall have new sap put into them at the day of judgment: *and fasted seven days*; not that they ate and drank nothing all that time, but they fasted every day till evening, as the Jews used to do; so long it seems a man may live without eating, but not longer; see the notes on Exod. xxiv. 18. 1 Kings xix. 8. this they did, as Kimchi thinks, in memory of the seven days Nahash the Ammonite gave them for their relief, in which time Saul came and saved them, ch. xi. 3.

THE SECOND BOOK OF SAMUEL,

OTHERWISE CALLED THE

SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS.

THIS book, in many copies of the Hebrew Bible, is carried on without any new title put unto it; the reason of it is, because, by some, this, with the preceding, has been reckoned but one book: hence the Jews say[b], Samuel wrote his book, not his books; in others it is called Samuel Second; and by the Vulgate Latin the Second Book of Samuel, which we call the Second of Kings; though why his name should be put to it at all I see not, since it neither concerns him, nor could it be written by him, being an history of events after his death. The Greek version calls it the Second of Kings; and the Syriac version, the Second Book of the Kings of Israel; whereas there is but one king of Israel it makes mention of, and of whose actions only it is an history; and therefore with greater propriety it is called, as the Arabic version, the Book of David the Prophet, of whose reign, from the beginning to the end of it, it gives an account: wherefore Isidore[c] thinks it was written by David; and if so, it has this mark of simplicity and integrity, that the writer does not spare himself, nor conceal his own faults, and particularly that very capital one, the affair of Bathsheba, and also his numbering of the people; but it is most probable that it was written by Nathan and Gad[d], see 1 Chron. xxix. 29. but whoever was the penman of it, there is no doubt to be made of its being written by inspiration, or that it is canonical; which has never been questioned, since there stands in it a famous prophecy concerning the building of the temple by a son of David, which had an exact accomplishment, ch. vii. 12, 13. as well as of the family of David, for a great while to come, which also was fulfilled, ver. 19. and an eminent passage concerning the Messiah, the son of David, and of his divine sonship, ver. 14. quoted by the Apostle Paul in proof of it, Heb. i. 5. It contains an history of above forty years, for so long David reigned, seven years and six months in Hebron, over Judah, and 33 years in Jerusalem, over all Israel and Judah; and this book relates his last words.

[a] Pisgah-Sight of Palestine, B. 2. ch. 2. p. 62.
[b] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 14. 2.
[c] Origin. l. 6. c. 2.
[d] Alting. Theolog. Hist. loc. 2. p. 40.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter contains an account of the death of Saul and Jonathan, as related to David by an Amalekite, ver 1—10. of the sorrow he and his men were filled with at the news of it, ver. 11, 12. of his order to put to death the messenger that brought the tidings, for his concern in the death of Saul, according to his own testimony, ver. 13—16. and of a lamentation composed by David on this occasion, ver. 17—27.

Ver. 1. *Now it came to pass after the death of Saul*, &c.] The third day after, as appears from the next verse: *when David was returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites;* as related in 1 Sam. xxx. 17. *and David had abode two days in Ziklag;* which, though fired by the Amalekites, was not utterly consumed, but there was still some convenience for the lodging of David and his men; within this time he sent his presents to several places in the tribe of Judah, of which mention is made in the chapter before quoted, and at the same time it was that so many mighty men came to him from several tribes spoken of in 1 Chron. xii.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass on the third day*, &c.] After the battle was fought, in which Saul was slain: *that, behold, a man came out of the camp from Saul;* that is, from them who were in the camp with Saul, for he was dead. Some say[d] this was Doeg the Edomite, which is not likely that he should come with such tidings to David; besides, if he was Saul's armour-bearer, as others say, see 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. he died with Saul; nor his son, as others[e], which is not at all probable, though his being an Edomite is no objection, since the Amalekites were of the race of Edom: *with his clothes rent, and earth upon his head:* in token of mourning, and was the bringer of bad tidings, see 1 Sam. iv. 12. *and so it was, when he came to David, that he fell to the earth, and did obeisance;* as being the rising sun, Saul's successor, and now king.

Ver. 3. *And David said unto him, from whence comest thou?* &c.] It is very likely by his appearance and circumstances he suspected from whence he came: *and he said unto him, out of the camp of Israel am I escaped;* which plainly suggested that that was in danger, confusion, and distress.

Ver. 4. *And David said unto him, how went the matter? I pray thee, tell me*, &c.] That is, how went the battle? on which side the victory? *and he answered, that the people are fled from the battle:* meaning the people of Israel, they had given way, and turned their backs upon their enemies, and were fled: *and many of the people also are fallen and dead;* fell by the sword in the pursuit of them, and were not only wounded, but were slain, and these great numbers of them: *and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also;* which are mentioned last, because they fell some of the last; and this part of the account is reserved by the messenger to the last, because it was the article of the greatest importance; the death of these two persons, the one the enemy, and the other the friend of David, and the death of both made way for his accession to the throne.

Ver. 5. *And David said unto the young man that told him*, &c.] These tidings: *how knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?* this he particularly inquired after, as what most affected him, and was most material for him to know; and his meaning is, whether he had this of his own sight and knowledge, or by report.

Ver. 6. *And the young man that told him*, &c.] So it seems he was, and therefore could not be Doeg, more likely his son of the two; but there is no reason to believe he was either of them, who can't be thought to be well disposed to David: *said, as I happened by chance upon Mount Gilboa;* who was either a passenger that came that way just as the army was routed, and part had fled to Gilboa; or if a soldier, was not one of those that attended Saul, and was of his body-guard, but happened on the flight to come to the same spot on Gilboa where Saul was: *behold, Saul leaned upon his spear;* that that might pierce him through and die; but this seems not true, for he fell upon his sword for that purpose, 1 Sam. xxxi. 4. *and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him:* the charioteers and cavalry, of which part of the Philistine army consisted; though this also does not agree with the account in the above place; for according to that they were the archers that pressed him hard, and hit him.

Ver. 7. *And when he looked behind him*, &c.] To see how near the enemy was, and who were pursuing him: *he saw me, and called unto me;* by which it should rather seem that he belonged to the Philistines than to the Israelites, and as his being an Amalekite shews; for such an one would hardly be admitted among the latter, though it is most likely he was with neither, but happened to come that way just at that time: *and I answered, here* am *I;* ready to hear what thou hast to say, and do thy pleasure.

Ver. 8. *And he said unto me, who* art *thou?* &c.] Being willing to know whether a friend or an enemy, which by his coming behind him he could not tell: *and I answered him, I am an Amalekite;* which he might be; but it is not likely he should tell Saul he was, which would not recommend him to him; though indeed he was now in such circumstances, that the Amalekites had nothing to fear from him; and if he was slain by him, as Josephus[f] affirms he was, it seems to be a just retaliation on him for sparing any of that race, contrary to the will of God.

Ver. 9. *And he said unto me again, stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me*, &c.] Which it can hardly be thought Saul would say; since he might as well

[d] Pesikta in Jarchi in loc.
[e] Tanchuma in Yalkut in loc. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 lib. Reg. fol. 77. C.

[f] Antiqu. l. 6. c. 14. sect. 7.

have died by the hands of the uncircumcised Philistines, which he endeavoured to avoid, as by the hands of an Amalekite: *for anguish is come upon me*; or trembling, as the Targum, not through fear of death, but through fear of falling into the hands of the Philistines, and of being ill used by them. Some render the words, *my embroidered coat*, or *breastplate*, or *coat of mail*, *holds me*[g], or hinders me from being pierced through with the sword or spear; so Ben Gersom[h]: *because my life is yet whole in me*: for though he had been wounded by the archers, yet he did not apprehend he had received any mortal wound, but he was still heart-whole; and therefore feared he should fall into their hands alive, and be ill treated by them.

Ver. 10. *So I stood upon him, and slew him*, &c.] Pressed with all his weight upon his body, that so the spear might pierce through him, and slay him; thus he represents his death to be brought about: *because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen*: this is not consistent with what he had said before, both that he was leaning on his spear, and not fallen to the ground, and that his life was whole in him: *and I took the crown that was upon his head*; which made him conspicuous, and therefore the Philistimes aimed at him, and pressed hard after him, ver. 6. though some think that this was not on his head, but carried into the field of battle, ready to be put on if victory was on his side; and others say it was in the possession and care of Doeg, who at his death gave it to his son to carry to David, and thereby gain his favour: *and the bracelet that was on his arm*; of gold no doubt, so Josephus[i]; such as great personages used to wear, men as well as women, see Gen. xxxviii. 18. Ezek. xxiii. 42. especially military men[k]. Jarchi takes them to be the *totaphot* or phylacteries on the arm, which is not probable: *and have brought them hither unto my lord*; as ensigns of royalty, fit only for a king, Saul's successor, as this person, by calling him lord, owned him to be, and thought by bringing those to him to be highly honoured and rewarded.

Ver. 11. *Then David took hold on his clothes*, &c.] Not on the young man's but his own: *and rent them*; on hearing of the death of Saul and Jonathan, see Gen. xxxvii. 34. from whence the Jews[l] gather, that a man is bound to rend his clothes for a prince, and for the father of the sanhedrim, since Saul, they say, was the prince, and Jonathan the father of that court: *and likewise all the men that were with him*; rent their clothes also, in imitation of him; the same custom obtained among the Gentiles on mournful occasions[m].

Ver. 12. *And they mourned and wept*, &c.] Inwardly mourned, and outwardly wept, no doubt sincerely: *and fasted until even*; ate no food all that day until it was evening, the manner in which fasts used to be kept: *for Saul, and for Jonathan his son*: it is no wonder that David and his men should mourn for Jonathan, a good man, and a valiant one, and a dear and faithful friend of David's; but it may seem not so clear a thing that they should mourn for Saul, a wicked man, and a persecutor of David without cause: but it should be observed that he had been reconciled to David, and had not since attempted any thing against him; besides, he was his prince, his father-in-law, and the rather he might be grieved for his death, and his men with him, because it was matter of joy to the Philistines, and they would endeavour to avail themselves of it; and especially the manner of his death, that he should be the cause of it himself, and die without repentance, as it might be feared, and quickly after consultation with a witch, and when left of God, if these particulars were known to David: *and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel*; that is, the people of the Lord, even the house of Israel, or who were of the house of Israel; or if they are to be distinguished, the former may respect the people of the Lord who died in battle, for whom mourning was made; and the latter the people that survived, the whole kingdom of Israel, which had sustained a great loss by the slaughter made in this battle, as it follows: *because they were fallen by the sword*; so many of them.

Ver. 13. *And David said unto the young man that told him, whence art thou?* &c.] From what place, or of what people and nation art thou? though Abarbinel thinks it neither respects place nor people, but that David thought he was another man's servant; so that the sense of the question is, to what man did he belong? *and he answered, I am the son of a stranger, an Amalekite*; he was not any man's servant, but the son of a proselyte, of one that was by birth and nation an Amalekite, but proselyted to the Jewish religion; he might know of what nation he originally was, by the account he had given of what passed between him and Saul, ver. 8. though the mind of David might be so disturbed as not to advert to it; or if he did, he might be willing to have it repeated for confirmation-sake.

Ver. 14. *And David said unto him, how, wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand*, &c.] By which it should seem that he did more than stand upon him, and press his body, that the spear might pierce through him, but that he drew his sword, and slew him; so David understood him, and is the sense of the phrase in 1 Sam. xvii. 51. *to destroy the Lord's anointed?* a reason why David did not destroy him, when it was in the power of his hands, and which he made use of to dissuade others from it; and here charges it not only as a criminal, but a daring action in this young man, at which he expresses his admiration how he could do it; hereby representing it as a very shocking and detestable action; see 1 Sam. xxiv. 6. and xxvi. 9, 11.

Ver. 15. *And David called one of the young men*, &c.] His servants that attended on him: *and said, go near, and fall upon him*: by smiting him with his sword: *and he smote him, that he died*: his orders were instantly obeyed. Kings and generals of armies had great power in those times and countries to execute a man immediately, without any other judge or jury:

[g] חשבץ tunica scutulata, Braunius; ocellata chlamys, Junius & Tremelius, Piscator; thorax villosus seu pelliceus, Texelii Phœnix, p. 219.

[h] Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacerdot. Heb. l. 1. c. 17. sect. 9.

[i] Ut supra.

[k] Vid. Liv. Hist. Decad. 1. l. 10. c. 44.

[l] T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 26. 1.

[m] ——— it scissa veste Latinus. Virgil. Æneid. 12. prope finem.

what may serve, or David might think would serve, to justify him in doing this, is what follows.

Ver. 16. *And David said unto him, thy blood be upon thy head*, &c.] The blood that he had shed, let him suffer for it; for as he had shed blood, his blood ought to be shed, according to the law of God; and for proof of this, that he had so done, he appeals to his own confession: *for thy mouth hath testified against thee, saying, I have slain the Lord's anointed*; and what might serve to confirm the truth of what he had said were the crown and bracelet which he brought along with him; and besides he was an Amalekite, of a nation that was devoted to destruction; and, as Abarbinel thinks, David might suppose that he killed Saul to take vengeance on him for what he had done to their nation; but, after all, both he and Maimonides [n] allow the punishment of him was not strictly according to law, but was a temporary decree, an extraordinary case, and an act of royal authority; for in common cases a man was not to be condemned and put to death upon his own confession, since it is possible he may not be in his right mind [o]; but David chose to exercise severity in this case, partly to shew his respect to Saul, and to ingratiate himself into the favour of his friends, and partly to deter men from attempting to assassinate princes, who himself was now about to ascend the throne.

Ver. 17. *And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul, and over Jonathan his son.*] Composed the following elegy on account of their death, and sung it in a tune agreeable to it, he and the men that were with him.

Ver. 18. *(Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow*, &c.] These words, with what follow in this verse, are rightly put into a parenthesis, since they don't begin nor make any part of the *elegiac* song, or lamentation of David; and are here inserted to shew, that, amidst his sorrow and lamentation, he was not unmindful of the welfare of the people, and to provide for their defence and security; and therefore gave orders that care should be taken, especially in the tribe of Judah, which was his own tribe, and where he had the greatest authority, and for whom he might have the chiefest concern, that they should be trained up in military exercises, learn the art of war, and the use of every weapon of war, particularly of the bow, which, being a principal one, may be put for all; and which may be the rather mentioned, because the Philistines were expert in the use of it, and seemed to have done much execution with it in the late battle, see 1 Sam. xxxi. 3. They are said [p] to be the inventors of it; though Pliny [q] ascribes it to others; and it may be the people of Israel and of Judah had of late neglected to learn the use of it, and to make use of it, and instead of that had taken to other sort of arms in fighting; for that that was not unknown to them, or wholly disused, is clear from this song, ver. 22. see also 1 Chron. xii. 2. Moreover, as the Philistines, especially the Cherethites, were expert in archery, David found ways and means to get some of them afterwards into his service, and by whom he might improve his people in the art, see ch. viii. 18. though some [r] are of opinion that the word *keshet*, or bow, was the title of the following lamentation or song, taken from the mention of Jonathan's bow in it; which song the children of Judah were to be taught to sing; but then, as has been observed by some, for this there would have been no need of the following reference, since the whole of this song is here recorded: *behold, it is written in the book of Jasher)*; which the Targum calls the book of the law; and Jarchi and Ben Gersom restrain it to the book of Genesis, the book of the upright, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and suppose respect is had to the prophecy concerning Judah, Gen. xlix. 8. 9. but Kimchi, extending it to all the five books of Moses, adds his blessing, in Deut. xxxiii. 7. In the Arabic version it is explained of the book of Samuel, interpreted the book of songs, as if it was a collection of songs; which favours the above sense. Jerom [s] interprets it of the same book, the book of the righteous prophets, Samuel, Gad, and Nathan: but this book seems to have been a public register or annals, in which were recorded memorable actions in any age, and had its name from the uprightness and faithfulness in which it was kept; and in this were set down the order of David for the teaching the children of Judah the use of the bow, and perhaps the method which he directed to for instruction in it; see the note on Josh. x. 13.

Ver. 19. *The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places*, &c.] The high mountains of Gilboa, where Saul their king, and Jonathan his son, a prince of the blood, and natural heir to the crown, and multitudes of young men, the flower of the nation, were wounded and slain. Here begins the lamentation, or the elegiac song: *how are the mighty fallen!* mighty men of war, strong and valiant, as Saul and his sons were, and the soldiers in his army.

Ver. 20. *Tell it not in Gath*, &c.] One of the five principalities of the Philistines, and the chief of them, being raised to a kingdom, and whose king was at the head of the armies of the Philistines that engaged with Saul. This is not to be understood of a command of David, who could not hinder the victory the Philistines had got over Israel being known at Gath, and talked of with pleasure there, but a wish it had not: *publish it not in the streets of Askelon*: another of the principalities of the Philistines, and the sense the same as before: *lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph*: it being usual in those times and countries for women, young women more especially, to express their joy, on occasion of victories obtained, by singing and dancing, Judg. xi. 34. 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7.

Ver. 21. *Ye mountains of Gilboa*, &c.] On which fell Saul and his sons, and many of the people of Israel, ver. 6. 1 Sam. xxxi. 1. let there be *no dew, neither* let there be *rain upon you*: which is not to be understood as a real imprecation; for David would

[n] Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 18. sect. 6.
[o] T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 25. 2. Maimon. ibid.
[p] Bedford's Chronology, p. 245.
[q] Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56.

[r] See Gregory's Notes and Observations, &c. ch. 1. and Weemse of the Judicial Laws, c. 44. p. 171.
[s] Trad. Heb. in 2 lib. Reg. fol. 77. D.

never curse any part of the land of Israel, for which he had so great a regard; but only as a poetical figure, expressing his concern for, and abhorrence of what happened on those mountains: much less did this in reality take place, as some have feigned, as if never dew nor rain descended on them [t] afterwards; which has been confuted by travellers, particularly Borchard [u], who, speaking of this mountain, says, that as he was upon it, there was such a violent shower fell, that he was wet through his clothes; and in the year 1273, laying all night upon this hill, there was a great dew fell upon him: *nor fields of offerings:* of heave-offerings: the meaning is, that he could wish almost that those hills were not fruitful, and that they brought no fruit to perfection, so much as that heave-offerings for the service of the sanctuary might be taken; which is expressive of great sterility and scarcity, see Joel i. 13, 16. *for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away:* mighty men were obliged to cast away their shields and flee, which were greatly to their reproach and scandal, and to that of the whole nation: it was always reckoned very scandalous, and a great crime, even punishable with death, to cast away a shield, both with the Greeks and others [w]: yea, also *the shield of Saul,* as though he had *not* been *anointed with oil:* as if he was not the anointed king of Israel, but a common soldier: or else this respects his shield, as if that was not anointed, as shields used to be, that they might be smooth and glib, and missile weapons, as arrows and others, might not pass through them, but slide off, see Isa. xxi. 5. though Gersom gives a different turn, that Saul's shield being in continual use, needed not to be anointed, as those did which for a time had been laid aside. Abarbinel interprets these words thus, that he, who was the shield of the mighty, even Saul himself, was vilely cast away, or become loathsome; and that his shield was anointed, not with oil, but with the blood of the slain, and the fat of the mighty, connecting them with the words following.

Ver. 22. *From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back,* &c.] That is, it always did execution, the arrows shot from it pierced into men, shed their blood, and slew them; even they entered into the fat of the mighty, or mighty ones, that were fat, and brought them down; so the arrows of the Medes and Persians, the expert men among them, are said not to return in vain, Jer. l. 9. *and the sword of Saul returned not empty:* but was the means of slaying many; though Abarbinel observes also that this may be interpreted of the blood of the slain, and of the fat of the mighty men of Israel; and that though Saul and Jonathan saw many of these fall before their eyes, yet *for* or *because* of their blood, they were not intimidated and restrained from fighting; the bow of the one, and the shield of the other, turned not back on that account.

Ver. 23. *Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,* &c.] To one another, had no quarrel or difference with each other, only on the account of David; otherwise they agreed together in the court, and in the camp, in their councils, and in their conduct: *and in their death they were not divided;* neither from the people, nor from one another; Jonathan stuck close by his father to the last; which is observed to clear him from any imputation of conspiracy against him: *they were swifter than eagles:* in the quick dispatch of business, in hasting to the relief of the distressed, as Saul to the men of Jabesh-gilead, and in the pursuit of their enemies, as of the Philistines, more than once: *they were stronger than lions:* in fighting with their enemies, who became an easy prey to them; and what is stronger than a lion among beasts? Judg. xiv. 18. Prov. xxx. 30. or swifter than an eagle among birds, which is said to cut the air with its wings [x]?

Ver. 24. *Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,* &c.] In their mournful elegies; *who clothed you with scarlet, with* other *delights;* not only with scarlet, but with other fine and delightful apparel, such as were very pleasing to the female sex, especially young people, who are delighted with gay apparel; this Saul was the means of, through the spoil he took from his enemies, and by other methods taken by him to the enriching of the nation, whereby husbands and parents were enabled to provide rich clothes for their wives and children: *who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel;* broidered work, jewels of gold, &c. See Isa. iii. 18—23. Ezek. xvi. 10—13.

Ver. 25. *How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!* &c.] The mighty and valiant men of war, the common soldiers as well as their general officers, whose loss David mourns, and the repetition of it shews how much it affected him: *O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places:* in the high places of the land of Israel, the mountains of Gilboa, which though high, and in his own country, could not protect him from his enemies, and from falling by their hands: he who had been so valiant and victorious a prince, and yet he fell, not in an enemy's country, but his own.

Ver. 26. *I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan,* &c.] So he was, not only by nation and religion, but by affinity, having married the sister of Jonathan; and still more so by affection and friendship, he being a friend of David's, that stuck closer to him than a brother, and who loved him as his own soul; he was distressed for him, not on account of his spiritual and eternal state, which he doubted not was happy, but for the manner of his death, his loss of him, and want of his pleasant conversation, of his counsel and advice, and assistance in his present circumstances: *very pleasant hast thou been unto me:* in their friendly visits of, and conversation with, one another: many a pleasant hour had they spent together, but now must see each other's faces no more in this world: *thy love to me was wonderful;* as indeed he might well say, being towards one of a mean extract in comparison of his, to one who was not his own brother, but a brother-in-law; and to one that was a rival to the crown he was heir to, and would take it before him;

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[t] Cippi Heb. p. 34.

[u] Apud Hottinger not. in ib. see Bunting's Travels, p. 131.

[w] Isocrates de Pace, p. 264. Horat. Carmin. l. 2. Ode 7. Tacitus de Mor. German. c. 6. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 13.

[x] Aelian. Hist. Animal. l. 13. c. 22. Vid. Ciceron. de Divinatione, l. 2. prope finem.

and who ran the risk of losing his father's affection, and even his life, for espousing his cause: see 1 Sam. xviii. 1, 3, 4. and xix. 2, 4. and xx. 30, 33. *passing the love of women;* either that which they are loved with by men, or that with which they love their husbands and children; which is generally the strongest and most affectionate. The Targum is, "more than the love of "two women," than his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail; so Kimchi; meaning that he was more strongly and affectionately loved by Jonathan than by them, who yet might love him very well too.

Ver. 27. *How are the mighty fallen,* &c.] This is the burden of this elegiac song, being the third time it is mentioned: *and the weapons of war perished!* not only the valiant soldiers were killed, but their arms were lost; and particularly he may mean Saul and Jonathan, who as they were the shields of the people, so they were the true weapons and instruments of war, and with them all military glory perished; which must be understood as a poetical figure, exaggerating their military characters; otherwise David, and many mighty men with him, remained, and who revived and increased the military glory of Israel, as the following history shews.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter relates that David, upon inquiring of the Lord, was directed to go up to Hebron, and did, where he was anointed king of Judah, ver. 1—4. And that being told of the kindness of the men of Jabesh-gilead in burying Saul, he sent them thanks, and promised to remember it, and took the opportunity to let them know he was anointed king over Judah, ver. 5, 6, 7. It also relates that Abner set up Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul, to be king over Israel, ver. 8—11. and that there was a rencounter between 12 of Abner's men and 12 of David's, which brought on a sore battle between them, in which Abner was beaten, ver. 12—17. and Asahel, who was of David's party, was slain in the pursuit by Abner, ver. 18—25. when a retreat was sounded by Joab, at the influence of Abner, who, with his men, betook themselves to Mahanaim, where he had left Ish-bosheth, ver. 26—29. And the chapter closes with an account of the slain on both sides, the burial of Asahel, and the return of Joab with David's men to Hebron, ver. 30, 31, 32.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass after this,* &c.] After David had heard of the death of Saul and Jonathan, and made a lamentation over them, perhaps the next day; since David and his men are only said to mourn, and weep, and fast till even, ch. i. 12. *that David inquired of the Lord:* of the Word of the Lord, as the Targum, by Abiathar the priest, and through the Urim and Thummim, in the ephod he had put on on this occasion: *saying, shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?* though the Lord had promised him the kingdom, and he had been anointed by Samuel by his appointment, yet he was not hasty to take it into his hands, but was desirous of acting according to the will of God, and by his direction, and wait his time when and where he should go and take possession of it; he mentions Judah because it was his own tribe, and where he had the most friends: *and the Lord said unto him, go up:* from Ziklag into the tribe of Judah, but did not mention any particular place whither he should go; hence another question was put: *and David said, whither shall I go up?* To what town or city in the tribe of Judah? whether Jerusalem or any other? *And he said, unto Hebron;* a city of the priests, a city of refuge, 20 miles from Jerusalem, or more, which is not directed to, because it was then chiefly in the hands of the Jebusites, and because, as Procopius Gazæus says, Hebron was now the metropolis of Judah.

Ver. 2. *So David went up thither,* &c.] From Ziklag to Hebron, which was 16 miles according to Bunting[r]: *and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail, Nabal's wife, the Carmelite;* who were beloved by him, and who had shared with him in his troubles, and which he took with him to partake of his honour and grandeur, wealth and riches; in which he was now a type of Christ. See Rom. viii. 17. 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12.

Ver. 3. *And his men that* were *with him did David bring up, every man with his household,* &c.] They and their families, and no doubt provided well for them when he was settled on the throne, who had shewn themselves to be his faithful friends, closely attached to his interest, and had run the risk of their all on his account. See Matt. xix. 28. *And they dwelt in the cities of Hebron:* in the towns and villages about it; for that itself being a city of refuge, and inhabited by priests, there was not room enough for all David's men, who were now increasing, persons from various tribes flocking to him. See 1 Chron. xii.

Ver. 4. *And the men of Judah came,* &c.] The inhabitants of the tribe of Judah came from the several parts of it to Hebron, that is, the principal of them, the elders of each city: *and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah;* they did not take upon them to make him king over all Israel, but left the rest of the tribes to act for themselves; and no doubt in this they had the mind of David, who was not willing to force himself upon the people at once, but by degrees get the whole government into his hands, as Providence should make his way; these men knew the kingdom was promised to their tribe, from Gen. xlix. 10. and were quite clear in what they did, and, without question, knew that David had been anointed by Samuel: but as that anointing was only a declaration of the Lord's choice of him, and of his will that he should be king after Saul's death, he is again anointed by the people, as an inauguration into his office: *and they told David, saying,* that *the men of Jabesh-gilead* were they *that buried Saul.* It is highly probable,

[r] Ut supra, p. 137.

that as soon as David was anointed king, the first thing he thought of was to inquire after the body of the late king, and give it an honourable interment, and upon inquiry was told that the men of Jabesh-gilead had buried him already. See 1 Sam. xxxi. 11, 12, 13.

Ver. 5. *And David sent messengers unto the men of Jabesh-gilead, &c.*] To return them thanks for their courage and boldness in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons out of the hands of the Philistines, and for their civility in the burial of them: *and said unto them, blessed be ye of the Lord:* which may be considered either as a wish, the Lord bless you for it, or as a prediction, the Lord will bless you: *that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him.* To bury the dead, with the Jews, was always reckoned an instance of humanity and kindness, and indeed of piety; an act done in imitation of God[z], who buried Moses, and so it might be expected the divine blessing would attend it.

Ver. 6. *And now the Lord shew kindness and truth unto you, &c.*] Or true kindness; confer real favours, bestow upon you good and substantial blessings, blessings indeed! *and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing.* He not only prayed to God to bless them and reward them for it, but would remember them himself, and at a proper opportunity would shew favour to them for this act of kindness to Saul. De Dieu proposes to consideration whether it may not be as well interpreted to this sense, *and I also do you this kindness* because of it; that is, have done you this honour by sending messengers to you, to thank you for it, and by wishing a blessing upon you on account of it, and by praising and commending you for it; but the former sense seems best.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore let your hands be strengthened, and be ye valiant, &c.*] And not be afraid of the Philistines, who might resent their conduct in taking away from them the bodies of Saul and his sons, whom they had hung up in triumph; and these men might fear they would bring their armies against them, and destroy them; but David bids them be of good heart and courage, and not be afraid of them: *for your master Saul is dead;* or rather *though*[a] he is dead; for that he was dead they knew full well, having buried him, and needed no information of it; but being dead, they might be discouraged, as having none to protect and defend them, or come to their relief as he did, should they be attacked; *and also the house of Judah have anointed me king over them;* or *for even*, or *notwithstanding*[b]; and this therefore being the case, he would take their parts, and help and assist them; and which he suggests to them, to invite them to own him as their king also, and put themselves under his protection.

Ver. 8. *But Abner, the son of Ner, captain of Saul's host, &c.*] This man's father, Ner, was Saul's uncle, and he was his own cousin, and being general of his army, a post he was willing to keep, might be the reasons for doing what he did, as follows: *took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul;* and who seems to be his only son left, except what he had by his concubine. This man's name is Esh-baal in 1 Chron. viii. 33. and ix. 39. Baal is the name of a shameful idol, and which was therefore sometimes called Bosheth, *shame*. See Hos. ix. 10. wherefore such names of men, which had Baal in them, were changed for Besheth or Bosheth, as the names of Jerub-baal and Merib-baal, who were called Jerub-bosheth and Mephi-bosheth. See Judg. viii. 35. compared with 2 Sam. xi. 21. and 2 Sam. iv. 4. with 1 Chron. viii. 34. and ix. 40. The latter of these, a son of Jonathan, bid fairest for the crown by lineal succession, but he being but five years of age, and lame, this man Abner judged fittest for his purpose; and though he knew it was the will of God, and he had sworn that David should be king, yet so blind and obstinate was his ambition, that he set up another against him: *and brought him over to Mahanaim;* a city on the other side Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, on the border of the half tribe of Manasseh; see Josh. xiii. 26—30. Gen. xxxii. 2. and hither Abner had Ish-bosheth, partly to keep the men of Jabesh-gilead in awe, to whom David had sent messengers, acquainting them with his being king of Judah, and prevent their joining with him; and partly that he might be at a proper distance both from the Philistines and from David, till he could form his measures, and gradually carry his point, as he did.

Ver. 9. *And he made him king over Gilead, &c.*] Which lay beyond Jordan, and included the tribes of Gad and Reuben, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; these he prevailed upon to acknowledge Ish-bosheth their king, and proclaimed him king over them: *and over the Ashurites;* that is, those of the house or tribe of Asher, as the Targum, and indeed none else can well be thought of; some indeed read the Geshurites, as the Vulgate Latin version; but these were never expelled by the Israelites, and had at this time a king over them, ch. iii. 3. see Josh. xiii. 13. *and over Jezreel;* the great plain which went along the borders of Zebulun, Issachar, and Naphtali, and included these tribes: *and over Ephraim, and over Benjamin:* the tribes of Ephraim and Benjamin: *and over all Israel*, excepting the tribe of Judah; that is, he prevailed first on one of these, then on another, until he got all the tribes of Israel to own him for their king; David all this time being still and quiet, and not opposing him, waiting God's own time to open the way for his possession of the kingdom over all Israel, and having a strict regard to his oath to Saul, 1 Sam. xxiv. 21, 22.

Ver. 10. *Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, &c.*] Being born the same year his father began to reign. See the note on 1 Sam. xxxi. 6. *and reigned two years;* which some understand of these, and no more; and whereas David reigned seven years and a half over Judah, before he reigned over all Israel, it is thought by the Jewish chronologer[c] that there was a vacancy in the throne of Israel for the space of five years, and so says Kimchi; which vacancy was either before the reign of Ish-bosheth, it being a matter in dispute

[z] T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 30. 2. and Sotah, fol. 14. 1.
[a] כי licet enim, V. L. quamvis, Piscator. So Pool and Patrick.

[b] וגם tamen, V. L. nam similiter, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[c] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. p. 37.

whether he or Mephibosheth should be set up, or after his death; the tribes of Israel being so long ere they acknowledged David their king; or Ish-bosheth's reign of two years must be in the middle of David's reign over Judah; but there is no need to suppose either of these, for the text says not that Ish-bosheth reigned only two years; but the meaning is, as Ben Gersom observes, that he had reigned two years when the following things happened, and a war began, and not by him but by Abner, and carried on by him; and he being an inactive prince, the rest of his reign was reckoned as no reign, whereas he lived and reigned the same length of time David did over Judah; see ch. iii. 1. *but the house of Judah followed David*; kept close to him as their king, yielding a cheerful obedience to him.

Ver. 11. *And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah*, &c.] And over them only, *was seven years and six months*; to which being added thirty-three years he reigned over all Israel in Jerusalem, made 40 years and 6 months; and which, for the roundness of the number, is usually called 40 years. See ch. v. 4. 1 Kings ii. 11.

Ver. 12. *And Abner the son of Ner*, &c.] Who was before captain of Saul's host, and now of Ish-bosheth's: *and the servants of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul*; who seem to be not only his domestic servants, that waited upon him, or his courtiers, but his whole army by what follows: *went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon*; came from the city on the other side Jordan, where perhaps they had been two years past, concerting schemes to bring all Israel under the government of Ish-bosheth; in which they had succeeded, only Judah stood out with David; and in order to reduce that tribe, they passed over Jordan and came to Gibeon, a city in Benjamin. See Josh. xviii. 25.

Ver. 13. *And Joab the son of Zeruiah*, &c.] A sister of David, and this her son was general of David's army: *and the servants of David, went out*; that is, his army went out from Hebron to Gibeon, which was 24 miles [d], to meet that under Abner; for though he had but one tribe with him, and Ish-bosheth had all the rest, yet Judah was a numerous, powerful, and warlike tribe; and besides many out of the other tribes had joined them, and, above all, God was on their side, and they had his promise to rely upon with respect to the establishment of the kingdom in the house of David, and his power and providence to trust in, and therefore went out boldly and cheerfully to meet the armies of Israel under Abner: *and met together by the pool of Gibeon*; the same perhaps with the great waters in Gibeon, Jer. xli. 12. *and they sat down, the one on the one side of the pool, and the other on the other side of the pool*; facing one another, and watching each other's motions.

Ver. 14. *And Abner said to Joab*, &c.] Perceiving he made no motion towards an engagement with him, his orders from David being only to act on the defensive, and avoid as much as possible the effusion of blood: *let the young men now arise, and play before us*; with their swords after the manner of gladiators or duellers; that it might appear who were best skilled in the use of the sword, and who were the bravest, stoutest, and most courageous; and this he proposed in a way of bravado, and in order to bring on a battle, or to decide the quarrel between them; and this bloody barbarous exercise Abner calls play, as if it was a diversion and pastime to see men wounding and killing one another: *and Joab said, let them arise*; he accepted the challenge, not caring to be hectored and bullied by Abner.

Ver. 15. *Then there arose and went over by number twelve of Benjamin*, &c.] Whom Abner had picked out of that tribe, being his own, and whom he knew to be stout and courageous men, and closely attached to him. It seems by this as if Abner's men, which pertained to *Ish-bosheth, the son of Saul*, passed over the pool of Gibeon unto Joab's men; so forward were they to engage in this duel, and it makes it still more appear that they were the aggressors: *and twelve of the servants of David*; of his army under Joab, whom Joab either selected, or they offered themselves as willing to engage with the twelve that were come over.

Ver. 16. *And they caught every one his fellow by the head*, &c.] By the hair of his head with his hand: *and thrust his sword in his fellow's side*; which he had in the other; *so they fell down together*; the 12 on each side, all the 24; some think only the 12 on Abner's side fell; but to me it seems that they all fell dead as one man, since they thrust their swords in each other's sides: *wherefore that place was called Helkath-hazzurim*; the field of rocks, or of mighty men as strong as rocks, who stood as immovable, and would not give way, but fell and died in the field of battle; the Targum interprets it, the inheritance of the slain.

Ver. 17. *And there was a very sore battle that day*, &c.] When the twenty-four men fell together, and no decision could be made thereby, or any triumph on either side, both armies drew up in battle array, and fought very furiously: *and Abner was beaten, and the men of Israel, before the servants of David*; the army under him had the worst of it, and were routed, and obliged to flee before the army of David under the command of Joab.

Ver. 18. *And there were three sons of Zeruiah there*, &c.] In the battle, Joab, and Abishai, and Asahel. Joab was the general of the army, Abishai was he who went into Saul's host at night, and took away his spear and cruse of water at his head, 1 Sam. xxvi. 6, 7. and it is for the sake of the third, Asahel, that the account is given, the story of his death being about to be told. *And Asahel was as light of foot as a wild roe*; swiftness of foot, as well as courage, for which this man was famous, 1 Chron. xi. 26. was a very great qualification for a warrior [e]. So Achilles, in Homer [f], is often said to be swift of foot, and others of his heroes are commended for their swiftness. Harold, son of King Canutus, was from his swiftness [g] called Harefoot; as here this man for the same reason is compared to a wild roe, which is a very swift creature, or to one of the roes that were in the field, as in the original text. See Cant. ii. 7, 17, and viii. 14. one

[d] Bunting's Travels, p. 146.
[e] Cornel. Nepos, Epaminond. l. 2.

[f] [illegible], Iliad. 1. lin. 12[illegible].
[g] Rapin's History of England, vol. 1. p. 128.

sort of which, called *kemas*, is said to run as swift as a tempest[h].

Ver. 19. *And Asahel pursued after Abner*, &c.] Ambitious of the glory of taking or slaying the general of the army of Israel; trusting to his swiftness, not considering that the race is not always to the swift, and that he had to do with a veteran soldier, and he a raw young man, though valiant: *and in going he turned not to the right hand nor to the left in following Abner*: he kept his eye upon him, and pursued him closely, disregarding persons on the right or left he could have made prisoners; but those he neglected, being bent on taking Abner if possible.

Ver. 20. *Then Abner looked behind him*, &c.] Perceiving one at his heels, and making haste up to him. *Art thou Asahel?* for it seems he knew him personally, being well acquainted with his family: *and he answered, I am*: so that they were very near to each other, as to discourse together, and be heard and understood by each other.

Ver. 21. *And Abner said unto him*, &c.] Having a respect for him, and consulting his good, and however fearing his brother Joab should he slay him: *turn thee aside to thy right or to thy left*: he does not advise him to go back, which would have been to his disgrace, having engaged in the pursuit, but to turn to the right or left, as if pursuing some other person and not Abner: *and lay thee hold on one of the young men, and take thee his armour*: one of the common soldiers, or an attendant on Abner, a young man like himself, whom he might be able to cope with, and take him a prisoner and disarm him, when he was not a match for such an old experienced officer as he was; and this Abner seems to speak as a friend, consulting the young man's safety and his honour too. *But Asahel would not turn aside from following him*: fired with the ambition of taking him, and not content with any prey short of him; and perhaps was the more animated by what he said, as supposing it arose from fear of him.

Ver. 22. *And Abner said again to Asahel*, &c.] Being loth to dispatch him: *turn thee aside from following me, wherefore should I smite thee to the ground?* which was giving him fair warning, and letting him know what he must expect, if he did not desist from his pursuit: *how then should I hold up my face to Joab thy brother?* the general of David's army, a stout valiant commander, a man of spirit and resentment, whom Abner knew full well, and that should he slay his brother, he would never be friendly with him, or look pleasantly on him; he would never forgive him, but seek ways and means to avenge his blood on him: and by this it seems as if Abner was conscious to himself that he was in a wrong cause, that the kingdom was of right David's, and would be his, and he must be obliged to make peace with him; when he should stand in need of Joab as his friend, which he could not expect, if he slew his brother, nor to live in favour and friendship with him hereafter.

Ver. 23. *Howbeit, he refused to turn aside*, &c.] Determined on making him his captive if possible. *Wherefore Abner, with the hinder end of the spear*, he had in his hand, which seems to have had a pike at both ends; so that with the hinder end of it, next to Asahel, he thrust it at him, without turning to him: and *smote him under the fifth rib*; the place where hang the gall and liver, as the Jewish commentators from their Talmud[i] observe. There are twelve ribs, seven of which are called true ones, and five spurious; if this was the fifth of the seven, the spear must pierce the breast[k], and strike the seat of life, the heart and lungs; if the fifth from the eighth and first of the spurious ones, then wounding the hypochondria, it must pass to the vital bowels of the abdomen, which seems to be the case here[l]: according to some[m] this is meant of the inferior ribs, which we call the short ribs, and any of these five are called the fifth rib; and Abner must strike him in the right side, because he was behind him, and which stroke must be deadly, because he struck him through the liver: *that the spear came out behind him*; the thrust was so violent that the spear went through him, and came out at his back: *and he fell down and died in the same place*; he fell at once, and died on the spot immediately: *and it came to pass, that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died stood still*; that is, such of David's men who were in the pursuit after the Israelites, when they came to the spot, and saw Asahel dead, they had no power to proceed in the pursuit, being so troubled and grieved at the death of him.

Ver. 24. *Joab also and Abishai pursued after Abner*, &c.] Or rather but Joab, &c.[n]. They stood not still as the rest, but, filled with indignation and resentment, pursued after Abner, to be avenged on him: *and the sun went down when they came to the hill of Ammah*: a hill by the side of which was a pool of water, as Kimchi thinks, and from thence so called: *that lieth before Giah*: a place near Gibeon, but nowhere after mentioned: *by the way of the wilderness of Gibeon*; very likely not far from the city from which it had its name.

Ver. 25. *And the children of Benjamin gathered themselves together after Abner*, &c.] Either those that were with him before, who upon the battle were dispersed, but now got together again; or others of that tribe, who, hearing of the defeat of Abner, went out of the several cities after him, to strengthen his hands, and renew the fight with Joab: *and became one troop*; were united together in a body, and became a regular troop: *and stood on the top of an hill*; which was some advantage to them, and from whence they could take a view of Joab's army, and observe its motions.

Ver. 26. *Then Abner called to Joab*, &c.] For having now a troop of men with him, he could stop with the greater safety; and being on an hill, and perhaps Joab on one opposite to him, could call to him, so as to be heard: *and said, shall the sword devour for ever?* slay men, and devour their blood. See Jer. xlvi. 10. That he was not thoughtful of, nor concerned about, when he set the young men to fighting before the battle, and called it play to wound and shed

[h] Ælian. Hist. de Animal. l. 14. c. 14.
[i] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 49. 1.
[k] Transadigit costas, & crates pectoris ensem. Virgil. Æneid. l. 12. ver. 506.
[l] Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 501.
[m] Weemse's Portrait of Man, p. 24.
[n] Autem, V. L. Tigurine version; sed, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Kimchi.

the blood of each other; but now the battle going against him, he complains of the devouring sword; and though it had been employed but a few hours, it seemed long to him, a sort of an eternity: *knowest thou not that it will be bitterness in the latter end?* since it might issue in the death of himself, or of Joab, or of both, as it had in Asahel, or, however, in the death of a multitude of others; and which at last would cause bitter reflection in the prosecutors of the war: *how long shall it be then ere thou bid the people return from following their brethren?* he pleads relation, that the men of Israel and the men of Judah were brethren; so they were by nation and religion, and therefore should not pursue one another to destruction; but who was the aggressor? It was Abner, that brought his forces against Judah; the men of David acted only on the defensive.

Ver. 27. *And Joab said, as God liveth,* &c.] Which was the form of an oath, swearing by the living God: *unless thou hadst spoken*: that is, these words in ver. 14. *let the young men arise and play*, that he had not given the challenge to fight: *surely then in the morning the people had gone up every one from following his brother;* they would have gone away and never fought at all; they were not desirous of shedding their blood, and following after them to slay them: thus he lays the blame upon Abner, and makes him to be the cause and beginner of the war. Some render the particle by *if*, and give the sense, that if he had spoken what he last did sooner, the people would long before this time have desisted from pursuing them; for it was not from a thirst after their blood, and a desire to take vengeance on them, that they pursued them, but to bring them to submission, and lay down their arms; for they could not in honour retreat until they desired it; but the former sense seems best, and is the general sense of the Jewish commentators.

Ver. 28. *So Joab blew a trumpet,* &c.] Or caused one to be blown as a signal of a retreat: *and all the people stood still, and pursued after Israel no more;* as soon as they heard the trumpet sound, the meaning of which they understood, they stopped at once, and left off their pursuit: *neither fought they any more;* that day, and perhaps no pitched battle afterwards; for none we read of, though the war continued after this a long time, and there might be often skirmishes, which greatly weakened Abner's party. See ch. iii. 1.

Ver. 29. *And Abner and his men walked all that night through the plain,* &c.] The plain of Jordan. He marched with his men all night, lest Joab should return, and pursue him, and take vengeance on him for the death of his brother: *and passed over Jordan;* at one of the fords of it: *and went through all Bithron;* the name of a province or country, as Jarchi, called so perhaps from its being separated from the rest of the tribes of Israel by the river Jordan; some think the mountains of Bether were in this country, Cant. ii. 17. From Gibeon, where the battle was fought, to Bithron, according to Bunting[e], was 28 miles, the which he says was in the tribe of Gad, 28 miles from Jerusalem north-eastward, lying between Dibon and Jordan: *and they came to Mahanaim;* from whence they came, and where they had left Ish-bosheth, ver. 8, 12. From Bithron to this place, according to the same writer[f], was 16 miles.

Ver. 30. *And Joab returned from following Abner,* &c.] It being in his commission from David to shed as little blood as he could: *and when he had gathered all the people together;* who had been pursuing the Israelites, some one way and some another: *there lacked of David's servants 19 men, and Asahel;* who is particularly mentioned, because a very honourable man, valiant and courageous, a relation of David, and brother of Joab the general, and the loss of him was greater than all the rest. This has made some think that the 12 men of the servants of David were not killed in the duel, or otherwise there must be but seven slain in the battle; though that is not more strange than that in the battle with Midian not one should be slain, and yet a terrible slaughter was made of the Midianites, Numb. xxxi. So in a sharp battle between the Spartans and Arcadians, 10,000 of the latter were slain, and not one of the former[g]. Stilicho killed more than 100,000 of the army of Rhadagaisus, king of the Goths, without losing one of his own men, no, not so much as one wounded, as Austin affirms[h]. At the battle of Issus the Persians lost 110,000 men, and Alexander not 200[i]. Julius Cæsar killed in the three camps of Juba, Scipio, and Labienus, 10,000 men, with the loss of 50 men only[k]. After these instances, not only the case here, but that between the Israelites and Midianites, cannot be thought incredible, for the sake of which the above are produced. This account, according to Josephus[l], was taken the day following.

Ver. 31. *But the servants of David had smitten of Benjamin, and Abner's men,* &c.] Of those of the tribe of Benjamin that joined him, and of those that he brought with him from Mahanaim; so many of them were smitten, as appeared by their bodies lying on the field of battle, that 360 *men died;* the number of the slain on each side was very unequal.

Ver. 32. *And they took up Asahel,* &c.] From the place where he fell; that is, Joab and Abishai, his brethren, as Josephus[m] relates; after they had buried the dead in the field of battle, they took up him: *and buried him in the sepulchre of his father, which was in Beth-lehem:* not in the city of Beth-lehem, but without it, on the south side of it; so says Fuller[n], "south-"ward, *i. e.* of Beth-lehem, we find Asahel's sepulchre, "who was buried in the grave of his father." What was his father's name is not known, only his mother's name, Zeruiah, is mentioned in Scripture, a sister of David, and daughter of Jesse the Beth-lehemite. Beth-lehem was 16 miles from Gibeon, according to Bunting[o]. *And Joab and his men went all night;* not the night following the battle, but the night following the next day, after he had been to Beth-lehem, and buried his brother there; wherefore, lest David should think

[e] Travels, &c. p. 145, 146.
[f] Ibid.
[g] Diodor. Sic. l. 15. p. 389.
[h] De civitate Dei, l. 5. c. 22.
[i] Curtius, l. 3. c. 11.

[k] Hirtius de Bello Africano. c. 86.
[l] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 3.
[m] Ibid.
[n] Pisgah Sight of Palestine, B. 2. c. 14. sect. 21. p. 301.
[o] Travels, ut supra.

it long ere he came, he travelled all night: *and they came to Hebron at break of day;* where David was, which, according to the same writer[t], was 20 miles from Beth-lehem.

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL TANJORE

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter begins with the continuation of the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, ver. 1. and gives an account of the wives of David, and his sons by them, ver. 2—5. of a quarrel between Ish-bosheth and Abner, ver. 6—11. and of Abner's proposal to make a league with David; but David would not see his face unless Michal his wife was returned to him, who was accordingly, ver. 12—16. and of the interest Abner made with the elders of Israel in favour of David, which he reported to him, and promised to make more, ver. 17—21. but Joab returning from a pursuit, and with great spoil, just as Abner departed, and hearing of it, chid David for letting him go, and privately sent for him back, and treacherously murdered him, ver. 22—27. from which murder David cleared himself and his kingdom, and for it made dreadful imprecations on Joab and his family, ver. 28, 29, 30. and buried Abner with great lamentation, expressing much concern for his death, and the high opinion he had of him, ver. 31—39.

Ver. 1. *Now there was a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David,* &c.] The late battle, though so much in favour of David, did not put an end to the war between him and Ish-bosheth, which lasted five years longer; for it was when Ish-bosheth had reigned two years that that battle was fought, and he reigned five years longer; for not till his death, and when David had reigned above seven years in Hebron, was he made king over all Israel; and during this time peace was not made, but the war carried on; though perhaps not in pitched battles, of which we no more read, but in skirmishes: *but David waxed stronger and stronger:* he having the advantage in all such skirmishes, and persons continually coming over to his side from the several tribes: *and the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker;* being always worsted whenever they skirmished with David's men, and by continual revolts from them. This is reckoned an emblem of the kingdoms of Christ and antichrist, the one increasing more and more, as it has and will do, and the other decreasing, and ere long will be consumed; and of the two parties in a regenerate man, grace and in-dwelling sin, the one as to its exercise growing stronger and stronger, and the other as to its influence on the outward conversation weaker and weaker.

Ver. 2. *And unto David were sons born in Hebron,* &c.] He was married before he came there, had wives in his state of exile, but had no children by them there, at least no sons; if any, only daughters: *and his first-born was Amnon, of Ahinoam the Jezreelitess;* who being mentioned first, and her son his first-born, seems to have been his wife before he took Abigail; he had not much comfort of this first-born son of his; see ch. xiii.

Ver. 3. *And the second, Chileab, of Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite,* &c.] That is, who had been the wife of Nabal. This son's name is called Daniel, 1 Chron. iii. 1. and was the first name he had, and which his father gave him, because as if he should say, *God hath judged me,* and pleaded the cause of his reproach from Nabal, 1 Sam. xxv. 39. but why he should be called Chileab is not easy to say; the name is commonly thought to signify *like unto his father,* or *all father;* had all the features of his father, and was exceedingly like him; the Jews have a fabulous story concerning this[u], not worth relating: *and the third, Absalom the son of Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur;* in 1 Sam. xxvii. 8. we read of David's invading the land of the Geshurites; and the Jews say[x] that he then took the daughter of this king captive, and she being a beautiful woman married her, after made a proselyte according to the law in Deut. xxi. but it should be observed that David slew all the women of that country, and left not any alive; and besides that lay to the south of Judah, whereas this Geshur, of which Talmai was king, was a part of Syria, ch. xv. 8. and lay to the north of the land of Israel; and with this king David hereby entered into an alliance, to strengthen his interest against Ish-bosheth in those parts; of the trouble he met with from Absalom, see ch. xiii. &c. contrary to the expectations he had raised when he gave him the name of Absalom, or Leabsalom, as in 1 Chron. iii. 2. that is, one given *for his father's peace.*

Ver. 4. *And the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith,* &c.] The same that usurped the throne before his father's death, to anticipate Solomon, and died by his order, 1 Kings i. 5. and ii. 25. *and the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital;* of whom we read nowhere else.

Ver. 5. *And the sixth, Ithream, by Eglah David's wife,* &c.] Who also is not spoken of in any other place; only, in a like chronological account as the former, it is remarked that the mother of this only is called David's wife; the reason of which is supposed to be, either because she was a person of no note, and had nothing else to distinguish her; but the same may be said of the two foregoing; or because she was his beloved wife, his heifer, as her name signifies; hence the Jews[y] take her to be Michal his first wife, whom he greatly loved, and who, though she had no children after her contempt of David for playing before the ark, unto the day of her death, yet might have before: but it should be observed, that as yet she was not returned to David in Hebron; and when she was returned, did not seem to continue there long enough to have a son

[t] Travels, ut supra.
[u] Jarchi, Kimchi, & Abarbinel in loc.
[x] Tanchuma apud Abarbinel in loc.
[y] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 1. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 77. F.

there; and besides, being his first wife, would not be reckoned last; but still more foreign is another notion of the Jews[z], that she was Saul's widow, who though she might not be married to another might be married to a king, as David was; and this they suppose receives some confirmation from ch. xii. 8. but after all it may be this phrase *David's wife*, as some have observed, by a figure the rhetoricians call *zeugma*, or *hypozeugma*, is to be joined to every one of the women before mentioned, who were his wives, and so called to distinguish them from his concubines, by whom he had sons also. Polygamy, or plurality of wives, which David gave into, is no favourable part of his character.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass, while there was war between the house of Saul and the house of David*, &c.] As long as that continued, as it did until the following quarrel happened between Ish-bosheth and Abner: *that Abner made himself strong for the house of Saul*: or was strongly in the interest of that house, and used his utmost endeavours to support and confirm it.

Ver. 7. *And Saul had a concubine, whose name was Rizpah, the daughter of Aja*, &c.] By whom he had two sons, ch. xxi. 8. Josephus[a] calls her father's name Sibathus: *and* Ish-bosheth *said to Abner*; though the word Ish-bosheth is not in the text, it is rightly supplied; for no other can be supposed to speak: *wherefore hast thou gone in unto my father's concubine?* and defiled her; though perhaps it was not so much the act of uncleanness that so much offended him, or the dishonour reflected on him and his family thereby, as it discovered an ambitious view in Abner to get the kingdom into his own hands, to which this was the leading step; see 1 Kings ii. 22. Whether Abner was really guilty of this sin or no is not easy to determine; though, by his not absolutely denying it, it looks as if it was not merely a jealousy of Ish-bosheth, or a false report made unto him; though, especially if he was not fully satisfied of it, it would have been his wisdom to have said nothing of it to him, since his continuance on the throne so much depended on him.

Ver. 8. *Then was Abner very wroth for the words of Ish-bosheth*, &c.] If false he had a good deal of reason for it; and if true, he thought he deserved better at his hands, than to be reproved for and upbraided with what he might think was a very small fault, and might easily be connived at, and especially in one that had been so serviceable to him: am *I a dog's head*; such a mean, vile, contemptible person with thee, as if no better than a dog, and as useless and as unserviceable as a dead dog, the head of a dog cut off; see 1 Sam. xxiv. 14. 2 Sam. ix. 8. or am I esteemed and to be treated as a head of dogs, a keeper of a pack of hounds, and not as a general of the armies of Israel? so Jarchi and others; but it seems rather to respect the filthy nature of a dog, that will couple with any; and so the sense is, am I such a filthy lustful creature that care not with whom I lie, no more than a dog? *which against Judah do shew kindness to the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends*; who in opposition to the tribe of Judah, which alone abode by David, had shewn respect to the family of Saul, and all his friends, by his close attachment to Ish-bosheth: *and have not delivered thee into the hand of David*; when it was in his power to have done it many a time: *that thou chargest me to-day with a fault concerning this woman?* he neither denies nor owns the charge, and yet, by his not denying it, tacitly owns it; though, by his way of speaking, he suggests as if it was no fault at all, at least a very trifling one, and such as ought not to have been mentioned to him, considering the services he had done to Ish-bosheth and his family.

Ver. 9. *So do God to Abner, and more also*, &c.] He wishes the worst of evils to himself, such as he cared not to name; but left them to be supposed what he meant as utter ruin and destruction of himself, soul and body: *except as the Lord hath sworn to David, even so I do to him*; meaning if he did not do that for David, which God had sworn should be done, namely, what follows, the translation of the kingdom to him; by which it appears that Abner knew of the promise and oath of God respecting this matter; and therefore acted against his conscience, in setting up Ish-bosheth on the throne; which he knew would not prosper, and that he was fighting against God; which shews what a hardened wicked creature he was, and how far ambition, and being thought to be of consequence, will carry a man.

Ver. 10. *To translate the kingdom from the house of Saul*, &c.] Which was what the Lord had sworn to do, 1 Sam. xv. 28, 29. and which Abner now threatens to do, insolently taking that to himself which belonged to the Lord, and as if he could not do it without him: *and to set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah*; over the one as well as over the other; for it was set over Judah already: *from Dan even unto Beersheba*; which were the utmost borders of the land of Israel, from north to south, and so includes the whole.

Ver. 11. *And he could not answer Abner a word*, &c.] That is, he would not, he durst not: otherwise, if it was fact he charged him with, he could have insisted on the truth of it, and aggravated the crime and scandal of it; and observed it to him, that the kindness he had shewn him was no excuse for it; but such things, though he would, he durst not say: *because he feared him*; he had the army at his command, and could dethrone him when he pleased; and it has been the fate of greater men than Ish-bosheth to be awed by their generals, and even David himself; see ver. 39.

Ver. 12. *And Abner sent messengers to David on his behalf*, &c.] On his own account, and not on the account of Ish-bosheth, or the people of Israel; but to obtain terms for himself, or in his own name, as representing him and standing in his stead; or secretly, as Kimchi explains it, unknown to Ish-bosheth, or the people of Israel. The Targum is, "out of "his place;" he sent them from the place where he was, from Mahanaim: *saying, whose is the land?* the land of Israel, is it not thine, David? verily it is; to whom does it belong but unto thee, to whom the Lord has given it? not to any of Saul's posterity: this he ordered the messengers to say in the first place, in order to ingratiate himself to David, and gain his messengers an audience. The Targum is, "I swear

[z] In Kimchi & Ben Gersom in loc.

[a] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 4.

"by him that made the earth;" so Jarchi says, it is an oath by him whose the earth is, even by the living God, whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof: *saying also, make thy league with me;* he desired to enter into a covenant of friendship with him, that every thing that had passed might be forgiven and forgotten: *and, behold, my hand shall be with thee, to bring about all Israel unto thee:* he promises on his part to do his utmost to bring all Isreal under his government, and to obedience to him.

Ver. 13. *And he said, well, I will make a league with thee,* &c.] He accepted of the offer, he was ready and willing to enter into a covenant of friendship with him, and forgive all past offences: *but one thing I require of thee;* as the condition of this covenant: *that is, thou shalt not see my face;* be admitted into my presence, or have any mark of my favour and respect: *except thou first bring Michal, Saul's daughter, when thou comest to see my face;* he insisted on it that Michal, Saul's daughter, and his wife, should be brought along with him, and presented to him; this was the preliminary to the league and covenant; if this was not complied with, the proposal would not be attended to. This shews the great affection David retained for his first wife, though he had had six since, and though she had lived with another man; as also his great regard to the honour of Saul's family, that one of them might share with him in the grandeur of the kingdom; though this also might be a piece of policy in him, to gain the friends of Saul's family to him.

Ver. 14. *And David sent messengers to Ish-bosheth, Saul's son,* &c.] When Abner's messengers returned to him, and acquainted him with the condition of David's entering into a league with him, it is highly probable that Abner sent them or others to David, to let him know that he could not do this of himself; that it was advisable for him to write to Ish-bosheth, whose sister she was, and demand her of him; and that then he would use his interest with Ish-bosheth to grant it, and this method David took: *saying, deliver me my wife Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines;* two arguments he made use of to enforce his demand; one is, that it was his wife he required, to whom he had a right, and no other man; and the other is, that he had purchased her at a great expense, at the risk of his life, in slaying 100 Philistines, whose foreskins he paid in for her at the instance of Saul; he mentions but one hundred, though he gave two as her dowry, no more being required than one; see 1 Sam. xviii. 25, 27. Josephus very wrongly says 600[b]; the Syriac and Arabic have here 200.

Ver. 15. *And Ish-bosheth sent and took her from her husband,* &c.] Her second husband, to whom Saul had given her, 1 Sam. xxv. 44. even *from Phaltiel the son of Laish;* he is called Phalti in the place referred to.

Ver. 16. *And her husband went with her along weeping behind her,* &c.] Because of his great affection to her, unwilling to part with her, but forced to it at the command of the king her brother: *to Bahurim;* a city in the tribe of Benjamin, ch. xix. 16. perhaps the same with Almon, Josh. xxi. 18. these two words being of the same signification; and the Targum has it here Almuth; so Alemeth in 1 Chron. vi. 60. It seems to be the same Josephus [c] calls Bachures, and says it was not far from Jerusalem. Bunting [d] says it was something more than a mile towards the north-east, and at this time is a fair castle strongly fortified, standing in a high place, and in the valley near it, at the stone Bohan, Josh xv. 6. see ch. xvii. 18. *then said Abner to him, go, return, and he returned;* by which it appears that Abner came with her to introduce her to David, without whom he was not to see his face; and he did not choose her husband should go with her any further, and was at his orders obliged to go back, who otherwise would have gladly accompanied her further still, through his great affection for her.

Ver. 17. *And Abner had communication with the elders of Israel,* &c.] Had a conference with the chiefs of the several tribes about the affairs of the kingdom: *saying, ye sought for David in time past to be king over you;* that is, at the death of Saul, and not before; for it was pretty generally known throughout the kingdom that David was anointed by Samuel; and Saul himself had declared that he knew the kingdom would come to him; so that upon his death it was the general expectation and desire of the people that the government would devolve upon him, as it doubtless would, if Abner had not set up one of Saul's house, and persuaded the Israelites to own him as their king.

Ver. 18. *Now then* do it, &c.] Make him your king, and I shall no longer oppose it as I have done: *for the Lord hath spoken of David;* concerning his being king, and the saviour of his people Israel: *saying, by the hand of my servant David I will save my people Israel out of the hand of the Philistines, and out of the hand of all their enemies;* and which, though nowhere recorded in so many words, yet was the sense of the promise of making him king, and the design of his unction; and besides they might have been spoken to Samuel, though not written, and which he might report, and so might pass from one to another to be generally known.

Ver. 19. *And Abner also spake in the ears of Benjamin,* &c.] Of the inhabitants of the tribe of Benjamin, of which tribe he was, and among whom he had the greatest influence; and with whom it was necessary to take some pains, because of their attachment to the family of Saul, which was of that tribe; and being near to that of Judah, might give David a good deal of trouble, if they were not got over to him: *and Abner went also to speak in the ears of David in Hebron;* having sounded the elders of Israel, and got their thoughts about the change of government, and found them well disposed to David, and had prevailed upon them to consent to make him king, and had gained the tribe of Benjamin on his side, went and reported to David the success he had: *all that seemed good to Israel, and that seemed good to the whole house of Benjamin;* how agreeable it was to the elders of Israel,

[b] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 4.

[c] Ibid. c. 9. sect. 7.

[d] Travels, p. 144.

and particularly to the tribe of Benjamin, to have David king over them.

Ver. 20. *So Abner came to David to Hebron, and* 20 *men with him,* &c.] Before he went privately to him, and conferred with him, but now, having gained so many of the Israelites in favour of David, he appeared more publicly, and brought perhaps some of the principal of the nation with him, to join in the league and covenant to be made: *and David made Abner and the men that* were *with him a feast;* not only in honour to them, as great personages, especially Abner, and as expressive of reconciliation; but as a token of the covenant they were entering into, and for the confirmation of it; it being usual to have feasts when covenants were made; see Gen. xxvi. 28, 30.

Ver. 21. *And Abner said to David, I will arise and go,* &c.] Into the several parts of the land of Israel: *and will gather all Israel unto my lord the king;* the princes of the several tribes, and the elders of the people, their heads and principal men: *that they may make a league with thee;* come into the league and covenant now made with Abner, and those with him: *and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth;* which he supposed reached to all the people of the house of Israel and of Judah, though David had not expressed any eager and impatient desire of government, but waited the Lord's time to be put into the possession of the whole kingdom of Israel: *and David sent Abner away, and he went in peace;* with inward satisfaction of mind, pleased that things were so well settled and adjusted to the content of all parties, and with outward safety of body, no insults or attempts being made upon him by any of David's men; which perhaps would not have been the case if Joab had been at court, as may be concluded from what follows.

Ver. 22. *And, behold, the servants of David and Joab came from pursuing a troop,* &c.] A troop of robbers, that made an incursion into the land, taking the advantage of a civil war between Israel and Judah; such as the Edomites, Amalekites, and especially the Philistines; which Joab hearing of went out in pursuit of them, and overtook them: *and brought in a great spoil with them;* which they took from them: *but Abner was not with David in Hebron:* when Joab and his army entered the city with their booty: *for he had sent him away, and he was gone in peace:* he had just dismissed him, and he was gone off safely.

Ver. 23. *When Joab and all the host that* was *with him were come,* &c.] To Hebron, or rather to David's court; for their coming to the city is before mentioned; this must be understood not of the whole army, of all the common soldiers, but of the chief officers, who with Joab came to court, to wait upon David, and report their success: *they told Joab, saying, Abner the son of Ner came to the king:* some of the courtiers informed him of it, who knew it would not be very agreeable to him: *and he hath sent him away, and he is gone in peace;* instead of seizing him, and laying him in a prison as his enemy, he has let him go with all the marks of friendship and good will.

Ver. 24. *Then Joab came to the king,* &c.] To the apartment where he was; perhaps he was told the above at his first entering into the king's palace, by some in waiting, before he came to the king, which filled him with wrath, so that he came to him in a passion: *and said to him, what hast thou done?* which was very insolent in a subject to say to his prince: *behold, Abner came unto thee:* I have been credibly informed of it, and am assured it is a fact which cannot be denied; he represents it as if he had done a wrong thing to admit him to come to him; but perhaps the great fault was that he had let him go: *why is it that thou hast sent him away, and he is quite gone?* or *going,* is *gone*[e]; is clean gone off, when he ought to have been laid hold on as a traitor, and put in irons.

Ver. 25. *Thou knowest Abner the son of Ner,* &c.] Thou canst not be ignorant what a cunning deceitful man he is, nor of his designs; or dost thou not know? art thou ignorant? so read the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, with an interrogation: *that he came to deceive thee;* with false hopes, or to lead into wrong measures with an intention to involve and ruin him: *and to know thy going out, and coming in;* the affairs of his court, the secrets of his government, to observe his conduct and behaviour, and all his actions, and improve them against him: *and to know all that thou doest:* he suggests that he came not as a friend, but as a spy, and therefore ought to have been taken up, and detained, and not dismissed. This Joab said to set David against him, fearing, if he should be received into favour, he would be a rival of his; and besides his breast was full of revenge against him for the death of his brother.

Ver. 26. *And when Joab was come out from David,* &c.] Which perhaps he did at once, as soon as ever he had spoken his mind, and flew out of the room in a great passion, not waiting for the king's answer, since we read of none returned; though it may be the king disdained to give him one, or cared not to confer with him whilst in his passion, until it subsided; or chose not to provoke him more, for it is plain he had great power over him; which generals of armies at this time very much assumed, see ver. 39. *he sent messengers after Abner;* in the name of the king, as Abarbinel rightly supposes, and so Josephus[f]; for otherwise it can hardly be thought he would have returned on a message from Joab only, who he knew bore him ill will: *which brought him again from the well of Sirah;* which might have its name from the thorns and briers that grew about it. Josephus[g] calls it Besira, and says it was 20 furlongs from Hebron: *but David knew it not:* that Joab had sent messengers in his name after Abner to fetch him back; it was not done by his order, with his consent or knowledge; this is observed, to clear David from any concern in the death of Abner, as follows.

Ver. 27. *And when Abner was returned to Hebron,* &c.] Alone, and not the 20 men with him; not to David's court, but just to the city, to the gate of it: *Joab took him aside in the gate:* where he was waiting for him, and met him; this was a public place, where

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[e] וילך הלוך & abiit eundo, Pagninus, Montanus.
[f] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 5.
[g] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 5.

people were continually passing and repassing, and where courts of judicature used to be held; wherefore Abner might think himself safe here with Joab, and have no suspicion at all of his design, and shews how fearless Joab was of God or men: *to speak with him quietly;* peaceably, in a friendly manner, as all his gestures towards him shewed; so that Abner made no difficulty of turning aside with him, supposing he had something to communicate to him from the king, which he had forgot: *and smote him under the fifth rib, that he died;* in the same place that Abner had smote his brother, of which see ch. ii. 23. and this he did: *for the blood of Asahel his brother;* for Abner's shedding his brother's blood; but this was not the only reason, and perhaps not the chief; but, as Josephus[h] observes, because he was fearful if Abner was received into the friendship of the king, he would be preferred unto him, and take his place as general of the army, as being an older and more experienced officer; so Procopius Gazæus, and Theodoret.

Ver. 28. *And afterward, when David heard it,* &c.] That Joab had sent to fetch Abner back, and that he had stabbed him in the gate of the city, and he was dead; it was some time after it was done that the news of it was brought to David; this circumstance is observed, the more to clear the king from any concern in this affair: *he said;* in a public manner, in open court, before all his princes; he called God to witness, and, as Josephus[i] says, stretching out his right hand to God, he cried aloud: *I and my kingdom are guiltless before the Lord for ever* from the *blood of Abner the son of Ner;* he was sensible it would be known that Abner had been with him, and that Joab his general had killed him; and therefore it might be suspected that he had an hand in it, and that it was done by his order, with his privy council; and therefore, to purge him and them from it, he made this public declaration, that neither he nor his council knew any thing of it; and that it was not done with their knowledge and consent, and by their order, but through the resentment of a single person; and therefore hoped that no man would impute the shedding of this blood unto them, or that God would punish them for it; and he was the rather led to make this public declaration, because he knew that the death of Abner in this way would be resented by the friends of Saul's family, and be an obstruction to the union of the two kingdoms, which it was known Abner was endeavouring to bring about.

Ver. 29. *Let it rest on the head of Joab,* &c.] That is, the blood of Abner, who was the shedder of it; let the guilt of it be charged to him, and let punishment for it be inflicted on him: *and on all his father's house;* on Abishai his brother, and other relations that might be privy to the death of Abner, and advising to it, and ready to assist in it if necessary: *and let there not fail from the house of Joab;* let there be always in his family, and of his seed, one or other of the persons described as follows: *one that hath an issue;* a gonorrhœa, which was reckoned infamous, and very impure, according to the Jewish law, and rendered persons unfit for society; see Lev. xv. *or that is a leper;* whose disease was very loathsome and infectious, and shut him out of the company of men; see Lev. xiii. *or that leaneth on a staff;* being blind, as Aquila renders the word; or through weakness of body, not being able to walk without one; or through some disease of the feet, as the Jewish writers generally understand it; and R. Isaiah interprets it of the gout particularly: the word for *staff* is rendered *spindle,* Prov. xxxi. 19. and to this sense it is rendered here in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; and then the meaning is, let his posterity, or some of them, be so poor, that they shall be obliged to get their livelihood in so mean a way as by spinning; or let them be of such an effeminate disposition, as be more fit to handle the spindle, and do the work of women, than to use the sword: *or that falleth on the sword;* not by it honourably in the field of battle, but cowardly destroying themselves with it: or *that lacketh bread;* and is obliged to beg it: all which David might say, not by a spirit of prophecy, but in a passion; and to shew with what horror he resented the action, and how detestable it was to him, and how far it was for him to have any concern in it: but though it was a very wicked action in Joab to murder Abner in this manner, and for the reasons he did; yet it was a just vengeance from the Lord on Abner for fighting against God, and acting against the dictates of his own conscience; for his rebellion against David, and perfidy to Ish-bosheth, and for having been the cause of much bloodshed in Israel.

Ver. 30. *So Joab and Abishai his brother slew Abner,* &c.] For though it was only Joab that gave him the thrust of which he died, Abishai was in the secret, and was consenting and advising to his death, and so an accessory to it; and might be present, ready to assist in it, if occasion required; and so Josephus[k] expressly says, that Abishai his brother was with him when he drew his sword, and smote him: *because he had slain their brother Asahel at Gibeon in the battle;* which was no just reason at all; his blood was shed in war, this in peace, in cold blood, and under the guise of friendship; that was shed with reluctance, and after fair warning, and in defence of himself; but this wilfully in Joab, unawares to Abner, and in great deceit and hypocrisy; see 1 Kings ii. 5.

Ver. 31. *And David said to Joab, and to all the people that were with him,* &c.] To his whole court, Joab being present: for he did not flee, nor was he laid hold on in order to be brought to justice; which shews how great his power was, and that he was too hard for David, as in ver. 39. however this he did, he enjoined his whole court, and Joab also, to express public mourning on this account: *rend your clothes and gird you with sackcloth;* which were expressions of mourning used on various occasions, and on account of the dead, and which with the Heathens were carried to a greater excess, even to the tearing of their flesh, *&c. and mourn before Abner;* before his corpse, as carried to the grave, when it was usual to make great lamentations: see Acts viii. 2. *and King David himself*

[h] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 1. sect. 5.
[i] Ibid. sect. 6.
[k] Ut supra.

followed the bier; or *bed*[l] on which his body was laid, and carried to the grave. On these the rich and noble among the Greeks and Romans were carried, and those of the meaner sort on biers[n]; and so with the Jews; see the note on Luke vii. 14. some of which were gilded with gold, and were made of ivory, and had ivory feet[o]; that of Herod's was all of gold, inlaid with precious stones, and the body covered with purple, and followed by his sons and kindred, the soldiers going before armed, and their leaders following[p]; the bier or bed with the Romans was sometimes carried by six persons, sometimes by eight or more[q]. It was not usual for kings, as the Jews say[r], to attend a funeral, to go out of the doors of their palace after their own dead, and much less others; but David did this to satisfy the people, and to root out of their mind all suspicion of his having any hand in Abner's death; and to shew that he was not slain by his will, and with his consent.

Ver. 32. *And they buried Abner in Hebron,* &c.] According to the Jewish account of places of burial[s], he was buried in the midst of the city, though burying-places were generally without; and so Fuller[t] places this in his map; whether the cave of Machpelah, which was near Hebron, was now used for a burying-place, is not certain: *and the king lifted up his voice and wept at the grave of Abner;* made a great outcry, a loud lamentation, so as to be heard by all the people; and which no doubt was real and hearty, and not done merely with political views: *and all the people wept;* through concern for the death of Abner, especially on account of the manner in which it was, and in imitation of the king, and being affected with his tears and cries.

Ver. 33. *And the king lamented over Abner,* &c.] Delivered an elegy or funeral oration, which he had composed on this occasion, as Josephus[u] suggests: for he had cried and wept before, but now he expressed something as follows: *and said, died Abner as a fool dieth?* the meaning of the interrogation is, he did not; the Targum is "did Abner die as wicked men die?" no, he did not; he did not die for any wickedness he had been guilty of; he did not die as a malefactor, whose crime has been charged and proved in open court, and sentence of condemnation pronounced on him righteously for it; but he died without any thing being laid to his charge, and much less proved, and without judge or jury; he was murdered in a clandestine, insidious, and deceitful manner; so the word *fool* is often taken in Scripture for a wicked man, especially in the book of Proverbs; the Septuagint version leaves the word untranslated, "died Abner according to the death of Nabal?" no; but it could hardly be thought that David would mention the name of any particular person on such an occasion.

Ver. 34. *Thy hands were not bound, nor thy feet put into fetters,* &c.] As malefactors are when they are taken up for any crime, and especially when proved upon them, and condemned for it, and brought forth to be executed. This was not his case, and had he been aware of the design against him, as his hands and feet were at liberty, he might have defended himself; or if he found he had too many to deal with, might have made use of his feet and fled: *as a man falleth before wicked men, so fellest thou;* as a man being before bloodthirsty and deceitful men, falls before them, through treachery and deceit, privately and unawares, so fell Abner before Joab and Abishai; this David said in the presence of Joab, and before all the people, to declare the plain fact how it was, to express his detestation of it, and to shew he had no hand in it; and Joab must be an hardened creature to stand at the grave of Abner, and hear all this, and not be affected with it: *and all the people wept again over him;* over Abner, being laid in his grave; they had wept before, but hearing this funeral oration delivered by the king in such moving language, and in such a mournful tone, it drew tears afresh from them.

Ver. 35. *And when all the people came to cause David to eat meat while it was yet day,* &c.] The custom was to bury in the day-time, and after the funeral was over to provide and send in food to the relations of the deceased, and come and eat with them; as was also the usage with the Greeks and Romans[w]; see the notes on Jer. xvi. 5, 7. and kings themselves used to attend those feasts; for the Jews say[x], "when they cause him "(the king) to eat, all the people sit upon the ground, "and he sits upon the bed;" but in this case David refused to eat with them: *David sware, saying, so do God to me, and more also;* may the greatest evils, and such as I care not to mention, befall me; and even more and worse than I can think of and express: *if I taste bread, or ought else, till the sun be down;* perhaps the funeral was in the morning, as funerals with the Jews generally now are; for otherwise if it was now towards evening, his abstinence from food till that time would not have seemed so much, nor required much notice, and still less an oath.

Ver. 36. *And all the people took notice* of it, &c.] Not only of his oath, that he would not eat food till evening, but of his whole conduct at the funeral of Abner; the sorrow he expressed for his death, and the oration he made on account of it, in which he pretty severely reflected on his murderer: *and it pleased them;* that he shewed such a concern for his death, and that it was a clear case he had no hand in it: *as whatsoever the king did pleased all the people;* what he did at this time, burying Abner with so much pomp and ceremony; and indeed he had so much the hearts of the people, and such a share in their affections, and they had such an high opinion of him, that all that he did in public and private affairs they reckoned well done; they were highly approved of by them, such an interest had he in them.

[l] המטה της κλινης, Sept. lectum, Piscator.

[n] Salmuth. ad Pancirol. par. 1. tit. 62. p. 343. Kirchman. de Funer. Roman. l. 2. c. 9. p. 375.

[o] Alstorph. de lect. vet. c. 19. p. 149.

[p] Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 1. c. 33. sect. 9.

[q] Kirchman. ut supra.

[r] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 3. Maimon in Hilchot Ebel. c. 7. sect. 7. David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 119. 4.

[s] Cippi Heb. p. 8.

[t] Pisgah-Sight, &c. in the Map of Judah.

[u] Ut supra.

[w] Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Roman. l. 4. c. 5. & 6.

[x] Misn. ut supra. David de Pomis ut supra.

Ver. 37. *For all the people and all Israel understood that day*, &c.] Not the people of Judah only, but of Israel also, to whom the knowledge of these things came; they knew and were satisfied by his conduct and behaviour, by his words and actions: *that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner*: it was not by the counsel or advice of the king, as the Targum; it was without his knowledge and consent, was contrary to his mind and will; that he had no manner of concern in it, and that if it had been in his power he would have prevented it.

Ver. 38. *And the king said unto his servants*, &c.] His courtiers, giving a reason why he mourned as he did; or *had said* *, and so is a reason why the people concluded, and were fully satisfied, he had no hand in his death; but the first is best, because what follows was said not to the people at the grave, but to his servants at court: *know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?* a *prince*, being of the royal family, his father was Saul's uncle, and he his own cousin: a *great* man, being general of the army, a very valiant and skilful commander, a man of great wisdom and parts. David says nothing of his grace and virtue, only of his grandeur, his high birth and civil excellencies; he praises him in what he was commendable, and proceeds no further; and this was sufficient to shew there was just cause of mourning on civil accounts; and this they might easily know and perceive, that the fall or death of such a man, which had that day happened in Israel, was a public loss, and matter of lamentation; and the rather as he was employing all his excellent talents in civil affairs, and all his interest in the people of Israel, to unite them to Judah, and bring them under the government of David.

Ver. 39. *And I am this day weak, though anointed king*, &c.] Which seems to be given as a reason, or for an excuse why he did not inflict just punishment upon the murderer, according to the law of God, because he was *weak*; not in body or mind, but with respect to the kingdom, that was like a tender branch, or in its infant state; and great care and caution were to be used that it was not overturned; he was a king by unction, not by birth; a son of the late king was set up against him, and was possessed of the far greater part of the kingdom; he was indeed anointed by Samuel to be king over all Israel; but as yet he was not put into the possession of the kingdom he was anointed to; he was anointed and made king over Judah, and invested with the office of king there, and settled in it; and yet his power was not very great there, for as follows: *and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, be too hard for me*; his sister's sons, Joab and Abishai, they were a check upon him; he could not do what he would, their influence was so great, both in the court and in the camp; the one was general of the army, and the other a considerable officer in it, and both valiant men, and very respectable among the people, for their achievements in war, and the success they had; so that they were very much out of the reach of David to bring them to justice, without shaking his kingdom; and therefore in point of prudence he thought it best to connive at this fact until he was more established in the kingdom. Whatever may be said for this conduct, it is certain he was too dilatory, and which did not sit easy upon his mind, and therefore gave it in charge to Solomon before his death not to suffer Joab to go to his grave in peace, 1 Kings ii. 5, 6, 31, 32, 33, 34. Some take these words, *weak* and *hard*, in a different sense, that David was weak or *tender* ^x, as it may be rendered, tender-hearted, of a merciful disposition, and therefore spared Abner when he was in his hands, though he had done him so much hurt, who was the Lord's anointed; but these men, his sister's sons, were of cruel tempers, more unmerciful than he, and therefore slew him; but the first sense seems best: *the Lord shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness*: which may be considered either as an imprecation of evil on Joab, or a prediction, that sooner or later righteous judgment would be rendered to him by the Lord; with whom he leaves it to take vengeance on him, satisfying himself with this for the present, that though it was not in his power to do it, the Lord would in his own time and way: but after all that can be said in favour of David, he seems to have been too much in fear of men, and too distrustful of the power and promise of God to establish him in his kingdom, and was too negligent of public justice; which had it been exercised, might have prevented other sins, as the murder of Ish-bosheth, to which the authors of it might be encouraged by this lenity.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter relates the concern the death of Abner gave to Ish-bosheth, and the men of Israel, ver. 1. the murder of Ish-bosheth by two of his captains, who cut off his head, and brought it to David, ver. 2—8. by whom they were rewarded according to their deserts, he putting them to death, and exposing their bodies to shame and ignominy, ver. 9—12.

Ver. 1. *And when Saul's son heard that Abner was dead in Hebron*, &c.] By Saul's son is meant Ish-bosheth, to whom tidings were soon brought of the death of Abner his general, and that he died in Hebron, where David his rival reigned, and was there murdered by Joab the general of his army: *his hands were feeble*; not only in a natural sense, being quite dispirited at hearing such news; but in a civil sense, having lost his main support and strength, he being president of his council, and commander of his forces, and in whom he placed all his confidence: and if he knew nothing of his being at Hebron, it must surprise him to hear of his dying there; from whence he might con-

* ויאמר nam dixerat, Junius & Tremellius.

^x רך tener, Pagninus, Montanus.

clude, that since he was there without his knowledge, it could not be in his favour, some plot was forming, and schemes laying with his rival to dethrone him; or if he knew of it, and understood it in this light, that he was endeavouring to make peace between him and David, and upon advantageous terms to him, of which now he might entertain no hopes; he was dispirited, and might conclude that Joab was against any terms of peace, and therefore had dispatched him: *and all the Israelites were troubled*: at the loss of so great a man in their kingdom, and of whose designs to unite them to Judah, and put them under the government of David, they were not ignorant; but now were in the utmost confusion, not knowing what step to take, and whom to send to carry on the treaty, in which Abner was concerned; and whether it would be safe for any to go upon it, since he who had the management of it was murdered, and no justice done on the murderer, and therefore might question David's sincerity and uprightness in this affair; these things greatly distressed and embarrassed them for the present, but Providence opened a way for their future establishment and prosperity.

Ver. 2. *And Saul's son had two men* that were *captains of bands*, &c.] Of troops in the army, or of guards about the person of Ish-bosheth son of Saul: *the name of the one was Baanah, and the name of the other Rechab, the sons of Rimmon a Beerothite, of the children of Benjamin*; so that these men were brethren in nature, as well as in iniquity; they had the same father, who is described by his name and city, and their names are expressly mentioned and recorded to their infamy; and they were not only the servants of Ish-bosheth, who had commissions under him, but were of the same tribe with him; all which is observed as an aggravation of their crime: *for Beeroth also was reckoned to Benjamin*: the place from whom Rimmon their father is denominated, and where he dwelt, as well as Gittaim, where they had sojourned, as in the next verse. This place, Beeroth, originally belonged to the Gibeonites, and fell to the lot of Benjamin at the division of the land, see Josh. ix. 17. and xviii. 25.

Ver. 3. *And the Beerothites fled to Gittaim*, &c.] At the death of Saul, when many of the Israelites deserted their cities, and left them to the Philistines, 1 Sam. xxxi. 7. and so the inhabitants of Beeroth forsook their city, which was near the Philistines, and went to Gittaim, a city in the same tribe, though a little further off, see Neh. xi. 33.

Ver. 4. *And Jonathan, Saul's son*, &c.] His eldest son, who died at the same time with him: *had a son that was lame of his feet*; of both feet, which were broken or bruised by a fall, as after related: and was *five years old when the tidings came of Saul and Jonathan out of Jezreel*: that is, when the tidings of their death came from Jezreel, the place where the battle was fought in which they died, to Gibeah, and the royal palace there; so that he was now 12 years of age: *and his nurse took him up and fled*; fearing the Philistines would come thither and destroy the family of Saul; and this child being the son of Jonathan, the eldest son of Saul, was by birth heir to the crown, his father and grandfather being both dead, and which might make the nurse the more solicitous to save his life by flight: *and it came to pass, as she made haste to flee, that he fell, and became lame*; in her hurry and fright he dropped out of her arms, and had some bone broken or dislocated, which was never rightly replaced, or had some contusion, of which he was never cured, and his name was Mephibosheth, called Merib-baal, 1 Chron. viii. 34. and ix. 40. of the change of such names see the note on ch. ii. 8. This story of Mephibosheth, and of his nurse's flight with him, and what happened upon it, is here inserted on occasion of the flight of the Beerothites, ver. 3. but chiefly to observe in what condition Saul's family now was, and what encouraged the murderers of Ish-bosheth to be guilty of the crime they were, since when he was taken off, there was none but this lame child of that family; and as the removal of Ish-bosheth would be of so much service to David, they doubted not but it would be very acceptable to him, and they should be greatly rewarded and honoured; and which they might do with the greatest safety, since the nearest kinsman and avenger of blood was so young, and lame of both his feet: or rather this is mentioned to shew that Ish-bosheth had no right to the throne, his eldest brother's son being living; so that those murderers might think they did a right thing, to take away the life of an usurper.

Ver. 5. *And the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite, Rechab and Baanah, went*, &c.] From Gittaim, where they were sojourners, ver. 3. or from the army, where they had commissions, wherever it was: *and came, about the heat of the day*: the middle of the day, at noon, as follows: *to the house of Ish-bosheth*; which was at Mahanaim: *who lay on a bed at noon*; as was usual in hot countries, especially for great personages, as kings; so the Targum, "and he was sleeping the sleep of "kings;" or at a time when kings usually slept; though this is remarked by some as an instance and proof of the sluggishness and inactivity of this prince, who left the management of all affairs to Abner his general, and gave himself to sloth and sensuality; which, when indulged, bring ruin on princes and their kingdoms.

Ver. 6. *And they came thither into the midst of the house*, &c.] They not only came unto it, but entered into it, and went into the inmost part of it; the guards being asleep also perhaps, or not on duty, so that there were none to obstruct them; or if there were, they deceived them, since they went in as though *they would have fetched wheat*; out of the king's granaries, for the payment and support of the soldiers under them, who in those days were paid in corn, as were the Roman soldiers[y] in after-times; and these granaries might not only be in the king's house, but near his bedchamber; for in those ancient ages of simplicity there was not such grandeur in the courts of princes as now; the Targum is, "as sellers of wheat," in the guise and habit of such persons, pretending they came to sell wheat to the king's purveyors, who were at the granaries; or, as others interpret it, they went in along with the wheat-merchants as if they be-

[y] Vid. Valtrinum de re militar. Roman. l. 3. c. 15. p. 236.

longed to them, and so found their way to the king's bedchamber: *and smote him under the fifth rib*; see the note on ch. ii. 23. *and Rechab and Baanah his brother escaped*; they got out of the palace after they had committed the murder undiscovered and unsuspected.

Ver. 7. *For when they came into the house, he lay on his bed in his bedchamber*, &c.] This is repeated to give a more particular account of the murder; though Abarbinel thinks they went in twice; when they went in first they smote him under the fifth rib, and made their escape; but fearing they had not left him dead, they returned, and did as follows: *and they smote him, and slew him*; so that it was out of all doubt with them that he was dead: *and beheaded him*; to make sure work of it: *and took his head*; along with them, perhaps in one of the sacks they had to fetch wheat in, and so passed undiscovered, to carry to David, to curry favour with him: *and gat them away through the plain all night*; through the plain of Jordan; all the way from Mahanaim to Hebron being for the most part a plain country till they came to Hebron, which was mountainous; the way from Mahanaim to Hebron was a space of 68 miles, according to Bunting [a].

Ver. 8. *And they brought the head of Ish-bosheth unto David to Hebron*, &c.] Supposing it would have been a very acceptable present to him: and *said to the king, behold the head of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul thine enemy, which sought thy life*: all which, his relation to Saul, his enmity to David, and his designs upon his life, are artfully put together to raise the indignation of David against him, and make their present of his head to him the more agreeable: *and the Lord hath avenged my lord the king this day of Saul and of his seed*; for all the evils and injuries they had done him; this being the last of the sons of Saul by a lawful wife, the two remaining were by a concubine; and these men impiously ascribe to the Lord what they with wicked hands had done.

Ver. 9. *And David answered Rechab and Baanah his brother, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite*, &c.] In a manner they did not expect: *and said unto them, as the Lord liveth, who hath redeemed my soul out of all adversity*; spiritual and temporal, especially the latter is meant, and particularly what he had been brought into by the persecution of Saul, whilst living, and by those that adhered to his house since his death; which he ascribes to the Lord, and doubted not that he would still deliver him, and complete what he had designed for him, and that he needed not the assistance of such wicked hands as theirs: the words contain the form of an oath made to testify the truth of the following narrative, concerning the man that brought the tidings of Saul's death to him, or for the certainty of what he would do those persons for the murder of Ish-bosheth.

Ver. 10. *When one told me, saying, behold, Saul is dead*, &c. No more is related, not that he killed him, or assisted in killing him, only that he was dead; by which it appears, as Abarbinel thinks, that the Amalekite did not slay Saul, and that David did not put him to death on that account, but for what follows: *thinking to have brought good tidings*; which would have been very acceptable to David, that he would have rejoiced and exulted at it as he did; but he was mistaken; instead of that, *I took hold of him, and slew him at Ziklag*: that is, ordered one of his young men to lay hold on him, and slay him, as he did, ch. i. 15. *who thought that I would have given him a reward for his tidings*; a handsome present, as the Targum here, a gift, or raised him to some post of honour and profit.

Ver. 11. *How much more, when wicked men have slain a righteous person*, &c.] As Ish-bosheth was in comparison of the wicked men that slew him; though not with respect to David, if he knew of his divine designation to the throne; nor with respect to Mephibosheth his eldest brother's son, whose right to the throne was prior to his, which he must know; though with respect to his conduct towards David, in assuming the throne of Israel, it might not be owing to any bad principles of malice and injustice, but to his ignorance of David's having a right to the throne upon his father's death, and by the advice of his friends he took it: the sin of these men in murdering him is aggravated, in that they slew him *in his own palace, upon his bed*? in cold blood, and not in the field of battle, not being engaged in war with him: in his own palace, where he might justly think himself in safety; on his bed asleep, and so at an unawares, when insensible of danger, and not in a posture of defence; and now David argues from the lesser to the greater, that if the man that brought him the tidings of Saul's death had no reward given him for bringing what he thought would be reckoned good tidings, then much less would any be given them who had actually slain their master, and that in such a base and barbarous way; and if the above person, who only was a bringer of tidings, was taken and slain, then how much more did they deserve to die, who had been guilty of such a cruel and barbarous murder? *shall I not therefore now require his blood of your hands, and take you away from the earth?* avenge his blood on them, by putting them to death, out of the world, and from the land of the living, as men that deserved to live no longer on it.

Ver. 12. *And David commanded his young men, and they slew them*, &c.] He ordered some of his guards about him to fall on them, and put them to death; and they accordingly did: *and cut off their hands and their feet*; their hands, which had smote Ish-bosheth, and cut off his head; and their feet, which had been swift to shed his blood, and made haste to bring his head so many miles to David; this was what the Jews call measure for measure: *and hanged them up over the pool in Hebron*; not their hands and their feet, but the trunks of their bodies, thus mutilated; so Theodoret; though others think their hands and their feet were hung up, and not their bodies, because dead bodies were not to hang upon the tree more than a day; they were hung up over the fish-pool in Hebron, because a public place, and where they were the more exposed to their shame, and the terror of others: *but they took the head of Ish-bosheth, and buried it in the sepulchre of Abner in Hebron*; by order of David no doubt, who it seems had made, or ordered to be made, a sepulchre

[a] Travels, p. 146, 149.

for Abner, see ch. iii. 32. all which David did to shew his regard to the family of Saul, his abhorrence of such execrable murders, and to remove all suspicion of his being concerned in them, and to conciliate the minds of the Israelites to him.

CHAP. V.

IN this chapter we have an account of all the tribes of Israel coming to Hebron, and anointing David king over them, ver. 1—5. of his expedition against the Jebusites in Jerusalem, and taking from them the strong hold of Zion, ver. 6—10. of his building an house for himself, and of his building up his family, by taking more wives and concubines, and having more children, whose names are given, ver. 11—16. and of an invasion of the land by the Philistines, and David's victory over them, ver. 17—25.

Ver. 1. *Then came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron*, &c.] All the rest of the tribes, save the tribe of Judah, who had made him king over them in Hebron seven years ago. These were ambassadors sent in the name of the several tribes to him, quickly after the deaths of Abner and Ish-bosheth; from having any hand in which David had sufficiently cleared himself, and which had tended to reconcile the minds of the people of Israel to him: *and spake, saying, we are thy bone and thy flesh*; for though he was of the tribe of Judah, yet as all the tribes sprung from one man, they were all one bone, flesh, and blood; all nearly related to each other, all of the same general family of which David was; and so, according to their law, a fit person to be their king, Deut. xvii. and from whom they might expect clemency and tenderness, being so near akin to them.

Ver. 2. *Also in time past, when Saul was king over us*, &c.] Even over all the tribes of Israel: *thou wast he that leddest out and broughtest in Israel*; that led out the armies of Israel against their enemies, fought their battles for them, obtained victories, and brought the troops under his command home in safety; and the remembrance of these valiant acts of his, which then endeared him to the people, was now another reason for their choosing him king: and another follows, the chiefest of them all: *and the Lord said to thee*; when anointed by Samuel; for though what follows is not recorded in so many words, yet the sense of it is expressed in the anointing him to be king, whose office, as such, lay in doing the following things: *thou shalt feed my people Israel*; as a shepherd feeds his flock; hence kings were frequently called shepherds, and David particularly, in which he was an eminent type of Christ, see Psal. lxxviii. 71, 72. Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24. and xxxvii. 24. *and thou shalt be a captain over Israel*; the Targum is, " and thou shalt be king over Israel;" which gives the true sense of the tribes, and which was the chief and prevailing reason with them to make him their king; and which they, at least many of them, would have done before, even immediately upon the death of Saul, but that they were persuaded by Abner to yield obedience to Ish-bosheth he set up.

Ver. 3. *So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron*, &c.] Which either explains what is meant by the tribes coming to him, ver. 1. namely, coming by their elders as their representatives; or else the meaning is, that the messengers the tribes sent, when they returned and reported the favourable reception they had met with from David; the elders of the several tribes, the princes or principal men met, and came together to David in Hebron: *and King David made a league with them before the Lord*; the states of the nation; he entered into a covenant with them; he on his part promising to rule them in justice and judgment according to the laws, and they promising to yield a cheerful obedience to him in all things just and lawful; and this was done *before the Lord*; either before the ark of the Lord, as Abarbinel; but that was in Kirjath-jearim, from whence it was after this brought by David to this city; rather, as Kimchi observes, wherever all Israel, or the greater part of them, were assembled, there the divine Shechinah or Majesty dwelt; so that what was done in a public assembly was reckoned as done before the Lord, and in his presence; or this covenant was made before the Lord, and each party appealed to him as witness of it, so that it was a very solemn one: *and they anointed David king over Israel*; that is, over all Israel, which was the third time of his being anointed; the first was by Samuel, pointing out the person the Lord chose and appointed king; the second was by the tribe of Judah, when they invested him with the office of a king over them; and now by all the tribes, when he was inaugurated into the whole kingdom of Israel; and not only the elders came at this time, but great numbers of the people from the several tribes, and continued with David some days, eating, drinking and rejoicing, see 1 Chron. xii.

Ver. 4. *David was thirty years old when he began to reign*, &c.] Over Judah, which was the age of his antitype Christ, when he entered upon his public ministry, Luke iii. 23. and *he reigned forty years*; and six months, as appears by the following verse; but the months are not mentioned, only the round number of years given: two reasons the Jews * give for this; the one, that he fled six months from Absalom; the other is, that he was ill in Hebron so long, and therefore are not reckoned.

Ver. 5. *In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months*, &c.] So long the kingdom of Israel continued in the house of Saul after his death; and by this it appears that David was near 38 years of age when the elders of Israel came and made him their king: *and in Jerusalem he reigned 33 years over all Israel and Judah*; which in all made 40 years and six months, see 1 Kings ii. 11. upon his being made king over all the tribes, as soon as he had taken the strong

* Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Reg. fol. 77. I.

hold of Zion, which he immediately attacked, as follows, he removed the seat of his kingdom from Hebron to Jerusalem.

Ver. 6. *And the king and his men went to Jerusalem*, &c.] Which, at least part of it, belonged to the tribe of Benjamin; and therefore until all Israel, and that tribe, with the rest, made him king, he did not attempt the reduction of it, but now he immediately set out on an expedition against it: *unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land*: who inhabited the country about it, and even dwelt in that itself; for the tribe of Judah could not drive them out at first from that part of it which belonged to them, nor the tribe of Benjamin from that part which was theirs; in short, they became so much masters of it, that it was called, even in after-times, Jebus, and the city of the Jebusites; see Josh. xv. 63. Judg. i. 21. and xix. 10, 11. *which spake unto David*; when he came up against them, and besieged them: *except thou take away the blind and lame, thou shalt not come in hither*: which many understand of their idols and images, which had eyes, but saw not, and feet, but walked not, which therefore David and his men in derision called the blind and lame; these the Jebusites placed for the defence of their city, and put great confidence in them for the security of it, and therefore said to David, unless you can remove these, which you scornfully call the blind and the lame, you will never be able to take the place. And certain it is the Heathens had their tutelar gods for their cities as well as their houses, in which they greatly trusted for their safety; and therefore with the Romans, when they besieged a city, the first thing they attempted to do was by any means, as by songs particularly, to get the tutelar gods out of it[b]; believing otherwise it would never be taken by them; or if it could, it was not lawful to make the gods captives[c]: and to this sense most of the Jewish commentators agree, as Kimchi, Jarchi, Ben Gersom, and R. Isaiah, who take them to be images; some say, made of brass, which were placed either in the streets of the city, or on the towers: it was usual with all nations to place on their walls both their household and country gods, to defend them from the enemy[d]. A learned countryman of ours[e] is of opinion that these were statues or images talismanically made, under a certain constellation, by some skilful in astrology, placed in the recess of the fort, and intrusted with the keeping of it, and in which the utmost confidence was put: but it seems better with Aben Ezra and Abarbinel, and so Josephus[f], to understand this of blind and lame men; and that the sense is, that the Jebusites had such an opinion of the strength of their city, that a few blind and lame men were sufficient to defend it against David and his army; and perhaps in contempt of him placed some invalids, blind and lame men, on the walls of it, and jeeringly told him, that unless he could remove them, he would never take the city: *thinking*; or *saying*[g]; this was the substance of what they said, or what they meant by it: *David cannot come in hither*; it is impossible for him to enter it, he cannot and shall not do it, and very probably these words were put into the mouths of the blind and lame, and they said them frequently.

Ver. 7. *Nevertheless, David took the strong hold of Zion*, &c.] A fortress without the city, and separate from it, and which was very strong; and the taking it might facilitate the taking of the city, which yet, as appears by what follows, was very difficult to do: *the same is the city of David*; it was afterwards so called, where he built an house, and dwelt.

Ver. 8. *And David said on that day*, &c.] On which he took the strong hold of Zion: *whosoever getteth up to the gutter*; where it is generally supposed the blind and lame were, whether images or real men; but what is meant by Tzinnur, we render *gutter*, is not easy to say; we follow some of the Jewish writers, who take it to be a canal, or water-spout, used to carry off the water from roofs of houses into cisterns, as the word is rendered in Psal. xlii. 7. which is the only place besides this in which it is used in Scripture; but R. Isaiah takes it to be the bar or bolt of the gate, and the sense to be, whoever got up to the gate, and got in at that, unbolting it, or breaking through it; the Targum interprets it of the tower of the city, or strong fortress, and so Abarbinel; but Jarchi says it was a ditch, agreeably to which Bochart[h] translates the words, and indeed more agreeably to the order of them; "whosoever smites the Jebusites, let him cast into "the ditch (next the wall) both the blind and the "lame, extremely hated by David." But a learned modern writer[i] gives a more ingenious and probable interpretation of these words thus; "whosoever (first) "smiteth the Jebusites, and through the subterra-"neous passages reaches the lame and the blind, &c." and which seems to be favoured by Josephus, as he observes; who says[k], the king promised the command of the whole army to him who should δια των υπονομων φαραγγων, through the subterraneous cavities, go up to the citadel, and take it: to which I would add, that the word is used in the Chaldee paraphrase of Eccl. i. 7. of the several subterraneous passages, through which the rivers flow out of, and reflow into the ocean: remarkable is the note of Theodoret, "a certain Hebrew says, Aquila ren-"ders it *through a pipe*; on which, he observes, David "being willing to spare the walls of the city, ordered "the citizens should enter into the city by an aque-"duct;" according to the Jews, there was a cave under ground, which reached from the king's house in Jerusalem to Jericho, when it was taken by Nebuchadnezzar; see the note on Jer. xxxix. 4. in which story there may be a mixture of fable; yet it is not improbable that there was such a subterraneous passage; since Dio Cassius[l] speaks of several such, through which the Jews made their escape in the last siege of the city: *and smiteth the Jebusites, and the lame and*

[b] Vid. Valtrinum de re militar. Rom. l. 5. c. 8.
[c] Vid. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 9. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 4.
[d] Cornel. Nepot. Vit. Themistocl. l. 2. c. 7.
[e] Gregory's Notes and Observations, &c. ch. 7.
[f] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 3. sect. 1.
[g] לאמר dicendo, Pagninus, Montanus.
[h] Phaleg. l. 4. c. 36. col. 304.
[i] Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 1. p. 55.
[k] Ut supra.
[l] Hist. l. 66.

the blind: or even the lame and the blind men the Jebusites had placed to mock David; and therefore it follows, that are *hated of David's soul:* because he was despised and jeered at by them, and through them: if these could be understood of their idols and images, the phrase would be easily accounted for, nothing being more abominable to David than idolatry: *he shall be chief and captain;* these words are not in the original text here, but are supplied from 1 Chron. xi. 6. that is, he shall be chief commander of the army, as Joab became, who was the first that went up and smote them: *wherefore they said, the blind and the lame shall not come into the house;* that is, either the Jebusites said this, that their images, called in derision by David the blind and the lame, if these did not keep David out, they should never be intrusted with the safety of their fort any more [m]; or rather because the blind and the lame men said this of David, he shall not come into the house, the fort, or citadel, therefore David hated them; which is the sense of the above learned writer [n].

Ver. 9. *So David dwelt in the fort,* &c.] The strong hold of Zion, which he took: *and called it the city of David;* from his own name, to keep up the memory of his taking it, and of his habitation in it: *and David built round about, from Millo and inward;* built a wall about it, and enlarged the place, increased the buildings both within and without. Millo is supposed to be a ditch round the fort, full of water, from whence it had its name; or was a large hollow place which divided the fort from the lower city, and which afterwards Solomon filled up, and made it a level, and therefore is called so here by anticipation; though Jarchi says it was done by David. According to Dr. Lightfoot [o], it was a part of Sion, or some hillock, cast up against it on the west side; his first sense is best, Millo being no other than the fortress or citadel; which, as Josephus says [p], David joined to the lower city, and made them one body, and erecting walls about it made Joab superintendent of them: and this was the *round-about,* or circuit, which David made, reaching from Millo, or the citadel, to that again, which is meant by *inward,* or *to the house* [q], as it should be rendered; that is, to the house of Millo, as in 2 Kings xii. 20. and so it is said 1 Chron. xi. 8. that David built the city *from Millo round about;* that is, to the same place from whence he began [r].

Ver. 10. *And David went on, and grew great,* &c.] In honour and wealth, in fame and reputation, in subduing his enemies, obtaining conquests over them, and enlarging his dominions: *and the Lord God of hosts,* of armies above and below, was *with him;* to whom all his prosperity and success was owing. The Targum is, "the Word of the Lord God of hosts was for his "help," or his helper.

Ver. 11. *And Hiram king of Tyre,* &c.] This was father of that Hiram that lived in the times of Solomon, whose name was Abibalus before he took the name of Hiram, which became a common name of the kings of Tyre; his former name may be seen in the ancient historians quoted by Josephus [s]; of the city of Tyre, see the note on Isa. xxiii. 1. which was built one year before the destruction of Troy [t]. This king, on hearing of David's being acknowledged king by all Israel, and of his taking Jerusalem out of the hands of the Jebusites, *sent messengers to David;* to congratulate him upon all this: *and cedar-trees, and carpenters, and masons;* these might not be sent at first, but David intending to build himself an house, might, by the messengers on their return, request of Hiram to send him timber and workmen for that purpose; the people of Israel being chiefly employed in cultivating their fields, and vineyards, and oliveyards, and feeding their flocks and herds, few of them had any skill in hewing timber and stone, and building houses, at least not like the Tyrians and Sidonians; see 1 Kings v. 6. and accordingly he sent him cedars from Lebanon, a great part of which was in his dominions, and artificers in wood and stone, to build his house in the most elegant manner: *and they built David an house;* to dwell in, a stately palace, called an house of cedar, ch. vii. 2.

Ver. 12. *And David perceived that the Lord had established him king over Israel,* &c.] By the prosperity and success which attended him in every thing he set his hand to: *and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake;* for their advantage and glory more than for his own.

Ver. 13. *And David took him more concubines and wives out of Jerusalem, after he was come from Hebron,* &c.] He had six when he was at Hebron, and now he took more, which was not to his honour, and contrary to the law of God, Deut. xvii. 17. the concubines were a sort of half-wives, as the word may signify, or secondary ones, and under the others: *and there were yet sons and daughters born to David;* besides those in Hebron mentioned in ch. iii. 2—5.

Ver. 14. *And these be the names of those that were born unto him in Jerusalem,* &c.] The names of his sons, for his daughters are not mentioned, and these seem to be such only that were born of his wives, see 1 Chron. iii. 9. *Shammua, and Shobab, and Nathan, and Solomon;* these four were by Bathsheba; the first of these is called Shimea, 1 Chron. iii. 5.

Ver. 15. *Ibhar also, and Elishua, and Nepheg, and Japhia.*] Elishua is called Elishama, 1 Chron. iii. 6.

Ver. 16. *And Elishama, and Eliada, and Eliphalet.*] Seven more by some other wife or wives; nine are mentioned in 1 Chron. iii. 6—8. there being in that account two Eliphalets, and another called Nogah; which two, one of the Eliphalets, and Nogah, might die without sons, as Kimchi thinks, and so are not mentioned here.

Ver. 17. *But when the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel,* &c.] That the civil war in the nation was now at an end, which they hoped would have issued in their destruction, and therefore lay still and quiet; but now being united under the government of David, and he hereby greatly strengthened and become powerful; and hearing also of his

[m] Gregory, ut supra.
[n] Dr. Kennicott, ut supra.
[o] Works, vol. 2. Chorograph. Cent. c. 84. p. 25.
[p] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 3. sect. 2.

[q] וביתה & ad domum.
[r] See Dr. Kennicott, ut supra, p. 49, &c.
[s] Contr. Apion. l. 1. sect. 17, 18.
[t] Justin e Trogo, l. 18. c. 3.

success against Jerusalem, and the friendship he had contracted with Hiram king of Tyre, they thought it was high time to bestir themselves, and put a stop to his power and greatness; and now it was, as Kimchi thinks, that David penned the second psalm, which begins, *why do the Heathen rage*, &c. *all the Philistines came up to seek David*; in order to fight him, all the five principalities of the Philistines combined together against him; perhaps his old friend Achish king of Gath was now dead, or had now entertained a different opinion of him: *and David heard* of it; that they had invaded his kingdom, and sought to fight him: *and went down to the hold*; some fortified place or strong hold near Jerusalem, which lay lower than the city, or than the strong hold of Zion, in which David dwelt: hither he went, not so much for safety, or with an intention to abide there, but as a rendezvous for his men, and to prepare to meet the Philistines.

Ver. 18. *The Philistines also came and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim.*] Or of the giants, as Josh. xv. 8. which lay to the west of Jerusalem; of which, see the note on the above place; the Philistines spreading themselves in it, shews that they were very numerous.

Ver. 19. *And David inquired of the Lord*, &c.] By Abiathar, and the Urim and Thummim, in the ephod he had on: *saying, shall I go up to the Philistines?* who by this time were gone from the valley to an higher place, to Mount Perazim, as in Isa. xxviii. 21. *wilt thou deliver them into my hand?* here two questions are put together, and an answer returned to both, contrary to a notion of the Jews, see the note on 1 Sam. xxiii. 11. *and the Lord said to David, go up, for I will doubtless deliver the Philistines into thine hand*; by which oracle he had both the mind of God that he should go up, and was assured of victory.

Ver. 20. *And David came to Baal-perazim*, &c.] As it was after called, for here it has its name by anticipation, and whither the Philistines were come from the valley of Rephaim; see 1 Chron. xiv. 11. which was at no great distance, the one being the hill, to which the other was the valley, computed to be about three miles from Jerusalem, in the way to Beth-lehem [u], between which places were two hours' travel [w]: *and David smote them there*; there a battle was fought, in which David had the victory assured him: *and said, the Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies before me, as the breach of waters*; as when waters, through their mighty force, break down the banks of rivers, and carry all before them; or as one breaks an earthen vessel full of water, so the Targum on 1 Chron. xiv. 11. *therefore he called the name of the place Baal-perazim*; which signifies *the master of breaches*, where the Philistines were broke in upon, and broken to pieces, of which God was the author, and which gave David the mastery over his enemies; the Targum renders it the plain of breaches, and seems to take it to be the same with the valley of Rephaim.

Ver. 21. *And they left their images*, &c.] Their idol-gods, which they brought with them to protect and defend them, and give them success; perhaps in imitation of the Israelites, who formerly brought the ark of God into their camp against the Philistines, 1 Sam. iv. 3—6. and it appears to have been the custom of other countries, in later times, to bring their gods with them to battle [x]: *and David and his men burnt them*; that is, his men burnt them at his command, 1 Chron. xiv. 12. agreeably to the law of God, that so no profit might be made of them, Deut. vii. 5. the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions, and others, render it, *and took them*, or *carried them away* [y]; as they might do, and, after they had exposed them in triumph, then burnt them.

Ver. 22. *And the Philistines came up yet again*, &c.] And, as Josephus says [z], with an army three times larger than the former: *and spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim*; in the same place where they were before.

Ver. 23. *And when David inquired of the Lord*, &c.] For though he had success before, and got the victory, he would not engage again with them without having the mind and will of God, on whom he knew victory alone depended: *he said, thou shalt not go up*; that is, directly, and in a straight line: but *fetch a compass behind them*; and get to the rear of them, instead of falling upon them in the front: *and come upon them over-against the mulberry-trees*; which grew in the valley of Rephaim, and near where the Philistines had pitched.

Ver. 24. *And let it be, when thou hearest the sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry-trees*, &c.] Of a going of the wind on the tops of these trees, making a rustling upon them, and that in such a manner as to resemble the going of men, or march of armies, as if they were moving in the air over the tops of the mulberry-trees; which Jarchi and R. Isaiah interpret of angels being sent of God, and moving at that time to help David, and destroy the Philistines; so the Targum on 1 Chron. xiv. 15. These trees being in Judea account for silk there, Ezek. xvi. 10. though some think that was not known so early; others suppose it was, and to be the Hebrew byssus mentioned by Pausanias [a], as being of a yellow colour: *that then thou shalt bestir thyself*; or move towards the camp of the Philistines, and fall upon them in the rear, who, by reason of the sound in the trees, would not hear the motion of the Israelites; or, if they heard it, would take it to be no other than the motion of the trees they heard, both sounds being confounded together; or they would take the sound they heard for the motion of the enemy in the front, and give way, and so fall into the hands of the Israelites in their rear, which must throw them into the utmost confusion and consternation: *for then shall the Lord go out before thee to smite the host of the Philistines*; by an angel or angels; so the Targum, "for then shall go forth the angel of the Lord, to "make thee prosperous to slay in the camp of the "Philistines;" that being the precise time for the sal-

[u] Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 128.
[w] Maundrell's Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 87. ed. 7.
[x] Omnigenumque Deum, &c. Virgil. Æneid. l. 8.

[y] וישאם και λαμβανουσιν αυτους, Sept. tulit, V. L. Tigurine version, Montanus; sustulit, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[z] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 1.
[a] Eliac. sive, l. 5. p. 294.

vation of Israel, and the destruction of the Philistines, and the token of it.

Ver. 25. *And David did so as the Lord commanded him*, &c.] In all things he was obedient to the command of God; Saul was not: he got behind the army of the Philistines, as he was directed; and when he heard the sound in the mulberry-trees, he arose and fell upon his enemies: *and smote the Philistines from Geba until thou come to Gazer*; or from Gibeon, as in 1 Chron. xiv. 16. a city in the tribe of Benjamin, near to which this battle was fought, and where the pursuit began, which was carried as far as Gazer, a city that lay on the borders of the Philistines, as Josephus says [b]; and so far they were pursued, and were smitten as they fled; and, according to Bunting [c], it was a space of 18 miles.

CHAP. VI.

IN this chapter we are told that David fetched the ark from Baale of Judah, with an intent to bring it to his own city, ver. 1—5. but Uzzah being smitten for his error concerning it, David was displeased, and left it at the house of Obed-edom, where it remained three months, and proved a blessing to his house, ver. 6—11. which David hearing of, went and brought it from thence with great expressions of joy before it as it came along, and offered offerings to the Lord at the setting it in its place, and gave gifts to the people, ver. 12—19. but Michal his wife was displeased with some of his gestures on that occasion, which made some difference between them, and which, on Michal's part, was resented by the Lord himself; for she became barren for it to the time of her death, ver. 20—23.

Ver. 1. *Again, David gathered together all the chosen men of Israel*, 30,000.] Which was done by the advice of his officers, 1 Chron. xiii. 1. the word *again* refers either to the gathering of them when they made him king in Hebron, as the Jewish writers generally observe; but then they gathered themselves, and not David: or rather to his gathering them to fight the Philistines a little while ago; and as they were the choice and young men that were gathered for war, as being the fittest, so now to fetch up the ark with dancing and singing, and to protect it; the Septuagint version says they were about 70,000; but the Targum, Syriac, and Arabic versions, have 30,000, agreeably to the Hebrew text.

Ver. 2. *And David arose, and went with all the people that were with him*, &c.] The 30,000 chosen men gathered together, and as many else as chose to go: *from Baale of Judah, to bring up from thence the ark of God*: that is, they first went to this place, as in 1 Chron. xiii. 6. in order to fetch the ark from thence, as here expressed, and then they came from thence with it; this place is the same that is called Baalah and Kirjath-baal, a city in the tribe of Judah; hence Judah is added to it, and the same with Kirjath-jearim, Josh. xv. 9, 60. the place where it was brought to when fetched from Beth-shemesh, 1 Sam. vii. 10. and had been here now near 50 years; nor was it any where else during this time, only once at Gibeah of Saul with him, 1 Sam. xiv. 18. *whose name he called by the name of the Lord of hosts, that dwelleth* between *the cherubim*: not the ark, but the Lord, whose is the ark; his name is called by the name of Jehovah, the infinite, incomprehensible, eternal, and immutable Being, the Lord of armies above and below; whose habitation was between the cherubim that overshadowed the mercy-seat, which was above the ark; all this is said, not only to express the greatness and majesty of God, but for the honour of the ark, which belonged to him.

Ver. 3. *And they set the ark of God upon a new cart*, &c.] Which was a great mistake, since it ought not to have been put upon a cart, old or new; it was to be borne upon men's shoulders, and carried by Levites only, and those of the family of Kohath, to whom no waggons were given, when others had them, for the above reason, Numb. vii. 9. it is strange that so many priests and Levites, and of the people of Israel gathered together on that account, and David also, so well versed in the law of God, should not advert to it; perhaps they were led by the example of the Philistines, who put it in a new cart, and set it forward towards Beth-shemesh, and were not punished for it; but it should have been considered they were an ignorant Heathen people, and who had no proper persons among them to bear it, and so might be dispensed with. This mistake was afterwards seen by David, and rectified, 1 Chron. xv. 2. wherefore there is no reason to charge the text with an error or escape, and that the word Kirjath-jearim is wanting, and to be supplied, as Spinosa [d] suggests: *and brought it out*, or *after they had brought it out* [e], *of the house of Abinadab that* was *in Gibeah*: or which was on the hill in Kirjath-jearim, 1 Sam. vii. 1. *and Uzzah and Ahio the sons of Abinadab drew the new cart*: perhaps not only Abinadab himself was dead, but Eleazar also, his eldest son, who was sanctified to keep the ark, as in the above-quoted place; and these might be his younger sons who at this time had the care of it, and it may be especially Uzzah.

Ver. 4. *And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which* was *at Gibeah*, &c.] That is, the new cart, which is the last thing spoken of, and the bringing of the ark out of his house is mentioned before; though some take this to be the coffer in which were the presents of the Philistines, which was now brought out along with the ark, see 1 Sam. vi. 8. *accompanying the ark of God*: or *with the ark of God* [f]; that is, they brought the new cart *from* the house of Abinadab on the hill, with the ark of God upon it: *and Ahio went before the ark*: guiding the oxen that drew it, and

[b] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 1.
[c] Travels, &c. p. 138.
[d] Tractat. Theol. Politic. c. 9. p. 176.
[e] וישאהו quum extulissent, Piscator.
[f] עם ארון האלהים cum arca Dei, Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version, Piscator.

Uzzah might go behind, or on one side, to take care that the ark fell not out of it.

Ver. 5. *And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord*, &c.] That is, before the ark, which was a symbol of the presence of the Lord: *on all manner of* instruments made of *fir-wood*; which is a general expression, the particulars follow; though instruments of different sorts are mentioned, and even some of metal, as cymbals, which were vessels of brass, they struck one against another, and gave a very acute sound, being hollow [g]; harps, psalteries, and timbrels, are frequently met with; cornets, according to Kimchi, are such sort of instruments, that in playing upon them it required an agitation of the whole body. Now it was that David penned the 68th psalm, which begins, *let God arise*, &c. words used by Moses when the ark set forward, Numb. x. 35.

Ver. 6. *And when they came to Nachon's threshing-floor*, &c.] Who is called Chidon, 1 Chron. xiii. 9. he seems to have had two names; or it was a place that had two names, as say the Jews [h]; according to a tradition of theirs [i], Chidon is the name of the place where it was said to Joshua, stretch out the spear or shield in thine hand towards Ai, Josh. viii. 18. so indeed the word signifies, nor was it unusual to stretch out the shield as a signal on occasion. Thus Æneas lifted up his shield in his left hand, as a token to his Trojans that he was come to relieve them [k]: where this threshing-floor was is not said; some say [l] it was the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite; it could not be far from Jerusalem, since Baale-judah or Kirjath-jearim was but about a mile from it, according to Bunting [m], from whence they fetched the ark: *Uzzah put forth* his hand *to the ark of God, and took hold of it*; to keep it from falling: the reason was, *for the oxen shook* it; the same word is used in 1 Chron. xiii. 9. and there it is rendered, *for the oxen stumbled*; and by their stumbling the cart was shaken, and the ark in it, and in danger of falling, as Uzzah thought: or *the oxen shook*, for the word *it* is a supplement; they shook as if their members were plucking asunder and parting, as Kimchi expresses it, because of the holiness of the ark; as if they were sensible it was wrong for them to draw it, when it ought to have been carried on the shoulders of Levites; and by this way, as well as by the death of Uzzah, the error committed was pointed out: but others render it, *for the oxen stuck in the clay* [n], and could not go on; which Uzzah observing, and fearing that in their struggle to get out the cart should be overturned, or that the procession would be retarded too much, took hold of the ark to take it out, and carry it the remainder of the way, it not being far from Jerusalem.

Ver. 7. *And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah*, &c.] And which was manifest by smiting him: *and God smote him there for* his *error*; committed at this time, which was complicated; as that the ark was put upon a cart, to which he might be the chief adviser, as Procopius Gazæus notes, when it should have been carried on the shoulders of the Levites; and that he touched it with his hand, which none but priests might do, supposing him to be a Levite, which it is not clear he was, however not a Kohathite: and he took hold of it in order to carry it in his arms, which even Levites, and those Kohathites, might not do, but with staves put into it, which only they were to hold; and besides, as Abarbinel observes, he shewed little faith in the power and providence of God, as if he could not take care of the ark without him: *and there he died by the ark of God*; directly, upon the spot, by the side of it; whether he was struck by lightning, or in what way, cannot be said; however, he died by the immediate hand of God, in token of his displeasure: and this shews that it is dangerous in matters of worship to act contrary to the command of God, even in things that may seem small and trivial; and though what may be done may be done with a good intention, as this was, yet that will not excuse the sin; nor are those who are the most forward and zealous in religious matters exempted from marks of God's displeasure when they go wrong.

Ver. 8. *And David was displeased, because the Lord had made a breach upon Uzzah*, &c.] He could not easily submit, and be reconciled to the providence; his heart was ready to rise up against God, and murmur at him for striking him dead in such an awful manner, for so small a matter as this might seem to be; and the rather, as this put a stop to the procession, and cast a damp upon their joy and mirth on this occasion, and might seem to be an ill omen to David, and be improved by his enemies against him: *and he called the name of the place Perez-uzzah unto this day*; the name he gave the place, which signifies the breach of Uzzah, continued to the time of writing this book.

Ver. 9. *And David was afraid of the Lord that day*, &c.] Lest he should be smitten for his error also, and especially as he had discovered some resentment at the Lord's dealing with Uzzah; when he ought to have been still and quiet, and submitted to the will of God, and owned his justice in it, confessed his own error, and been thankful for his sparing mercy vouchsafed to him: *and said, how shall the ark come to me?* the meaning of which is not, how it should be brought to the place provided by him in Jerusalem, now Uzzah was dead, for there were Levites enow to carry it, as they afterwards did; but as signifying that it would be either boldness and presumption in him to do it, since God had shewn such a mark of his displeasure at their proceeding, that he might be in doubt whether it was the will of God it should come to him; or as fearing it would be dangerous to him to have it with him, since he might be guilty of such an error, of the same, or like it, that had been committed.

Ver. 10. *So David would not remove the ark of the Lord unto him into the city of David*, &c.] As yet, but wait a little longer, until he had more thoroughly considered of it, and made himself acquainted with every thing relative to the ark, that he might know how to

[g] Suidas in voce κύμβαλα.
[h] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 35. 2.
[i] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Paralipom. fol. 83. G.
[k] Virgil. Æneid. 10. ver. 261, 262. Vid. Diodor. Sic. l. 20. p. 787.
[l] Gloss. in T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 35. 2.

[m] Travels, &c. p. 138.
[n] כי שמטו הבקר nam luto hæserunt boves, Noldius, p. 366. No. 1343. so Bochart. Hierozoic, par. 1. l. 2. c. 37. col. 374. ex Arabica Lingua.

behave for the future, without giving offence: *but David carried it aside into the house of Obed-edom the Gittite*: which was hard-by, on one side of the place where they were; this man was a Levite, as appears from his being afterwards appointed to be door-keeper for the ark, and to sing praise before it, and so a proper person to commit the care of it to, 1 Chron. xv. 18, 21, 24. and xvi. 5, 6. he is called a Gittite, either because he had sojourned in Gath some time, or rather because he was of Gath-rimmon, a city of the Levites, Josh. xxi. 24.

Ver. 11. *And the ark of the Lord continued in the house of Obed-edom three months*, &c.] David, and those with him, returned to their habitations, where they continued during this time: *and the Lord blessed Obed-edom, and all his household*: him, and all his family, with spiritual blessings, and with an affluence of temporal good things; for godliness has the promise of this life, and of that which is to come; men are not losers but gainers, even in things temporal, for their attachment to the cause of religion, and the service of God, and their regard to that in their own houses, as well as in the house of God. Josephus [o] says, that Obed-edom was very poor before, and in a low condition, out of which he soon emerged, and came into affluent circumstances, so as to be taken notice of by his neighbours, and reported abroad; by which means David came to the hearing of it, as follows.

Ver. 12. *And it was told King David*, &c.] By some of his courtiers who had heard of it: *saying, the Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the ark of the Lord*: it was so suddenly, in so short a time, and so largely, that it could not escape the notice and observation of men that knew him; and this increase was not in any natural way by which it could be accounted for; so that it could be ascribed to no other cause but the blessing of God, and that on account of the ark of God that was with him; nothing else could be thought of: *so David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom in the city of David with gladness*: being animated and encouraged by the blessing of God on the house of Obed-edom, because of it, and thereby freed from those slavish fears he was before possessed of, and filled with hopes of being blessed also on account of it; if not with temporal blessings, he needed not, yet with spiritual ones.

Ver. 13. *And it was so, that when they that bare the ark of the Lord*, &c.] The Levites; for now David had seen the former mistake, and rectified it, and ordered the Levites to *carry* it, as they did upon their shoulders, with the staves therein, see 1 Chron. xv. 2, 12—15. when these had *gone six paces*, he *sacrificed oxen and fatlings*: upon an altar, which was at once erected for that purpose; the number and kind of sacrifices offered were seven bullocks, and seven rams, 1 Chron. xv. 26. and these David offered, not by himself, but by the priests that were with him, and that as soon as they had gone six paces from the house of Obed-edom; whereby they perceived the Levites were able to carry the ark, with what was in it, the Lord helping them, as in the above-quoted place, and without stumbling and falling, or any evil attending them; and Kimchi thinks these six paces were just the measure of the ground Uzzah went before what befell him; but it is highly probable that he had gone further; however, no doubt by the order of David, the Levites set down the ark, and sacrifices were offered by way of thanksgiving to God, and for the continuance of his goodness, and for atonement for former errors. Some think these seven oxen and rams were offered, at seven several times and places, at every six paces an ox and a ram; but this is not very likely.

Ver. 14. *And David danced before the Lord with all his might*, &c.] That is, before the ark of the Lord; not a set dance, or along with others; but he leaped and skipped as *car*, a lamb, does, and that for joy that the ark was like to be brought home to his house, without any token of the divine displeasure, as before; the Targum is, "he praised before the Lord "with all his might;" exerted himself to the uttermost in singing the praises of God vocally, or by playing on an instrument; to which sense are the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which is approved of by Castel [p]; who observes, it nowhere appears to have been a custom to dance before the ark; but it might be now done, though not usual, and therefore was observed by Michal with contempt, ver. 16. a later writer [q] shews that dancing is the proper sense of the word: *and David was girded with a linen ephod*; which others, besides priests, sometimes wore, as Samuel did, and which David might choose to appear in, rather than in his royal robes, as being more agreeable to the service of God, and lighter for him both to walk and dance in on this occasion.

Ver. 15. *So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord*, &c.] The elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, 1 Chron. xv. 25. besides the common people; there might be as large a number with him now as before: *with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet*; with the shouts of the people in common, and with blowing of trumpets by those who were appointed for that purpose, and with other instruments of music, see 1 Chron. xv. 27, 28. Josephus says [r], that seven choirs went before the priests bearing the ark, as the king commanded, he himself playing on the harp; so the Septuagint version.

Ver. 16. *And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David*, &c.] Being brought thither on the shoulders of the Levites: *Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window*; in the king's palace, to see the procession, which was very grand, and in great pomp, attended by a vast number of people, and with music of all sorts. She is said to be Saul's daughter, though David's wife, as having a good deal of her father's haughty temper and disposition, as appears by what follows: *and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord*; the ark of the Lord, by these outward gestures expressing the inward joy of his heart on this occasion: *and she despised him in her heart*; as acting a mean part, quite beneath himself, and unbecoming his royal dignity.

[o] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 2.
[p] Lexic. col. 1792.

[q] Hackman. Præcidan. Sacr. p. 156, 157.
[r] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 4. sect. 2.

Ver. 17. *And they brought in the ark of the Lord,* &c.] Into the city of David, the strong hold of Zion: *and set it in his place, in the midst of the tabernacle that David had pitched for it*: or *stretched out*; for this was not the tabernacle of Moses, David pitched any where; that was at this time at Gibeon, where it continued to the time of Solomon, 1 Chron. xxi. 29. 2 Chron. i. 3, 4. but this was a curtain, or curtains, which he had stretched out or drawn around for the ark to be pitched in the midst of; and this was not in his own house, for he is afterwards said to go to that, but somewhere in Jerusalem or the city of David: *and David offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings before the Lord*: that is, before the ark, and that by way of thanksgiving for its being brought safe thither, without any error or mistake on the side of him, the Levites, and the people, and without offence to God, and any mark of his displeasure as before. This must be supposed to be done by priests, and not by David himself, who was no priest.

Ver. 18. *And as soon as David had made an end of offering burnt-offerings and peace-offerings,* &c.] Or these were performed according to his order: *he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts*; not as a priest, but as a prince, as the common father of them, wishing them all happiness and prosperity outward and inward, praying to God to bless them with all blessings temporal and spiritual, who is the God of armies above and below, and can do what he pleases, and more than his people can ask or think.

Ver. 19. *And he dealt among all the people,* &c.] Gave a dole unto them, divided among them: even *among the whole multitude of Israel*; and if there were so many as at first, there were 30,000 of them, ver. 1. and perhaps more, since it follows: *as well to the women as men*; to both the one and the other; and the women, it is very probable, were not among those that went to fetch the ark, but assembled to attend the entrance of it into the city, and were present at the solemnities of its settlement: *to every one a cake of bread*; or a loaf of bread, of what quantity is not said, no doubt sufficient for any one person, or more: *and a good piece of flesh*; not only that was good in quality but large in quantity, a very large piece of it; the Jews say * the sixth part of a bullock, they dividing it into six parts as we into four quarters; but it is not likely that such a quantity of flesh should be given to each person; *and a flagon* of wine; but what such a vessel held cannot be said, though at least we may suppose it equal to a bottle of ours, or more; see Cant. ii. 5. and Hos. iii. 1. *so all the people departed every one to his house*; to refresh themselves with the provisions David had given them.

Ver. 20. *Then David returned to bless his household,* &c.] His wife, children, and servants, to wish all happiness to them on this occasion, and pray to God for blessings on them temporal and spiritual. This was done when he came from the place where the ark was set, and was come to his own palace: *and Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David*: before he had got quite to his own house: *and said, how glorious was the king of Israel to-day*; which she spoke in an ironical jeering way, meaning the reverse, how inglorious, mean, and despicable he had made himself to be, by his airs and gestures: *who uncovered himself to-day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!* because he had put off his royal robes, and put on a linen ephod; for that he had stripped himself naked cannot be supposed, nor do her words import so much though a passionate exaggeration of the case.

Ver. 21. *And David said unto Michal, it was before the Lord,* &c.] Before the ark of the Lord, what was done was done there; she upbraided him with his dancing and singing, which was designed for the honour and glory of God, and in thankfulness to him for the bringing the ark to his city, and therefore she ought not to have reproached him with it, and he adds, *which chose me before thy father, and before all his house*; which he observed to humble her pride, and mortify her, as well as to remark the distinguishing goodness of God to him, which laid him under obligation to express his thankfulness to him in every shape: *to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel*; which was a high honour conferred upon him, and required the utmost gratitude: *therefore will I play before the Lord*; upon the harp, or praise before him, as the Targum, sing his praise before the ark, unto any instrument of music, without once imagining I disgrace myself, on the contrary think it to be the highest honour to me to be employed in such service.

Ver. 22. *And I will yet be more vile than thus,* &c.] If this is to be vile, I'll endeavour to be viler still; if to dance before the ark, and sing the praises of God, be reckoned a lessening of me, I'll more and more be found in doing such things, or what is similar to them: *and will be base in mine own sight*; humble himself, and lie low in his own eyes, admiring the grace and goodness of God to him, thinking he could never condescend too low to exalt the Lord, and magnify the riches of his goodness: *and of the maid-servants which thou hast spoken of, of them shall I be had in honour*; who the more humble I am, and the more I condescend, by laying aside all state in acts of devotion and religion, the more shall I be honoured and spoken well of by them.

Ver. 23. *Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no child until the day of her death,* &c.] The children she brought up for Adriel were not her own, but adopted ones, or Adriel's by another woman, ch. xxi. 8. however, she had none after this time, whatever she had before, and it does not appear that she had any, though the Jews say she was Eglah, and Ithream her son, ch. iii. 5. see the note there. And thus she that vilified David brought a reproach upon herself, as barrenness was always reckoned, and no one descending from her arrived to royal dignity, and sat on the throne of David; and so it was ordered in Providence, as Abarbinel observes, that the seed of David and of Saul might not be mixed.

* T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 36. 2.

CHAP. VII.

THIS chapter expresses David's concern for building an house for the ark of God, which he communicated to Nathan the prophet, and was approved of by him, ver. 1, 2, 3. and who was that night sent by the Lord to David, to acquaint him, that as he had for many years dwelt in a tent, and had never given directions to the tribes of Israel, and the rulers of them, to build him an house, so neither should David build him one; but his son that would succeed him in the throne should; and also observes to him the many great things he had done for him, and promises him more, and particularly the establishment of his throne and kingdom for ever, in which he has respect to the Messiah, that should spring from him, ver. 4—17. Then follows a prayer of David, in which he expresses the sense he had of the greatness and goodness of God, and of his own unworthiness to receive such favours from him he had, returns him thanks for the promises he had made, and prays for the performance of them, ver. 18—29.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when the king sat in his house*, &c.] Which Hiram's servants had built for him, having no occasion to go out to war: *and the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies*; both at home and abroad; though this rest and peace did not last long; for the next chapter gives an account of several people he was engaged in war with.

Ver. 2. *That the king said unto Nathan the prophet*, &c.] This is the first time this prophet is made mention of, but often afterwards, yet who he was, and from whence he came, is not known; he appears to be a man of great piety and prudence, as well as endowed with a prophetic spirit, and was very familiar with David, and perhaps dwelt in his palace; being a man on all accounts fit for conversation with princes, to whom David imparted what he had been meditating upon in his heart. The Jews have a tradition [t] that he was the same with Jonathan the son of Shimea, the brother of David, 2 Sam. xxi. 21. which is not very likely: *see now, I dwell in an house of cedar*; made of the cedars of Lebanon; see what a spacious palace it is: *but the ark of God dwelleth within curtains*; in a tabernacle within curtains, as the Targum; not the tabernacle of Moses, for that was at Gibeon, 1 Chron. xxi. 29. but that which David had made for it, which consisted of curtains that were drawn around it, ch. vi. 17. It gave him a concern that he should dwell in so magnificent a palace, and the ark of God should have so mean an habitation; wherefore it was upon his mind to build a grand edifice for it, and this he suggested hereby to Nathan, and so he understood him, as appears by what follows; and the rather he was led to such a thought, being now at rest and in peace; for then it was an house was to be built for God, in which he would cause his name to dwell, as David might easily learn from Deut. xii. 9, 10, 11. and who so proper to set forward such a work as a king, and he when at rest from his enemies?

Ver. 3. *And Nathan said to the king, go, do all that is in thine heart*, &c.] He perceived it was in his heart to build an house for God; he knew an house was to be built at one time or another, by some person or another; he knew it was a good work, and fit for a king to do, and might think this was a proper time as any, he being at leisure, and therefore encouraged him to it: but inasmuch as the time when and the person by whom this was to be built were not pointed out particularly in the word of God, David and he should have consulted the Lord about it; in this they erred, and for which they were tacitly reproved; for, as the event shews, this was not the time when, nor David the person by whom, it was to be built. Nathan said this as a pious and good man, in a private capacity, not as a prophet, or under a spirit of prophecy; for prophets did not always speak under such an influence, but, as private men, said some things ignorantly and through mistake; see 1 Sam. xvi. 6. 2 Kings iv. 27. *for the Lord is with thee*; prospering and succeeding him in all he undertook, giving him rest from all his enemies; and he might think that this motion he now made of building an house was from the Lord; the Targum is, "the Word of the Lord shall be for thine help," or thine helper, and shall assist thee in this work. David being thus encouraged by the prophet, his thoughts were more employed about it, and he was resolute and eager to perform it; and now it was he penned the 132d psalm, in which he expresses his oath and vow to find a place to build on.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass that night*, &c.] The same night following the day in which David and Nathan had had the above conversation, that neither of them might continue long in their error and mistake, and especially lest David, in his great zeal and warm affection, should take an hasty and improper step: *that the word of the Lord came unto Nathan*; the word of prophecy, as the Targum; before he was not under a prophetic influence, but spoke in his own words, and had not the word of God; but now it came to him: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 5. *Go and tell my servant David*, &c.] The Lord speaks very honourably and respectfully of him, owns him to be his servant in other things, though he did not choose to employ him in this; and though he was not the person, nor this the time, to build the house of the Lord, yet, as he shewed a good will towards it, so far it was acceptable to God: *thus saith the Lord, shalt thou build me an house for me to dwell in?* no, thou shalt not, as appears from 1 Chron. xvii. 4. which seems to be expressed with much spirit, and some degree of resentment, to resolve on such a work, without seeking to know his mind in it. Eupolemus [a], an Heathen, confirms this account, only instead of a

[t] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 79. M. & in lib. Paralipom. fol. 89. B. F.

[a] Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 9. c. 30, p. 447.

prophet he speaks of an angel, whose name he says was Dia-nathan, who, when David was desirous of building a temple for God, and very anxious to be shewn the place where the altar was to be erected, this angel appeared to him; and, though he shewed him the place for the altar, forbad him building it, because he was polluted with human blood, and had been engaged in wars many years, and bid him leave the building of it to his son.

Ver. 6. *Whereas I have not dwelt in* any *house*, &c.] Fixed, stated, habitation: *since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day;* a space of 5 or 600 years, though he might before: *but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle;* moving from place to place while in the wilderness, and since in the land of Canaan, first at Gilgal, then at Shiloh, afterwards at Nob, and now at Gibeon. *Tent* and *tabernacle* are distinguished, though they were but one building and habitation; the tent was the curtains of goats' hair, and the tabernacle the linen curtains, see Exod. xxvi. 1, 6, 11, 12, 13. In 1 Chron. xvii. 5. it is *from tent to tent, and from* one *tabernacle* to another; which does not intend variety of tabernacles, but change of place.

Ver. 7. *In all* the places *wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel*, &c.] Those mentioned in the note on the preceding verse: *spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel;* or rather the sceptres of Israel; so the word is rendered, Gen. xlix. 10. the sceptre-bearers, rulers, and governors, whose custom was to carry a sceptre in their hands, as Ben Melech observes; and so in a parallel text, 1 Chron. xvii. 6. it is, *to any of the judges of Israel;* any of those from the times of Moses and Joshua to the times of Saul and David, and this is confirmed by what follows: *whom I commanded to feed my people Israel;* that is, to rule and govern them, protect and defend them, which cannot be said of the tribes, but of the rulers of them; and the Lord asks this question, whether ever he had said a word to any of those, in all that space of time, expressing any thing of this kind: *why build ye not me an house of cedar?* they never were bid to do it, or expostulated with why they did not, or ever reproved for not doing it; therefore why should David think of doing it?

Ver. 8. *Now therefore so shalt thou say unto my servant David*, &c.] For it was taken well at his hands, in part, that it was in his heart, and he had a desire to build an house for God, though he was wrong in determining upon it without seeking the Lord; and lest he should be discouraged by the prohibition of him from building, the following things are observed to assure him it was not from disregard unto him, or displeasure at him, that he would not be employed in this service; since the Lord had given sufficient tokens of his favour to him, and with which he should be content, as having honour enough done him; it was enough that God had raised him up from a low estate to great grandeur and dignity: *thus saith the Lord of hosts, I took thee from the sheepcote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel;* for that was his employment, to keep his father's sheep, before he was taken into Saul's court, and married his daughter, when after his death he came to have the crown of Israel: now this is said, not to upbraid him with his former meanness, but to observe the goodness of God unto him, and what reason he had for thankfulness, and to look upon himself as a favourite of God, who of a keeper of sheep was made a shepherd of men, to rule and feed them; so Cyrus is called a shepherd, Isa. xliv. 28. and Agamemnon, in Homer [w], is called *the shepherd of the people.*

Ver. 9. *And I was with thee whithersoever thou wentest*, &c.] When he went against Goliath, when he went forth against the Philistines, when in Saul's court, when he fled from Saul, and was obliged to go to various places, God was with him protecting and preserving him, prospering and succeeding him every where, and in every thing: *and have cut off all thine enemies out of thy sight:* as Saul, and others in the land of Israel, and the Philistines, and other enemies round about him, so that he had rest from them all: *and have made thee a great name, like unto the name of the great* men *that* are *in the earth;* a name for a mighty king, warrior, and conqueror, such as some mighty kings and great men of the earth had obtained, and such fame, being made king over all Israel; and his success against the Jebusites had got him a name, as well as former victories he had been favoured with; on account of all which his name and fame had been spread abroad in the world, and he was reckoned as one of the greatest princes in it.

Ver. 10. *(Moreover, I will appoint a place for my people Israel*, &c.] The land of Canaan: this the Lord had of old appointed to them, and had introduced them into and settled them in it, but not entirely and alone; in many places the Canaanites had inhabited; but now they should be expelled, and the Israelites should have the place to themselves: *and will plant them;* so that they shall take root and flourish, and continue: *that they may dwell in a place of their own;* and not as they dwelt in Egypt, in a land that was not theirs; or *under themselves* [x], under their own rulers and governors: *and move no more;* as they did in the times of the judges, when, sinning against God, they were often delivered into their enemies' hands, and carried captives: *neither shall the children of wickedness afflict them any more, as before-time;* when in Egypt, and in the times of the judges; all which is supposed, provided they did not depart from the Lord, but abode by his word, worship, and ordinances, and obeyed his will; for it was by their obedience they held their tenure of the land of Canaan, see Isa. i. 19. or all this may respect future times, when they shall be converted to the Messiah, and return to their own land, and ever continue in it, and never more be harassed and distressed, Jer. xxxii. 41. Ezek. xxxvii. 25.

Ver. 11. *And as since the time that I commanded judges* to be *over my people Israel*, &c.] Before the time the judges were raised they were greatly afflicted by one nation or another around them, and between judge and judge, but now they should be no more so; here the parenthesis should end: *and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies;)* this belongs

[w] Iliad. 2.

[x] יתחתי, sub se, Montanus.

to David personally, and intends the same as in ver. 1. *also the Lord telleth thee, that he will make thee an house:* not only build up his family, and make that numerous, but establish the house of his kingdom, as the Targum; that whereas he was desirous of building an house for God, God would build up an house for him; which would be a clear proof, that though he did not think fit to make use of him in the building of his house, yet he was not cast out of his favour, nor was it to be so interpreted by himself or others.

Ver. 12. *And when thy days be fulfilled,* &c.] The days of his life, which were appointed by the Lord for him to live, and when he had filled up the common term of man's life, as he exactly did; for he lived just 70 years, see ch. v. 4. Psal. xc. 10. *and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers;* die and be buried; for this is a phrase expressive of death, and the grave the common portion of men: *I will set up thy seed after thee;* sons to succeed in the kingdom, as they did for the space of 500 years; though here it respects one particular seed or son, even Solomon, as appears by what follows: *which shall proceed out of thy bowels;* be begotten by him, and born unto him, and has regard to a future son of his not yet born; not Absalom nor Adonijah, nor any of the rest born in Hebron were to succeed him in the kingdom, but one as yet unborn: *and I will establish his kingdom;* so that he shall have a long and happy reign, as Solomon had.

Ver. 13. *He shall build an house for my name,* &c.] For the honour of it, for the worship and service of God, as it is well known Solomon did; and so his antitype the Messiah, Zech. vi. 12, 13. *and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever;* that is, for a long time. Solomon's reign was 40 years, and the kingdom of Judah continued in his posterity until the Babylonish captivity, and a prince that descended from him was the ruler of the people when they returned: this has its fulfilment more eminently in Christ, who was of his seed, to whom God has given *the throne of his father David,* and who *shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever,* Luke i. 32, 33.

Ver. 14. *I will be his father, and he shall be my son,* &c.] That is, I will be as kind unto him, and careful of him, as a father of a son; or he shall be, and appear to be my son, by adopting grace, as no doubt Solomon was, notwithstanding all his failings. This is applied to Christ, the antitypical Solomon, who was, in an higher sense, the son of God, even by natural and eternal generation; see Heb. i. 5. *if he commit iniquity;* which cannot be supposed of Christ; for though he was made sin by imputation, he neither knew nor did any, but may be supposed of his spiritual offspring, whom he represented as an head and surety, as of Solomon, who committed many sins and transgressions: *I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men;* either with men themselves, as Hadad the Edomite, Rezon the son of Eliadah, and Jeroboam the son of Nebat, by all whom he was afflicted and distressed, after he fell into idolatry, 2 Kings xi. or with such rods and stripes as men correct their children with, not to destroy them, but to chastise them for their good; and so the phrases denote humane, kind, gentle, moderate corrections given in love, and which answer some good purposes.

Ver. 15. *But my mercy shall not depart away from him,* &c.] Which is not to be understood of special mercy and grace, though it is true of these with respect to Solomon, and so to all the adopted children of God, see Psal. lxxxix. 32, 33. but then this here designs such mercy as may be taken away from another, and as it was from Saul, as it follows: *as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee;* and therefore must be understood of his mercy and kindness, in giving him a kingdom, and setting him on the throne; this should not be taken away from him, as it was from Saul, whom God rejected from being king; not him personally, but his posterity; but so the Lord would not do, nor did he, to Solomon, in whose posterity the kingdom of Judah continued to the Babylonish captivity.

Ver. 16. *And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee,* &c.] That is, both his family and his government should be perpetuated, or he should always have one of his family to sit upon his throne; the accomplishment of which, in the beginning of it, he saw with his eyes in his son Solomon, and with an eye of faith in his greater son the Messiah, in whom only these words will have their complete fulfilment; and so Abarbinel says this vision or prophecy is explained by some of the days of the Messiah; and this house and kingdom, in 1 Chron. xvii. 14. are called by the Lord *my* house, and *my* kingdom: *thy throne shall be established for ever;* which is a repetition of the same in other words for the confirmation of it.

Ver. 17. *According to all these words, and according to all this vision,* &c.] All the words of this prophecy, just as they were delivered to Nathan, were exactly expressed by him; he did not vary from them in the least, but with the greatest faithfulness related them; *so did Nathan speak unto David;* though in the part which related to the history of the house of God, it was contrary to the advice which he had given; but he was not ashamed to retract his sense, when he was made acquainted with the mind of God.

Ver. 18. *Then went King David in,* &c.] Into the tabernacle where the ark was, which he had prepared for it, ch. vi. 17. *and sat before the Lord;* before the ark, the symbol of his presence, and prayed, and gave thanks, as follows: from whence it appears that a sitting posture was sometimes used in prayer, of which we have other instances, Exod. xvii. 11, 12. 1 Kings xix. 4. It is said [y] that Pythagoras, and also Numa, ordered that worshippers should sit. So that this act of devotion is not to be limited to any particular posture, though it seems most agreeable either to stand or kneel; and the Jews look upon this to be a peculiar case, and infer from hence that none were allowed to sit in the court but the kings of the house of Judah [z]; and some of them [a] will not allow that to them, since the seraphim above are even said to stand, Isa. vi. 2, and suppose the meaning of this to be only that David supported himself in the court; and some render the

[y] Vid. D. Herbert. de Cherbury de Relig. Gent. c. 7. p. 65.

[z] T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 69. 2. Maimon & Bartenor. in Misn. Yoma, c. 7. sect. 1.

[a] Midrash in Abarbinel in loc.

words, *he remained before the Lord* [b]; he continued in meditation, prayer, and thanksgiving, and such-like acts of devotion, for a considerable time; so the Targum, in 1 Chron. xvii. 16. "King David came and continued "in prayer before the Lord:" *and he said, who am I, O Lord God?* a creature, a sinful creature, a mean and unworthy one, undeserving of a place in the house of God, and of access unto him, and to receive any favour from him, less than the least of all saints, less than the least of all mercies: *and what is my house:* or family of which he was, the family of Jesse; for though it sprung from a prince in Israel, yet was but low and mean, in comparison of some others, and especially unworthy of the regard of the great God: *that thou hast brought me hitherto?* to such grandeur and dignity, as to be king over all Israel and Judah, to have all his enemies subdued under him, and to be at peace and rest from them, and established in his kingdom; and which he signifies the Lord alone had brought him to, through many difficulties and tribulations, and which he could never have attained unto by his own wisdom and power, nor by the assistance of his friends; it was all the Lord's doing, and wondrous in his eyes.

Ver. 19. *And this was yet a small thing in thy sight, O Lord God,* &c.] This of raising him to the throne, and settling him on it, was but a small thing in comparison of what he promised to do for him and his: *but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come:* since he had not only spoken of a son that should succeed him in the kingdom, but that he would make him an house, and establish his kingdom; yea, that the throne of his kingdom should be established for ever, that a race of kings should spring from him, and especially the King Messiah, of whose kingdom there would be no end; and so the Targum, "thou hast spoken of the house of thy servant unto "the world to come," a phrase often used by the Jews for the times of the Messiah; see Heb. ii. 5. and so Abarbinel thinks this clause has respect to Messiah the son of David: *and is this the manner of man, O Lord God?* to bestow their favours on their inferiors, persons of no worth and merit, and in a profuse manner? it is not; and yet to one so much below thee, and so undeserving, hast thou most largely and liberally given such great and unmerited mercies: or is it the manner, or customary to deal thus with men mean and abject, though it may with great personages that make a great figure in the world? it is not: and yet I am regarded by thee as if I was one of the greatest monarchs on earth: this sense agrees with the parallel text in 1 Chron. xvii. 17. *and hast regarded me according to the estate of a man of high degree;* or, *this is the law,* or *doctrine of the man* who is *the Lord God* [c]. This doctrine contained in the promise now made respects the seed of the woman, the promised Shiloh, the illustrious man, Jehovah's fellow, the incarnate God, the Messiah, who is Jehovah our righteousness, the true God and eternal life.

Ver. 20. *And what can David say more unto thee,* &c.] In a way of self-abasement, or in thankfulness for such wonderful favours, or in prayer for more and other mercies; he wants words, as if he should say, to express his sense of his own nothingness and unworthiness, and to praise the Lord for all his benefits; and so large are the grants and promises made, that there is no room for him to ask for more: *for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant;* what a sense he has of his own meanness and vileness, what gratitude his heart is filled with, and what his wants and necessities are, which God only can supply, and does abundantly, even more than he is able to ask or think. The Targum is, "and thou hast performed the petition of thy servant, "O Lord God."

Ver. 21. *For thy word's sake,* &c.] For the sake of the promise he had made to him by Samuel, that he should be king, and his kingdom should be established; or for the sake of the Messiah, that should spring from him; the Memra, as the Targum, the essential Word of God; and so the Septuagint version, *because of thy servant,* with which agrees the parallel text in 1 Chron. xvii. 19. *and according to thine own heart;* of his own sovereign good will and pleasure, of his own grace, as the Arabic version, and not according to the merits and deserts of David: *hast thou done all these great things;* in making him king of Israel, and settling the kingdom in his posterity to the times of the Messiah, who should spring from him: *to make thy servant know* them; as he now did by Nathan the prophet, what he and his should enjoy for time to come; so that it is not only a blessing to have favours designed, purposed, and promised, but to have the knowledge of them, to know the things that are freely given of God.

Ver. 22. *Wherefore thou art great, O Lord God,* &c.] In his name, nature, persons, and perfections, purposes, promises, and works: *for there is none like thee;* for his essence and attributes, for his greatness and goodness, for what he is in himself, for what he is to his people, and has done for them: *neither* is there any *God beside thee;* there is but one God, the living and true God, the former and maker of all things; all others are but fictitious and factitious gods, see 1 Sam. ii. 2. *according to all that we have heard with our ears;* concerning what he did in the land of Egypt upon the Egyptians, and in the wilderness, in favour of the Israelites, and in the land of Canaan, by driving out the inhabitants before the people of Israel, and in the times of the judges, in raising them up to deliver his people.

Ver. 23. *And what one nation in the earth* is *like thy people,* even *like Israel,* &c.] For the knowledge and worship of the true God among them, for laws and ordinances given them, and for blessings of goodness bestowed upon them: *whom God went to redeem for a people to himself;* the words are plural, *whom the gods went to redeem;* the Targum is, "they that were sent "from the Lord," meaning Moses and Aaron, of whom Jarchi interprets them, of the first of which it is said, *I have made thee a god unto Pharaoh,* Exod. vii. 1. but Kimchi and R. Isaiah understand it of the true God, only suppose, as the former, that the plural expression is used for the sake of honour and glory; whereas, no

[b] וישב et mansit, Vatablus.

[c] So Luther and Osiander; or this is the delineation of the man who is the Lord, &c. So Hiller. Onomastic. Sacr. p. 447.

doubt, respect is had to the three divine Persons in the Trinity, who were all concerned in the redemption of Israel, see Isa. lxiii. 9, 10, 11, 12. where mention is made of the Lord, and of the Angel of his presence, and of his Holy Spirit, as engaged therein: *and to make him a name*; either to get himself a name, and honour and glory in the world, to shew forth his power and might, as well as his mercy and goodness, or to make his people famous, great, and glorious in the earth: *and to do for you great things and terrible*: as he did in the land of Ham, at the Red sea, and in the wilderness, and in the land of Canaan, great things for his people, and terrible ones to their enemies: *for thy land*: which is either spoken to God, whose was the land of Israel, and which he had chosen to dwell in, and had given to his people; or else to Israel, to whom the grant of this land was made, and who were put into the possession of it: *before thy people which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt*: that is, the great and terrible things were done in their sight, when they were redeemed from the bondage of Egypt, see Psal. lxxviii. 12. from *the nations, and their gods?* meaning, that they were redeemed not only from Egypt, but the nations of the Canaanites were driven out before them; nor could their idols save them, but destruction came upon them as upon the gods of the Egyptians: some leave out the supplement *from*, and interpret this of the persons redeemed, even of the nations and tribes of Israel, and their great men, their rulers and civil magistrates, sometimes called gods.

Ver. 24. *For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel* to be *a people unto thee for ever*, &c.] So long as they were obedient to him, and observed his laws and statutes, and abode by his worship and ordinances, otherwise he would write a *lo-ammi* on them, as he has; *and thou, Lord, art become their God*; their covenant-God, they having avouched him to be their God, and he having avouched them to be his people, Deut. xxvi. 17, 18.

Ver. 25. *And now, O Lord God*, &c.] From confessions of unworthiness, and of the goodness of God, and a recital of favours conferred on him and the people of Israel, David proceeds to petitions: *the word that thou hast spoken concerning thy servant, and concerning his house, establish it for ever*; he prays for the sure performance of the promise of God respecting himself and his family, and the stability and perpetual continuance of the kingdom in it, and has, no doubt, a special regard to the Messiah, the promised seed that should spring from him: *and do as thou hast said*; for though God had purposed and promised to do those several things, and would do them, yet it was expected by him, and it was right in David to pray for the performance of them; see Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

Ver. 26. *And let thy name be magnified for ever*, &c.] David desired the performance of the above things not so much for his own sake, and for the sake of his family, as for the glory of God; his great concern was, that God might be magnified, and his greatness displayed, in making him and his family great; and particularly that he might be magnified and glorified in that famous son of his, the Messiah, as he has been, John xiii. 31, 32. and by all his people in succeeding ages: *saying, the Lord of hosts is the God over Israel*; the Lord of armies above and below, is God over all, and in a special and peculiar manner God over Israel, literal and spiritual, that takes care of them, supplies, protects, and defends them: *and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee*; as he had promised, ver. 16.

Ver. 27. *For thou, O Lord of hosts, God of Israel*, &c.] As he is called in the preceding verse: *hast revealed to thy servant*; which he otherwise could not have known: *saying, I will build thee an house*; see ver. 11. *therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this prayer unto thee*; found his heart disposed to this service, or found freedom and boldness in him to put up this prayer to God; what encouraged and emboldened him to do it was the gracious promise of God, that he would build up his family, and establish his kingdom; or otherwise he could not have taken such liberty, and used such boldness with God in prayer, as to have requested it of him.

Ver. 28. *And now, O Lord God, thou* art *that God*, &c.] Who is the Lord of hosts, and the God of Israel, that has promised and is able to perform, and is faithful to his promise: *and thy words be true*; are truly, punctually, and faithfully performed, never fail: *and thou hast promised this goodness unto thy servant*; concerning building and establishing his house. David repeats this promise as being greatly affected with it, and fully assured of the performance of it.

Ver. 29. *Now therefore let it please thee to bless the house of thy servant*, &c.] Not according to the merits of him or his family, but according to the sovereign will and pleasure of God; the Targum is, *begin and bless*; let the promised blessings begin to descend, that there may be some appearance of the performance of the promise, which may give encouragement that the whole will be fulfilled: *that it may continue for ever before thee*; under his care and protection: *for thou, O Lord God, hast spoken* it; whose words never fall to the ground, but have a sure accomplishment: *and with thy blessing let the house of thy servant be blessed for ever*; even both with temporal and spiritual blessedness.

CHAP. VIII.

THIS chapter gives a relation of the wars of David with his enemies, and his victories over them, particularly the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, and of the spoils he took from them, and of the presents made to him by others, ver. 1—14. and of his righteous administration of government, and of the principal officers in his court and camp, ver. 15—18.

Ver. 1. *And after this it came to pass*, &c.] After David had rest from his enemies for a time, and after the conversation he had had with Nathan about building the house of God, and after the message sent to

him from the Lord by that prophet, forbidding him to build, and David's prayer to the Lord upon it, the following events happened; and which are recorded to shew that David's rest from his enemies did not last long, and that he had other work to do than to build the house of God: *that David smote the Philistines, and subdued them*: these had been long and implacable enemies of Israel; Samson began to weaken them in his days; a war was waged between them and Israel in the times of Samuel and Saul, and the battle sometimes went on one side and sometimes on the other: but now David made an entire conquest of them: before they had used to come into the land of Israel, and there fight with Israel, but now David entered into their land, and took it from them: *and David took Metheg-ammah out of the hands of the Philistines*: the name of a province in Palestine, and from the parallel place in 1 Chron. xviii. 1, it appears to be Gath, and its adjacent towns; but why that was called the bridle of Ammah, or the bridle of a cubit, as it may be rendered, is not easy to say. The conjecture of Kimchi is, that there was a pool or river of water, so Ammah is thought to signify; and Aquila renders it a water-course, which passed through the city, having been brought from without it into it, the communication of which from place to place it may be David cut off, by stopping or turning its stream; but interpreters more generally suppose that Gath was built upon an hill called Ammah, see 2 Sam. ii. 24. thought to be the same with the Amgaris of Pliny [d], though that is sometimes read Angaris, a mountain he places in Palestine; and that it was called Metheg, a bridle, because being a frontier city, and being very strong and powerful, erected into a kingdom, it was a curb and bridle upon the Israelites; but now David taking it out of their hands, opened his way for the more easy subduing the rest of their country: or the word may be rendered Metheg and her mother, *i. e.* Gath, the metropolis, since that and her daughters, or towns, are said to be taken, 1 Chron. xviii. 1. and Metheg might be one of them.

Ver. 2. *And he smote Moab, &c.*] He next went against that, and invaded it, the people of it being always troublesome and distressing to the children of Israel: and though the king of it had shewn some favour to David, yet it was when he considered him as an enemy to Saul, and Saul to him; but things having taken a different turn, his and his people's enmity against David and his people appeared; wherefore he went and fought them, and made them his subjects, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy of Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 17. as it referred to David: *and measured them with a line*; either their country and fields, to distribute among his people, or rather the soldiers he took prisoners; which, as Procopius Gazeus says, were so numerous that they could not be told, and therefore they were ordered to lie prostrate on the ground, and they were measured with a line, as it follows: *casting them down to the ground*; or ordering them to lie down; though some understand this of casting down their cities, towers, and strong holds, and levelling them with the ground: *even with two lines measured he*; with one, so it may be supplied, as the Vulgate Latin, *to put to death, and with one full line, to keep alive*; that is, in measuring them with his lines, he divided them into two parts, one he put to death, and the other, the full line, which contained the most, he saved alive; though it seems according to our version, and so most understand it, that David slew two thirds, and saved one, and so Josephus [e]. This must be understood of the army of the Moabites that fell into his hands, so Josephus, who persisted and refused to submit, not of all the inhabitants of the land. The Jews say [f], that the reason of this severe treatment of them was because they slew the father, and mother and brethren of David, whom he left to the care and custody of the king of Moab, when he fled from Saul, see 1 Sam. xxii. 3. since after that they are heard no more of; though it should rather be imputed to their enmity against the people of Israel. The phrase of *meting out the valley of Succoth* seems to be an allusion to this fact, Psal. lx. 6. the psalm being written on occasion of the victories here related: *and so the Moabites became David's servants*; the inhabitants of the land who were left in it, perhaps that part of the soldiers preserved alive were brought home captives: and *brought gifts*; paid a yearly tribute to King David, as they afterwards did to Solomon and to Rehoboam, until the revolt of the ten tribes, and then they paid it unto the kings of Israel, to the times of Ahab, see 2 Kings iii. 4, 5. though these gifts may be distinct from, and besides the tribute paid, which is supposed in their being servants, see 2 Chron. xvii. 11. Thus the Arabians [g] carried gifts to the king of Persia besides tribute.

Ver. 3. *And David also smote Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, &c.*] Called sometimes Aram-zobah, and was a part of Syria, as its name shews. Benjamin of Tudela [h] takes it to be the same with Haleb or Aleppo; Josephus [i] calls it Sophene; but that is placed by Ptolemy [k] beyond the Euphrates; whereas this country must be between that river and the land of Israel, and was contiguous to it, and near Damascus; and it was so near the land of Israel, and being conquered by David, that it became a controversy with the Jews, whether it was not to be reckoned part of it, and in several things they allow it to be equal to it [l]. Rehob was the first king of this part of Syria, and then his son the second and last; he is called Hadarezer in 1 Chron. xviii. 3. the letters D and R being frequently changed in the Hebrew tongue: him David fought with, and overcame, *as he went to recover his border at the river Euphrates*: which some understand of Hadadezer, so Jarchi and Kimchi, who attempted to recover part of his dominions that had been taken by some one or another from him, which lay upon the river Euphrates; or he endeavoured to enlarge his dominions, and carry them as far

[d] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 13.
[e] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 1.
[f] Bemidbar Rabba, l. 14. fol. 212. 1.
[g] Herodot. Thalia, sive, l. 3. c. 97.
[h] Itinerar. p. 59.
[i] Ut supra.
[k] Geograph. l. 5. c. 13.
[l] T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 8. 1. 2. Misn. Demai, c. 6. sect. 11. & Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

as the river, and establish the borders of them; and whilst he was doing this, or attempting it, David fell upon him, and routed him: or rather this refers to David, who considering that the ancient border of the land of Israel, as given to Abraham, reached to the river Euphrates, Gen. xv. 18. he set out on an expedition to recover this border, and whereas the country of this king lay in his way, he invaded that; upon which Hadadezer rose up against him, and was conquered by him, and by this means the border was recovered to the kingdom of Israel, and reached so far, as is plain it did in Solomon's time, 1 Kings iv. 21—24.

Ver. 4. *And David took from him* 1,000 chariots, *and* 700 *horsemen*, &c.] *Chariots* are not in the text here, it is only 1,700 *horsemen*; but it is supplied from 1 Chron. xviii. 4. where the word is expressly mentioned, and there the horsemen are said to be 7,000, as in the Septuagint version here, and in Josephus[m]; which may be reconciled by observing, with Kimchi and Abarbinel, that here the chief officers are meant, there all the chariots and horsemen that were under their command are mentioned, which together made up that large number; or else here are meant the ranks and companies of horse David took, which were 700; and these having ten in a company or rank, made 7,000; and there the complement of soldiers in those companies and ranks are intended: *and* 20,000 *footmen*: the same as in 1 Chron. xviii. 4. and so in Josephus[n]: *and David houghed all the chariot*-horses; or hamstringed them, as Joshua was ordered to do with respect to the Canaanites, Josh. xi. 6. he did not kill them, which might seem cruel and unmerciful to the brute creatures, but hamstringed them, that they might be useless for war; and the reason of it was, that horses might not be multiplied in Israel for that purpose, that so their trust and confidence might not be placed in them; see Deut. xvii. 16. *but reserved of them for an hundred chariots*; for his own use, not for war, but for grandeur; which accounts in some measure for the number of chariots and horses Solomon had, 1 Kings iv. 26. 2 Chron. i. 14. the number of horses reserved is supposed to be 400, four horses being used in a chariot, which Jarchi gathers from 2 Chron. i. 17.

Ver. 5. *And when the Syrians of Damascus came to succour Hadadezer king of Zobah*, &c.] These seem to have had no king at this time, or, if they had, Hadadezer was their king, which is not improbable; and Nicholas of Damascus[o], an Heathen writer, is clear for it, whom he calls Adad, who, he says, reigned over Damascus, and the other Syria without Phœnicia, who made war with David king of Judea, and was routed by him at Euphrates: and he seems to be the first king of Damascus, which he joined to the kingdom of Zobah, and all the kings of Damascus afterwards were called by the same name: though Josephus[p], who also speaks of Adad being king of Damascus and of the Syrians, yet makes him different from this Hadadezer, to whose assistance he says he came: *David slew of the Syrians* 22,000 *men*; that is, of the Syrians of Damascus.

Ver. 6. *Then David put garrisons in Syria of Damascus*, &c.] Which was Cœle-Syria, and lay between Libanus and Antilibanus, the chief city of which was Damascus; which Curtius[q] calls Damascus of Syria, being the head of it, Isa. vii. 8. in the principal places of which he put garrisons of soldiers to keep the country in subjection to him; or he put commanders or governors, as the Targum, in the chief cities, and so Ben Gersom and R. Isaiah interpret it: *and the Syrians became servants to David, and brought gifts*; or paid him tribute by way of homage, acknowledging themselves his subjects: *and the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went*; he covered his head in the day of battle, and saved him from the hurtful sword.

Ver. 7. *And David took the shields of gold that were on the servants of Hadadezer*, &c.] That were found with them, which they had in their hands; these must be supposed to be with the principal officers of his army; or golden chains, as Aquila, or golden bracelets on their arms, as the Septuagint; the Syriac version is *quivers of gold*, such as they put arrows into, and so Jarchi and R. Isaiah understand it of such, and refer to Jer. li. 11. and so Josephus[r]: *and brought them to Jerusalem*: where they were laid up, and converted to the use of the sanctuary Solomon built; see Cant. iv. 4.

Ver. 8. *And from Betah, and from Berothai, cities of Hadadezer*, &c.] Which, in 1 Chron. xviii. 8. are called Tibhath and Chun, they having different names; or their names might be changed upon this conquest of them, and the one might be the names they went by with the Syrians, and the other the Israelites called them by; the latter is the same with Berothah in Ezek. xlvii. 16. and the Barathena of Ptolemy[s], placed by him near Mesopotamia; in the Arabic version of 1 Chron. xviii. they are called Emesa and Baalbec, the former was a city of Cœle-Syria, the latter was at the foot of Mount Lebanon; see the note on Amos i. 5. *King David took exceeding much brass*; whereby he was furnished and able to give the large quantity he did for the service of the temple, 1 Chron. xxix. 7. The Septuagint version adds here what is expressed in 1 Chron. xviii. 8. "wherewith Solomon "made the brazen sea, and the pillars, and the lavers, "and all the vessels."

Ver. 9. *When Toi king of Hamath*, &c.] Which was another small kingdom in Syria, perhaps lately erected to defend themselves against Hadadezer, and this the first king of it, at least the first we hear of; his name is Tou in 1 Chron. xviii. 9. where in the Targum he is called king of Antioch. Hameth lay to the north of the land of Canaan; see Numb. xxxiv. 8. and the note there: it is said[t] to be three days' journey from Tripoli, and that it stands in the mid-way to Aleppo, on a very goodly plain, replenished with corn and cotton-wool, but much ruinated, and falls more and more to decay: at this day (says my author, who travelled in those parts in the beginning of the last century) there is scarce one half of the wall standing, which hath been very fair and strong. The king of this place *heard that David had smitten all the host of Hadadezer*:

[m] Ut supra.
[n] Ut supra.
[o] Apud Joseph. ib. sect. 2.
[p] Ibid.

[q] Hist. l. 3. c. 8.
[r] Ut supra, sect. 3.
[s] Geograph. l. 5. c. 19.
[t] Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 6.

the news of which soon reached him, he being in the neighbourhood.

Ver. 10. *Then Toi sent Joram his son unto King David,* &c.] Who is called Hadoram in 1 Chron. xviii. 10. though the Syriac and Arabic versions read Joram there: *to salute him:* to inquire of his welfare after his fatigue in the battles he had had with the Moabites and Syrians, and to wish him all happiness and prosperity for the future: *and to bless him;* to congratulate him on his victory, and to wish him success in all afterwars he might be engaged in; and particularly to give him thanks for delivering him from so great an enemy as Hadadezer had been to him, as also to bring a present to him, which is sometimes called a blessing; see Gen. xxxiii. 11. *because he had fought against Hadadezer, and smitten him;* that is, David had, which had endeared him to Toi: *for Hadadezer had wars with Toi;* was an enemy of his, sought to take his kingdom from him, and had had many battles with him; and though he could not conquer him, he sadly harassed him, being too mighty for him: *and Joram brought with him vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and vessels of brass;* as a present to David, in gratitude for his deliverance from his enemy by him, and as a token of his homage and subjection to him; at least as a sign that he put himself under his protection, and desired to be his friend and ally. The word *Joram,* though not in the Hebrew text, is rightly supplied; for none else can be supposed to bring the present.

Ver. 11. *Which also King David did dedicate unto the Lord,* &c.] He devoted it to sacred uses, particularly to the building of the house of the Lord, as he also had the gold and the brass he took from Hadadezer: *together with the silver and the gold he had dedicated of all nations which he subdued;* who are after particularly mentioned; he did not convert the spoils he took to his own use, but observed the law God gave to the kings of Israel, that they should not greatly multiply to themselves silver and gold, Deut. xvii. 17. He set it apart, and laid it up for the service of the sanctuary; and this accounts for the abundance of gold, silver, and brass, which David had amassed together, and left to his son Solomon to build the temple with; see 1 Chron. xxviii. and xxix.

Ver. 12. *Of Syria,* &c.] Of Syria of Damascus, as distinct from Syria-zobah, Hadadezer was king of, after mentioned; this is omitted in 1 Chron. xviii. 11. *and of Moab;* who brought him gifts and presents, and were tributaries to him, ver. 2. *and of the children of Ammon;* who very probably joined the Moabites, and were conquered and spoiled at the same time: *and of the Philistines;* when Metheg-ammah was taken from them, ver. 1. *and of Amalek;* for though we have no account of any war of his with that people, since he was king, yet he doubtless had, and had been victorious and spoiled them; see Psal. lxxxiii. 7. *and of the spoil of Hadadezer, son of Rehob, king of Zobah;* see ver. 3, 4, 5, 6. These conquests of David are confirmed by the testimony of Eupolemus, an Heathen writer, who says that he overcame the Syrians by Euphrates, and the Assyrians in Galadene (or Gilead), and the Phœnicians; that he fought against the Idumeans (or Edomites), the Ammonites, Moabites, Ituræans, Nabathæans, and Nabdæans; also against Syron king of Tyre and Phœnicia; all of whom he obliged to pay tribute to the Jews[a].

Ver. 13. *And David gat him a name,* &c.] Fame and reputation in the several nations of the world for valour and courage, for the many and signal victories that he obtained; the Jewish writers generally refer this to his humanity in burying the dead bodies of his enemies slain in war, which gained him great esteem among all, and even his very enemies; but nothing of that kind is pointed at here, but his conquests: or *he made himself a name;* erected a triumphal arch[b] in memory of his victories: *when he returned from smiting of the Syrians in the valley of salt;* being 18,000 men; in the relation of this fact in different places some difficulties arise, both as to the people smitten, and their numbers, and by whom; in this place they are said to be Syrians, but in 1 Chron. xviii. 12, and in the title of Psal. lx. which was composed on account of these victories, they are called Edomites, and said to be of Edom; which may be reconciled by observing, that the Syrians and Edomites were confederates in this war; and that whereas the latter were auxiliaries to the former, the whole body of the army might be called Syrians, of which 22,000 were slain that were properly Syrians, and 18,000 Edomites, in all 40,000; which was a very great slaughter: or the sense is, that when he had smitten the 22,000 Syrians, and was upon the return, he met with a body of Edomites, who came to the assistance of the Syrians, and he slew 18,000 of them; and the Jews say, as Jarchi observes, there were two battles; and if so, this would remove all the difficulties started; as for the numbers slain, here 18,000, and Psal. lx. 12,000, it is reconciled by observing, that Abishai first began the attack upon the Edomites, and slew 6,000 of them; and then Joab fell upon them, and slew 12,000 more, in all 18,000: in 1 Chron. xviii. 12. this slaughter is ascribed to Abishai, because he began it, even the whole number; and in Psal. lx. to Joab, the 12,000 slain by him, who seconded Abishai; and the whole is here attributed to David, because he was king, under whom Abishai and Joab served as generals; and no less difficult is it to ascertain the place where this slaughter was made, called *the valley of salt;* it seems by our text that it was in Syria, but in other places as if it was in Edom; see 2 Kings xiv. 7. 2 Chron. xxv. 11. but in Edom itself is no such valley to be found, though there is in Syria; one traveller[c] tells us, that in the way from Aleppo to the banks of Euphrates are many villages, among which is one of note, called Tedith, famous for a synod held here by the Jews, in the year from the creation 3498, of which Ezra was the scribe; when were placed the books of the Old Testament in the order in which they now are; and near this town, he says, is the valley of salt, memorable for the victory here recorded: others say[d] about three or four hours' journey from Aleppo is the valley of salt, near which is a salt spring, whose waters running over the place leave, when dried by the sun, a great quantity of excellent salt; this salt is thrown

[a] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.
[b] So Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 78. D.

[c] Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 11.
[d] Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 347.

together in the Gabboul, or salt-house; but by others[e] we are informed, that near about an hour's distance from the city of Tadmor (see 1 Kings ix. 18. 2 Chron. viii. 3, 4.) is to be seen a large valley of salt, affording great quantities thereof; and it is thought that this is more probably the valley of salt mentioned here, than another which lies about four hours from Aleppo, and has sometimes passed for it; and which the above accounts shew: but a modern writer[f], in his account of Palmyra, the same with Tadmor, speaks of a great plain, all covered with salt, from whence the whole country round is supplied. This plain is about a league from Palmyra, and extends itself towards the eastern part of Idumea (or Edom), the capital city of which was Bozra; and indeed this valley being both in Syria, and reaching to the borders of Edom, bids fair to be the valley here spoken of.

Ver. 14. *And he put garrisons in Edom*, &c.] To keep the inhabitants in subjection to him; as their forts and strong holds came into his hands, he placed companies of soldiers in them for the said purpose; or governors, as the Targum, men of his own nation, into whose hands he put their principal cities, who governed them for him, and under him. Jarchi interprets it of officers appointed to collect the tribute he exacted of them: *throughout all Edom put he garrisons*: which is observed to shew that the whole country was brought into subjection to him: *and all they of Edom became David's servants*: and hereby were fulfilled the oracle delivered to Rebekah, and the prophetic blessing of Isaac, Gen. xxv. 23. and xxvii. 29, 40. *and the Lord preserved David whithersoever he went*: see the note on ver. 6.

Ver. 15. *And David reigned over all Israel*, &c.] Not only over Judah, but over all the tribes of Israel, and over the whole land of Canaan, as promised to Abraham, Gen. xv. 18. reaching to the river Euphrates, as Syria did, now conquered by David: *and David executed judgment and justice unto all his people*: when he returned from his wars, he heard and tried all causes impartially, brought before him, and gave sentence according to the law of God, and administered righteous judgment without any respect to persons; all had justice done them that applied unto him, whether high or low, rich or poor; and indeed during his wars he was not negligent of the civil government of his subjects, and the distribution of justice to them by proper officers, in which he was a type of Christ; see Isa. xi. 5, and Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

Ver. 16. *And Joab the son of Zeruiah was over the host*, &c.] Which was not only owing to his relation to David, being his sister's son, but to his promise that whoever smote the Jebusites first should be chief and captain; that is, should have the command of the army under him; this Joab did, and so was entitled to this office, and was put into it, and continued in it, 1 Chron. xi. 6. *and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder*: of memorable events, who kept a diary of whatsoever remarkable happened, which were digested into a chronicle, history, or annals; see Esth. vi. 1. so the Targum, he "was appointed over the memorials;" or book of memorials, as Kimchi interprets it; that is, to take care of it, and see that every thing worthy of notice was inserted in it; or was *remembrancer*[g]; one that put the king in mind what was to be done every day, or in certain cases, and so R. Isaiah explains it, the king's counsellor; some take him to be chancellor, as Luther and others[h].

Ver. 17. *And Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar, were the priests*, &c.] Not high-priests, as Josephus[i] suggests, for there was only one high-priest at a time; indeed there was a sagan, or deputy priest, on occasion; and so Abarbinel says, that Zadok was the high-priest, and Ahimelech his second or deputy; but the truth of the case was this, Abiathar was high-priest only, and continued so until the time of Solomon, when he was thrust out of his office, and Zadok put into it; and Ahimelech his son and Zadok were the principal priests under him, the one of the family of Ithamar, the other of Eleazar; so the Targum on 1 Chron. xviii. 16. calls them *sagans*, or deputies of the high-priesthood. Zadok is mentioned first, though Ahimelech was the son of the present high-priest, because he was in great favour with David, as afterwards with Solomon, in whose days the high-priesthood was translated to him; the family of Eli being now upon the decline, and near being removed from the high-priesthood, as was foretold by Samuel it should: *and Seraiah was the scribe*; or secretary of state; in 1 Chron. xviii. 16. he is called Shausha; he seems to have had two names.

Ver. 18. *And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over both the Cherethites and Pelethites*, &c.] These, according to Josephus[k], were the king's body-guards, and this man is expressly said to be set over his guards, ch. xxiii. 23. and which some think were of the nation of the Philistines, famous for archery, and slinging of stones; and so the Targum renders it, "was appointed "over the archers and slingers;" so *choriti* in Virgil[l] are quivers for arrows; the great use of which in fighting David had observed, and therefore got a select company of these men, partly to teach Israel, and partly to guard himself: but others are of opinion that David would never suffer such as were Heathens to be so near his person, and therefore take them to be Israelites; and so some Jewish writers say they were two families in Israel; which is much better than to interpret them as others do of the sanhedrim, and even of the Urim and Thummim, as in the Targum on 1 Chron. xviii. 17. see the note on Zeph. ii. 5. and it is most probable that they were Israelites, who were David's guards, and consisted of the chiefs that were with him in Philistia, and particularly at Ziklag, which lay on the south of the Cherethites, 1 Sam. xxx. 14. and so had their name from thence; and among the chief of those that came to him at Ziklag there was one named Peleth, from whence might come the Pelethites, and they were all of them archers; see 1 Chron. xii. 2, 3. *and David's sons were chief rulers*; princes, princes of the blood, or *chief about the king*, as in 1 Chron. xviii. 17. they were constant attendants

[e] See Lowthorp's Philosophical Transactions abridged, vol. 3. p. 504.
[f] Halifax apud Calmet's Dictionary in the Word *Salt*.
[g] מזכיר commemorans, Montanus; commemorator, Syr. Ar. memorans, sive reducens in memoriam, Vatablus.
[h] Vid. Beckium in Targ. 1 Chron. xviii. 15.
[i] Ut supra, sect. 4.
[k] Ibid.
[l] Æneid. 10.

at court, waiting on the king, ready at hand to do what he pleased to order; they were the chief ministers, and had the management of the principal affairs at court. Abarbinel thinks that this respects not only David's sons, but Benaiah, and the family of the Cherethites and Pelethites, who had none of them particular posts assigned them, which were settled and known, as those before mentioned had, but were always near at hand, to do whatsoever the king commanded them; and which seems better to agree with the literal order and construction of the words; which are, *and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and Pelethites, and the sons of David, were princes*, or chief rulers; or priests, who according to Gussetius [a] brought the offerings or presents to the king, and did that to him the priests did to the Lord.

CHAP. IX.

THIS chapter relates David's inquiry after the posterity of Saul, whether any were living and where they were, ver. 1—4. and on inquiry being informed of one, he sent for him, and kindly received him, ver. 5—8. and restored to him the land of his fathers, and appointed a person to till it for him, and bring him the fruits of it, and maintained him at his own table, ver. 9—13.

Ver. 1. *And David said*, &c.] To some of his courtiers: *is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul?* which question was put by him, not in order to destroy them, lest they should disturb his government, as was usual with other princes, and especially such who got their crowns by usurpation; but to prevent any suspicion of that kind in the persons he inquired of, he adds, *that I may shew him kindness, for Jonathan's sake?* not for Saul's sake, who had been his implacable enemy, though he had sworn to him that he would not cut off his seed; but for Jonathan's sake, his dear friend, whose memory was precious to him. Some of the Jewish writers have thought, because this follows upon the account given of the officers of David, both in his camp and court, that this question was occasioned by a thought that came into his mind, while he was appointing officers, that if there were any of Saul's family, and especially any descendant of Jonathan, that was fit for any post or office, he would put him into one; but this seems to be a long time after David had settled men in his chief offices; for Mephibosheth, after an inquiry found out, was but five years of age when his father was slain, and so but 12 when David was made king over all Israel, and yet now he was married, and had a young son, ver. 12. so that it was a long time after David was established in the kingdom that he thought of this; which is to be imputed to his being engaged so much in war, and having such a multiplicity of business on his hands.

Ver. 2. *And there was of the house of Saul a servant whose name was Ziba*, &c.] Or there was a servant that belonged to Saul's family; not that any of Saul's family was a servant; and this servant the Jews commonly say was a Canaanitish servant, and who upon the death of his master was not made free, but became the inheritance and possession of his children after him, Lev. xxv. 46. though Josephus [b] says he was made free by Saul: *and when they had called him unto David*: who it seems was now at court, or in Jerusalem, on some account or another; or was in David's service, in some inferior post or another; however, having been a quondam servant of Saul, it was thought he could give the best intelligence of his family, and whether any were living, and therefore was sent for; and when he was come into the king's presence, *the king said unto him, art thou Ziba?* for he had been told before by some of his courtiers what his name was: *and he said, thy servant* is he; or my name is Ziba, and I am at thy command.

Ver. 3. *And the king said, is there not yet any of the house of Saul*; that is, remaining or living: *that I may shew the kindness of God unto him?* great kindness, some large favour or benefit; for the word *God* added to things, as to trees, mountains, &c. serves to set forth the excellency of them; and this kindness is in imitation of God, or such as he had sworn in the presence of God to shew; and that is expressed in the same language, 1 Sam. xx. 14. *and Ziba said unto the king, Jonathan hath yet a son*; a son still living; which is *lame on his feet*; on both his feet, as the Targum; the occasion of which is recorded in ch. iv. 4. see the note there.

Ver. 4. *And the king said unto him, where is he?* &c.] In what part of the land, city, or town, does he dwell? *and Ziba said unto the king, behold, he is in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel*; a descendant of Machir, the son of Manasseh, to whom the land of Gilead was given, which lay on the other side Jordan: *in Lodebar*; a place in that country, perhaps the same with Lidbir in Josh. xiii. 26. Here it may be his mother's relations lived, and here he might dwell in obscurity, and lie hid from the knowledge of David; who, it might be feared by his friends, would have dispatched him, had he known where he was. Some take it to be an appellative, and render it, as Abarbinel observes, *without any thing*; as if he was so poor that he had not any thing to support himself with. No mention as yet is made of his name, perhaps because the historian had given it before, ch. iv. 4.

Ver. 5. *Then King David sent*, &c.] Messengers; it may be Ziba, none being more proper than he that knew him, and where he was: *and fetched him out of the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, from Lodebar*; they demanded him in the king's name, and being delivered to them, they brought him from thence to Jerusalem.

Ver. 6. *Now when Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul*, &c.] For that was his name, though sometimes called Merib-baal, 1 Chron. viii. 34. and this was his relation to Jonathan and Saul, the son of

[a] Ebr. Commeat. p. 266.

[b] Ut supra, sect. 5.

the one, and grandson of the other: *was come unto David*: to his court and palace in Jerusalem, being thither brought; for he could not go of himself, being lame: *he fell on his face, and did reverence*; to him as a king, in a civil way, and in the best manner he could, considering that he was lame on his feet: *and David said, Mephibosheth*; is it he? having learnt what his name was, this he expressed with great vehemency and affection, as glad that he had found one of Jonathan's posterity: *and he answered, behold thy servant!* he answered to his name, and owned his subjection to David, and was ready to take the oath of allegiance to him, and give him homage, and serve him in what way he could.

Ver. 7. *And David said unto him, fear not*, &c.] He might observe a dejection in his countenance, a trembling in his limbs, and might discover signs of fear lest David should cut him off, because he was of the seed-royal: *for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake*; whom he loved as his own soul, and to whom he had sworn that he would not cut off his kindness from his house for ever, and now remembering his oath was determined to observe it: *and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father*; his grandfather, such sometimes being called fathers; which David had taken to him, as crown-lands, or in the right of his wife; or as being confiscated by Ish-bosheth's rebellion: *and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually*; he gave him an apartment in the court, a place at his table, admitted him to be a guest with him as long as he should live; which was a very great favour and high honour, and shewed what an unshaken friendship he had for his father, and would maintain with him. This was the kindness of God he meant to shew to him.

Ver. 8. *And he bowed himself*, &c.] In token of gratitude, and as a sign of humility, and of the sense he had of his unworthiness to enjoy such a favour: *and said, what is thy servant, that thou shouldest look on such a dead dog as I am?* one so mean, and base, and worthless; which he might say with respect to the infirmities of his body, the rejection of his family by the Lord, their attainder of high treason for rebellion against David, and the low circumstances he was brought into and now under; though one of the royal family, the son of a prince, and grandson of a king; such was his humility, and the sense he had of his being undeserving of any favour from the king, and says this with admiration and astonishment.

Ver. 9. *Then the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant*, &c.] Who had been his servant: *and said unto him, I have given unto thy master's son*; meaning either, as some, the son of Mephibosheth, Micha after mentioned; or rather Mephibosheth himself, the grandson of Saul, whose servant Ziba had been: *all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house*; all his paternal estate, or what he had acquired, or in any wise belonged to him and his family; which David had in possession, and which he readily and cheerfully delivered up to Mephibosheth, having so great a regard to the memory of his father.

Ver. 10. *Thou therefore, thy sons, and thy servants*, &c.] Which were many, and whose numbers are after given: *shall till the land for him*; manure it, plough it, sow it, and reap it: *and thou shalt bring in the fruits*; the corn, and oil, and wine, the land produces: *that thy master's son may have food to eat*; meaning either Micha, the son of Mephibosheth, since Mephibosheth seems to be distinguished from him, and opposed to him in the next clause; and who would stand in no need of food from any other quarter, being a guest at the king's table continually; or else Mephibosheth, who by this means would have a sufficiency for his son and servants, and in which Ziba's family and servants would have a share: *but Mephibosheth thy master's son shall eat always at my table*; wherefore the land was to be tilled not for him personally, but for his family, and for what uses he should think fit to put the produce of it to: *now Ziba had* 15 *sons and* 20 *servants*; who were enough to cultivate a considerable quantity of land.

Ver. 11. *Then said Ziba unto the king, according to all the king hath commanded his servant, so shall thy servant do*, &c.] Till the land, and bring the fruits of it to Mephibosheth, for the support of his family; he promised very fair, had he been as faithful to his trust: *as for Mephibosheth*, said the king, *he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons*; which is repeated, for the confirmation of it, and to shew that he should be treated with equal respect, and fare as the king's sons themselves did; though the clause *said the king* is not in the original text, and the words are thought by Abarbinel and others to be the words of Ziba continued; who promised to do what the king had ordered, though Mephibosheth had eaten at his table, as one of the king's sons, and needed not any thing, and needed not to eat at the king's table; and if it was his pleasure, he would maintain him out of this estate like the son of a king; but the phrase *my table* seems to be too arrogant for Ziba to say, and rather fits the mouth of David the king.

Ver. 12. *And Mephibosheth had a young son, whose name was Micha*, &c.] What his age was is not said; from him sprung a progeny of several generations, 1 Chron. viii. 34—40. *and all that dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants to Mephibosheth*; his sons and his servants.

Ver. 13. *So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem*, &c.] Either in some apartments in the king's palace, or in some house in the city provided for him; for he returned not to Lodebar, nor to any mansion-house upon the estate of Saul restored unto him: *for he did eat continually at the king's table*; to which he was invited, and he accepted of: *and was lame on both his feet*; or *though* he was[a], yet this was no objection to David, he admitted him notwithstanding his infirmity; nor any obstruction to Mephibosheth, who found ways and means to be carried to the king's table daily.

[a] והוא quamvis esset, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator; so Patrick.

CHAP. X.

THIS chapter gives an account of the ill treatment of David's messengers to the king of Ammon, who were sent to condole the death of his father, and were basely used by him, which David resented, ver. 1—5. which the Ammonites perceiving prepared for war, and got the Syrians to be confederates with them; of which David being informed, sent Joab and Abishai into their country, ver. 6, 7, 8. who divided the army between them, and attacked the Ammonites and Syrians with great courage, and routed them both, and returned to Jerusalem, ver. 9—14. after which the Syrians gathered together again to fight with David, who went out to meet them, and got an entire conquest over them, and made them servants to him, ver. 15—19.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass after this,* &c.] After the wars with the Moabites, Syrians, and Edomites, being friendly with the children of Ammon, David sent an embassy to their king, after related; by which it appears what is said concerning the spoils of the children of Ammon, ch. viii. 12. is by anticipation; for these spoils were not taken until the following war with them, the occasion of which is here told: *that the king of the children of Ammon died;* whose name was Nahash, as is clear from the next verse, and probably might be the same that came against Jabesh-gilead, from whom Saul delivered the inhabitants of that place, 1 Sam. xi. 1. *and Hanun his son reigned in his stead:* who, being his son, was heir to his crown, and succeeded him in his kingdom.

Ver. 2. *Then said David, I will shew kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash,* &c.] Send him a friendly compliment of condolence on the death of his father: *as his father shewed kindness unto me;* when David was persecuted by Saul, he sent him succours, and invited him into his country for protection it may be, and some way or other shewed respect unto him; though not out of real love and friendship to David, but in enmity to Saul, who had defeated him at Jabesh-gilead, and had often wars with him: the Jews say [*] the particular kindness was, that when David left his father, mother, and brethren, with the king of Moab, he slew all but one, who fled to the king of the children of Ammon, and was by him saved alive: *and David sent to comfort him by the hand of his servants for his father;* for the death of his father; to condole the loss of him, which was the custom of kings in friendship and alliance in former times, and still continues: *and David's servants came into the land of the children of Ammon;* even to Rabbah, the metropolis of the nation, and the royal city, where the king kept his court.

Ver. 3. *And the princes of the children of Ammon said to Hanun their lord,* &c.] His nobles and prime ministers, the courtiers that were about him: *thinkest thou that David doth honour thy father, that he hath sent comforters unto thee?* could he imagine that David was sincere, and that he really meant to do honour to the memory of his father, and comfort him under the loss of him, by sending his ambassadors to him on such an errand? there was no reason, they thought, to believe this, since an Israelite was forbidden to seek their peace and prosperity, or ask of it, nor might an Ammonite enter into their congregation unto the tenth generation, Deut. xxiii. 3, 6. and indeed some have thought that David did not do a right thing in sending this embassy, and was justly requited; but it is certain he acted according to the laws of friendship, and was cordial and sincere in what he did, though these courtiers of Hanun put an ill construction on his conduct, their minds being filled with enmity against the Israelites: *hath not David rather sent his servants unto thee to search the city, and to spy it out, and to overthrow it?* to reconnoitre the place, to observe, as they walked about in it, which were the weakest and most defenceless parts of it, and what avenues there were to it, and which were most accessible, that they might the better know how to attack it, and destroy it; these surmises and suspicions they endeavoured to fill the king's head with, to set him against them, and treat them ill.

Ver. 4. *Wherefore Hanun took David's servants,* &c.] His ambassadors: *and shaved off one half of their beards;* that is, he ordered them to be shaved off; than which a greater indignity could not have been well done to them and to David, whom they represented, since the Israelites shaved not their beards, and were very careful of preserving them: for had it been the custom to shave, they might have shaved off the other half, and then they would not have appeared so ridiculous; and with other people it has been reckoned a very great punishment as well could be inflicted, and as great an affront as could well be offered, to mar a man's beard, or shave it off in whole or in part [p]. The Lacedemonians, as Plutarch [q] relates, when any fled from battle, used, by way of reproach, to shave off part of their beards, and let the other part grow long; and with the Indians, as Bishop Patrick observes from an ancient writer, the king used to order the greatest offenders to be shaven, as the heaviest punishment he could inflict upon them; but what comes nearest to the case here is what the same learned commentator quotes from Tavernier, who in his Indian Travels tells us, that the sophi of Persia caused an ambassador of Aurengzeb to have his beard shaved off, telling him he was not worthy to wear a beard, and thereupon commanded it should be shaved off; which affront offered him in the person of his ambassador was most highly resented by Aurengzeb, as this was by David: *and cut off their garments in the middle,* even *to their buttocks;* and as they wore long garments in those countries, without any breeches or drawers under them, those parts by these means were exposed to view which modesty requires should be concealed [r]; so that they must be put to the utmost shame and confusion: *and sent them away;* in this ridiculous manner, scoffing and jeering at them no doubt; that since they came with

[*] Tanchuma apud Jarchium in loc.
[p] Apollon. Vit. Philostrat. l. 7. c. 14.
[q] In Agesilao.
[r] Dimidiasque nates Gallica palla tegit. Martial.

compliments of condolence, it was proper they should appear in the habit of mourners, with their beards shaved, and their garments rent; cutting of garments, and standing in them from morning to night, was a punishment of soldiers with the Romans, when they offended[t].

Ver. 5. *When they told it unto David, &c.*] Not the ambassadors, for they were not yet arrived, but some of their servants, perhaps, they sent before them to acquaint David of the usage they had met with: *he sent to meet them:* he sent men to meet them with proper garments to put on, and to assure them how much he resented the indignity done to them and him, and would avenge it in due and proper time, and to direct them where to go for the present, as follows: *because the men were greatly ashamed:* to proceed on their journey, and come to court in the condition they were: *and the king said:* gave orders by the messengers he sent to them: *tarry at Jericho until your beards be grown, or bud*[v], *and then return:* that is, to Jerusalem; Jericho, though not yet built, might have some cottages at or near the spot on which it had stood, for the convenience of shepherds, and gatherers of fruit, in the plains of it; here the ambassadors were directed to go, it being the first place they came to when they had passed over Jordan, from the country of Ammon; and being a place where there were scarce any inhabitants, or very few, was very proper for them in their present circumstances; and this confirms what is before observed, that it was now the custom of the Israelites not to shave their whole beards; or otherwise it was but shaving off the other half, and being now provided with other clothes, they would have had no need to have stayed at Jericho, but might have proceeded on in their journey.

Ver. 6. *And when the children of Ammon saw that they stank before David, &c.*] Or had made themselves odious to him, as it is rendered in 1 Chron. xix. 6. were abominable to him, that he was incensed against them, and enraged at them, and was determined to be avenged on them for the affront given, of which they had certain information: but instead of seeking to appease him, and give him satisfaction for the affront, *the children of Ammon sent, and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob:* a place near Hamath, Numb. xiii. 21. there was a city of this name in the tribe of Asher, out of which the Canaanites could not be driven, and perhaps now inhabited by Syrians, or by a people so called, Josh. xix. 28. Judg. i. 31. *and the Syrians of Zoba, 20,000 footmen:* that is, out of both places; this place Hadadezer was king of, with whom David had fought before, and beat, and who owed him a grudge on that account, and was ready to assist the Ammonites against him, ch. viii. 3, 4, 5, *and of King Maacah 1,000 men:* that is, of the king of Maacah, which was a place in the tribe of Manasseh, from whence the inhabitants could not be expelled, Josh. xiii. 11, 13. and seems now to have been inhabited by Syrians, and therefore is called Syria-maachah, 1 Chron. xix. 6. *and of Ishtob 12,000 men:* which is thought to be the same with the land of Tob, whither Jephthah fled, and dwelt in it, when ill used by his brethren, Judg. xi. 3, 5. these mercenary soldiers were in all 33,000 men; in 1 Chron. xix. 6, 7, it is said, chariots and horsemen, even 32,000; these were hired with 1,000 talents of silver.

Ver. 7. *And when David heard of it, &c.*] Of the preparation made by the Ammonites to fight with him: *he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men;* he sent out Joab his general, and an army under his command, consisting of men of strength, valour, and courage; or all the host and the mighty men, as Kimchi and Ben Melech, the famous mighty men mentioned in ch. xxiii. 8. he did not think it advisable to wait for the Ammonites, but carried the war into their own country, and, instead of suffering them to invade his dominions, he invaded theirs.

Ver. 8. *And the children of Ammon came out, &c.*] Either out of Rabbah their metropolis, as Josephus[v]; or rather out of Medeba, as it seems from 1 Chron. xix. 7. a city that lay on the borders of their country, and was a frontier town, see Numb. xxi. 30. *and put the battle in array, at the entering in of the gate;* of the city of Medeba; they were first within the city, but, upon the approach of Joab and his army, they came out and drew up in a line of battle at the gate of it: *and the Syrians of Zoba, and of Rehob, and Ishtob, and Maacah, were by themselves in the field;* at some distance from the city, the Ammonites not choosing to trust mercenaries in it; and perhaps they placed these in ambush in the field, to get Joab between two fires, as we now express it.

Ver. 9. *When Joab saw that the front of the battle was against him before and behind, &c.*] Or *the face* of it[w]; armies appeared both before and behind, about to attack him both in front and rear; the Targum is, "and "Joab saw that the warriors, or those that made war, "were strong against him before and behind:" *he chose of all the choice men of Israel;* the most eminent for strength, and valour, and military skill, who had been tried, and were famous for warlike exploits, the flower of the army: *and put them in array against the Syrians;* who might be the strongest party, and the best soldiers; though being but mercenaries, if hard beset, would sooner give way, as he might suppose, upon which the Ammonites would do the same.

Ver. 10. *And the rest of the people he delivered into the hands of Abishai his brother, &c.*] Who was a commander under him, and a very valiant man; and thus, as his enemy had two armies, he divided his into two parts, that he might the better attack them: *that he might put them in array against the children of Ammon:* draw them up in a line, place them rank and file to meet the children of Ammon, and give them battle.

Ver. 11. *And he said, if the Syrians be too strong for me, &c.*] Which he might perceive by Joab's forces giving way, or by some signal agreed on between them: *then thou shalt help me;* detach a part of his army to his support and assistance: *but if the children of Ammon be too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee;* in the same manner.

Ver. 12. *Be of good courage, and let us play the men,*

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[t] Valer. Maxim. l. 2. c. 2.
[v] יצמח germinet, Pagnins, Montanus.

[v] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 6. sect. 2.
[w] פני facies, Pagninus, Montanus.

&c.] This Joab said, not only to encourage Abishai and himself, but in the hearing of the rest of the officers of the army, and of many of the people, to hearten them to the battle; who might be somewhat intimidated with the number of their enemies, and the position they were in, being before and behind them; and therefore he thought proper to make such a speech to them to animate them to fight: *for our people, and for the cities of our God*; that the people of Israel might not be carried captive, and their cities spoiled and plundered; and instead of being cities where the people of God dwelt, and he was worshipped, would, if taken, become the habitations of idolatrous Heathens, and where temples would be erected to idols, and the worship of them; these were the arguments he used to engage them to fight manfully for their country, the liberties and religion of it: *and the Lord do that which seemeth him good*: tacitly suggesting that victory was of the Lord, and that it became them to do their part in fighting courageously, and leave the issue to the Lord, on whom alone success depended.

Ver. 13. *And Joab drew nigh, and the people that were with him, unto the battle against the Syrians*, &c.] Fell upon them, attacked them first, began the battle with them; rightly judging, that if they, being hired soldiers, were closely pressed, they would give way, which would discourage the Ammonites, who depended much upon them; and the fight, according to Josephus [x], lasted some little time, who says, that Joab killed many of them, and obliged the rest to turn their backs and flee, as follows: *and they fled before him*: the Syriac and Arabic versions in this verse, and in all others in this chapter where the word Syrians is used, have Edomites, reading Edom instead of Aram, the letters R and D in the Hebrew tongue being very similar.

Ver. 14. *And when the children of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fled*, &c.] In whom they put great confidence: *then they fled also before Abishai*; without engaging at all with him, as it seems: *and entered into the city*; out of which they came, either Rabbah or Medeba, for their safety: *so Joab returned from the children of Ammon*; did not stay to lay siege to their city, the season of the year not being proper for it, winter drawing near; see ch. xi. 1. *and came to Jerusalem*; in triumph, to report to David the victory he had obtained.

Ver. 15. *And when the Syrians saw that they were smitten before Israel*, &c.] Considered it in their minds, and conversed with one another about it, and fearing what would be the consequence of it: *they gathered themselves together*; not only the forces got together again, that fled before Joab, but all the kings of Syria united their forces together, as appears from ver. 19. supposing that David would avenge himself on them for assisting the Ammonites against him; and therefore judged it advisable to raise a large army, that they might be in a condition to receive him.

Ver. 16. *And Hadarezer sent*, &c.] The same with Hadadezer, ch. viii. 3, who was at the head of this confederacy, and to whom the rest of the kings of Syria were servants, ver. 19. *and brought out the Syrians that were beyond the river*; the river Phrat or Euphrates, as the Targum; so the Arabic version and Josephus [y], who says, that he hired them: *and they came to Helam*; which, according to the same writer, was king of the Syrians beyond Euphrates; but it seems to be the name of a place, where was the general rendezvous of the Syrian army. Junius conjectures that it is the same with the Alamatha of Ptolemy [z], which he places with the Trachonite Arabs near the Euphrates: *and Shobach the captain of the host of Hadarezer went before them*: before the whole combined army, which, according to Josephus [a], consisted of 80,000 foot, and 10,000 horse: this general is called Shophach, 1 Chron. xix. 16. the letters B and P being of the same pronunciation in the Hebrew tongue, as Kimchi observes, though it is there read Shobach, in the Syriac and Arabic versions; he was no doubt a very able, valiant, and skilful general, since he is particularly mentioned by name, and whose name was then famous; the Arabic version calls him a spear-bearer of Hadarezer.

Ver. 17. *And when it was told David*, &c.] What preparations the Syrians were making to fight him, and where they were: *he gathered all Israel together*; all the fighting men in the country: *and passed over Jordan, and came to Helam*: which, according to Bunting [b], was 20 miles from Jerusalem. David seems to have gone himself in person to this war: *and the Syrians set themselves in array against David, and fought with him*; they formed themselves in a line of battle, and attacked him first, being eager to fight, and perhaps confident of victory, because of their numbers.

Ver. 18. *And the Syrians fled before Israel*, &c.] After an obstinate and bloody fight between them: *and David slew the men of 700 chariots of the Syrians*; the word *men* is rightly supplied, for chariots could not be said to be slain, but the men in them; in 1 Chron. xix. 17, they are said to be 7,000, here 700; which may be reconciled by observing, that here the chariots that held the men are numbered, there the number of the men that were in the chariots given, and reckoning ten men in a chariot, 700 chariots held just 7,000 men; though Kimchi takes another way of reconciling the two places, by observing that here only the choicest chariots are mentioned, there all of them, but the former way seems best: *and 40,000 horsemen*; in 1 Chron. xix. 17. it is 40,000 *footmen*, and so Josephus [c]; and the same may be called both horse and foot, because though they might come into the field of battle on horseback, yet might dismount and fight on foot; and so one historian calls them horsemen, and the other footmen; or the whole number of the slain, horse and foot mixed together, were 40,000: Kimchi makes use of another way of removing this difficulty, and which perhaps is the best, that here only the horse are numbered that were slain, and there the foot only, and both true; an equal number of each being slain, in all 80,000, besides the 7,000 in the chariots: *and smote*

[x] Ut supra.
[y] Ut supra, sect. 3.
[z] Geograph. l. 5. c. 15.

[a] Ut supra.
[b] Travels, &c. p. 140, 141.
[c] Ut supra.

Shobach the captain of their host, who died there; of his wounds upon the spot.

Ver. 19. *And when all the kings* that were *servants to Hadarezer*, &c.] That were subject to him, and at his beck and command, at least were hired by him into his service: *saw that they were smitten before Israel:* could not stand their ground against them, being too powerful for them: *they made peace with Israel, and served them;* became tributaries to them, whereby the promise of the land of Canaan made to Abraham and his seed, as reaching to the river Euphrates, had its accomplishment, Gen. xv. 18. *so the Syrians feared to help the children of Ammon any more;* who standing by themselves, they were soon and easily conquered by wid's forces, as recorded in the following chapters.

CHAP. XI.

THIS chapter begins with the destruction of the Ammonites, and the siege of Rabbah their chief city, ver. 1. and enlarges on the sins of David in committing adultery with Bathsheba, ver. 2—5. in contriving to conceal his sin by sending for her husband home from the army, ver. 6—13. in laying a scheme for the death of him by the hand of the Ammonites, ver. 14—25. and in marrying Bathsheba when he was dead, ver. 26, 27.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, that after the year was expired*, &c.] Or at the end of the year, as the Targum, which concluded with the month Adar or February, the spring of the year: *at the time when kings go forth* to battle; in the month Nisan, as the Targum on 1 Chron. xx. 1. adds, the same with Abib, which was the first month of the year, Exod. xii. 2. and xiii. 4. a fit time to go out to war; when, as the Jewish commentators observe, the rains were over, and there were grass in the fields, and fruit on the trees, and corn ripe, and so food for horse and men. This month was called Nisan, as some think [d], from נסים, the military banners then erected; so by the Romans it is called Martius, and by us March, from Mars, the god of war; though some [e] take this to be the month Tisri, answering to part of September, and part of October, when all the fruits of the earth were gathered in, and supposed to be a fit time for war, when the heat of the year was declining: *that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel;* his whole army under Joab as general; in 1 Chron. xx. 1. it is *the power of the army;* the whole body of it: *and they destroyed the children of Ammon;* burnt their cities, and slew the inhabitants of them, and laid their land waste wherever they came: *and besieged Rabbah;* their chief city, called Rabathamana by Polybius [f], that is, Rabbah of Ammon, and afterwards Philadelphia, from Philadelphus, king of Egypt, as it was in the times of Jerom [g]: *but David tarried still at Jerusalem;* which is observed for the sake of the following history; it would have been well for him if he had gone forth with the army himself, then the sin he fell into would have been prevented.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass in an evening tide*, &c.] Some time in the afternoon, when the sun began to decline; not in the dusk of the evening, for then the object he saw could not have been seen so distinctly by him: *that David arose from off his bed;* having taken a nap in the heat of the day after dinner; indulging himself more than he used to do to sloth and luxury, which prepared him, and led him on the more eagerly to the lust of uncleanness: *and walked upon the roof of the king's house;* to refresh himself after his sleep, it being the cool of the day, and the roof of the house being flat and fit to walk upon, as the houses of Judea were; see Deut. xxii. 8. *and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself;* in a bath in her garden, or in an apartment in her house, the window being open: *and the woman* was *very beautiful to look upon;* of a fine shape and good complexion, and comely countenance; all which were incentives to lust, at which his eye catched, and his heart was insnared therewith.

Ver. 3. *And David sent and inquired after the woman*, &c.] Who she was, what her name, and whether married or unmarried; if the latter, very probably his intention was to marry her, and he might, when he first made the inquiry, design to proceed no further, or to any thing that was dishonourable; but it would have been better for him not to have inquired at a and endeavoured to stifle the motions raised in him at the sight of her: *and one said, is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam;* who in 1 Chron. iii. 5. is called Bathshua, and her father Ammiel, which is the same with Eliam reversed: *the wife of Uriah the Hittite?* who either was of that nation originally, and became a proselyte; or had sojourned there for a while, and took the name; or had it given him, for some exploit he had performed against that people, as Scipio Africanus, and others among the Romans; this was said by one that David inquired of, or heard him asking about her, and was sufficient to have stopped him from proceeding any further, when he was informed she was another man's wife: some say [h] she was the daughter of Ahithophel's son; see ch. xxiii. 34.

Ver. 4. *And David sent messengers*, &c.] To invite her to his palace: *and took her;* not by force, but through persuasion: *and she came in unto him;* into the apartment where he was: *and he lay with her;* she consenting to it, being prevailed upon, and drawn into it through the greatness and goodness of the man, which might make the sin appear the lesser to her. This is recorded to shew what the best of men are, when left to themselves; how strong and prevalent corrupt nature is in regenerate persons, when grace is not in exercise; what need the saints stand in

[d] Vid. Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 50. col. 557.
[e] Weemse of the Judicial Law, c. 28. p. 106.
[f] Hist. l. 5, p. 414.

[g] De loc. Heb. fol. 94. C.
[h] Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 2.

of fresh supplies of grace, to keep them from falling; what caution is necessary to every one that stands, lest he fall; and that it becomes us to abstain from all appearance of sin, and whatever leads unto it, and to watch and pray that we enter not into temptation; and such a record as this is an argument for the integrity of the Scriptures, that they conceal not the faults of the greatest favourites mentioned in them, as well as it serves to prevent despair in truly penitent backsliders: *for she was purified from her uncleanness;* this clause is added in a parenthesis, partly to shew the reason of her washing herself, which was not for health and pleasure, and to cool herself in a hot day, but to purify herself from her menstruous pollution, according to the law in Lev. xv. 19. the term of her separation being expired; and partly to give a reason why she the more easily consented, and he was the more eager to enjoy her; and in this he sinned, not that he did not lie with an unclean person; but, then, as some observe, he did that which was much worse, he committed adultery; also this may be added to observe, that she was the more apt for conception, as Ben Gersom notes, and to account for the quickness of it, with which the philosopher[1] agrees: *and she returned unto her house;* whether that evening, or next morning, or how long she stayed, is not said.

Ver. 5. *And the woman conceived,* &c.] Whereby the sin would be discovered, and shame, and disgrace, or worse, would follow upon it: *and sent and told David, and said, I am with-child;* this message she sent to David, that he might think of some ways and means to prevent the scandal that would fall both upon him and her, and the danger she was exposed unto; fearing the outcries of the people against her, in acting so unfaithful a part to her husband, so brave a man, who was now fighting for his king and country; and the rage and jealousy of her husband when he should come to the knowledge of it, and the death which by the law she was guilty of, even to be stoned with stones, see John viii. 5.

Ver. 6. *And David sent to Joab,* &c.] Who was with the army besieging Rabbah, which, according to Bunting[*], was 64 miles from Jerusalem: saying, *send me Uriah the Hittite;* the scheme David had contrived in his mind was to get Uriah home to his wife for a few days, that it might be thought the child she had conceived was his, whereby the sin of David, and her own, might be concealed: *and Joab sent Uriah to David;* not knowing his business, and besides it was his duty to obey his command.

Ver. 7. *And when Uriah was come unto him,* &c.] To David, to whom he came first, before he went to his own house, desirous of knowing what was the special business of the king with him: *David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered;* he asked of the welfare of Joab the general, and of the common soldiers, and of the warriors, as the Targum, the mighty men that went along with Joab, ch. x. 7. and xi. 1. David seems to have been at a loss what to say to him. These questions were so mean and trivial, that it might justly give Uriah some suspicion that it could never be on this account that he was sent for; since David could not want intelligence of such things, expresses being daily sending him.

Ver. 8. *And David said to Uriah, go down to thy house, and wash thy feet,* &c.] For his refreshment, and to prepare for bed, which was what he wanted to get him to: *and Uriah departed out of the king's house;* in order as it might seem to the king to go to his own: *and there followed him a mess* of meat *from the king;* no doubt a delicious dish, to eat with his wife before he went to bed, to excite him the more to desire the enjoyment of her. This mess consisted, according to Abarbinel, of bread, wine, and flesh; and who also observes, after Ben Gersom, that the word may be interpreted of a torch to light him home to his house, it being night.*

Ver. 9. *But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house, with all the servants of his lord,* &c.] The life-guards, which were placed there to watch the palace in the night-season; Uriah first fell into a conversation with these, as is highly probable, to whom he was well known, and who might inquire of one and another of their friends in the army; and he being weary, laid himself down among them, and slept: *and went not down to his house;* whether the trifling questions David asked him, or the information the guards might give him of his wife being sent for to court, made him suspect something, and so had no inclination to go to his own house; or however so it was ordered by the providence of God, which directed him to act in this manner, that the sin of David and Bathsheba they studied to hide might be discovered.

Ver. 10. *And when they had told David,* &c.] The next morning, either those that went with the mess of meat, or the guards with whom he slept all night: *saying, Uriah went not down to his house;* as the king had ordered him; which those persons being acquainted with, informed him of it, as an act of disobedience to him: *David said unto Uriah;* having sent for him upon the above information: *camest thou not from thy journey?* and which was a long one, of 64 miles, as before observed, and therefore might well be weary, and want refreshment and rest, and his own house was the most proper place for it; for which reason David suggests he had sent him thither, and did not require nor need his service among his guards: *why then didst thou not go down unto thine house?* which was the fittest place for him in such circumstances.

Ver. 11. *And Uriah said unto David,* &c.] As an apology for his conduct: *the ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents;* meaning not the people of Israel and Judah in the land of Canaan; for they did not now dwell in tents, though indeed the ark of the Lord did, ch. vii. 2. which some think is here referred to; but the armies of Israel and Judah besieging Rabbah, with whom it seems the ark was, which sometimes was carried with them when they went out to war, 1 Sam. iv. 4. and xiv. 18. though Abarbinel thinks this was not the ark in which were the two tables of stone, and therefore is not called the ark of the covenant, but an ark which was made to put the ephod, and Urim and

[1] Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 7. c. 2.

* Travels, &c. p. 146.

Thummim in, that they might upon occasion inquire of the Lord by them: *and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields*: around Rabbah they were besieging; he calls Joab his lord, because he was the chief general under whom he served, and the rest of the commanding officers he calls the servants of his lord, as distinguished from the common soldiers. The Jews, who are for excusing David from blame in the case of Uriah, observe[1], that he was guilty of rebellion against David, and so worthy of death, not only because he disobeyed his command, in not going to his house when he ordered him, but by calling *Joab my lord*, in his presence: but this was only a respectable character of his general, and no overt-act of treason to his king; nor did David so understand it, nor in the least resent it: now seeing such great men, who were far superior to him in rank and office, were obliged to lie on the bare ground, he argues: *shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife?* if he had any suspicion of David's crime, he might purposely add the last clause; and if not, it was enough to awaken the conscience of David, and cut him to the quick, had he not been greatly hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, to observe, that a faithful subject, and a soldier of his, would not allow himself the enjoyment of lawful pleasures, when his fellow-soldiers were exposing their lives to danger for their country; and yet he, under such circumstances, indulged to sinful lusts and criminal pleasures: as *thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing*: he swears to it, for the confirmation of it; this he did to prevent any further solicitations from the king, or his wife, unto it, who were both anxiously desirous of it; for though no mention is made of his wife, yet no doubt she did all she could to prevail upon him to come to his house, but all to no purpose; his mind was so bent to the contrary, through the overruling providence of God, to which it must be ascribed.

Ver. 12. *And David said to Uriah, tarry here to-day also*, &c.] In his court, when he found he could not persuade him to go to his own house: *and to-morrow I will let thee depart*: after he had tried one method more with him: *so Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day and the morrow*; not in his own house, but the king's palace.

Ver. 13. *And when David had called him*, &c.] Invited him to sup with him: *he did eat and drink before him*; very freely and plentifully: *and he made him drunk*; this was another sin of David's, done in order to make him forget his oath and vow, and that being inflamed with wine, desires might be excited in him to go home and lie with his wife; but even this scheme did not succeed: *and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord*: in the guard-room, where he had lain before: *but went not down to his house*; for he was not so drunk but he remembered his oath, and kept his resolution not to go down to his own house; the Lord no doubt working upon his mind, and disinclining him to it.

Ver. 14. *And it came to pass in the morning*, &c.] When David was informed that Uriah did not go to his own house, but slept with his servants, Satan put it into his head and heart to take the following wicked and cruel method: *that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah*; to have him cut off by the sword of the enemy. If Uriah suspected David's criminal conversation with his wife, he was so true and trusty a servant to him, that he would not open his letter to Joab, which had he, it would have betrayed the base design. No one that knows the story of Bellerophon can read this without thinking of that, they are so much alike; and indeed that seems to be founded upon this, and taken from it with a little alteration. Bellerophon rejecting the solicitations of Sthenobæa, who was in love with him, she prevailed upon her husband Prætus to send letters by him to Jobates (a name similar to Joab), the general of his army, which contained instructions to take care that he was killed; who sent him upon an expedition for that purpose[m].

Ver. 15. *And he wrote in the letter, saying*, &c.] Giving the following orders to Joab: *set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle*: over-against that part of the city where the enemy was strongest, and the battle the fiercest, and the stones and arrows were cast the thickest: *and retire ye from him*; leave him to himself to combat the enemy alone; who seeing him deserted, would sally out upon him, and the few that might be with him, and slay him: *that he may be smitten, and die*: thus he sought to add murder to adultery, and that in the basest manner, and which he accomplished; and this is often the case, that murder follows adultery, either by way of revenge for it, or in order to cover it, as here.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city*, &c.] Where lay its greatest strength, and where it was best defended; or *besieged* it, as the Targum: *that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were*; who would not easily give way, and when they saw an opportunity would sally out. Joab cannot be excused from sin, unless he thought that Uriah had been guilty of death, and that David took this way of dispatching him for some political reason; however David was king, and to be obeyed.

Ver. 17. *And the men of the city went out*, &c.] Made a sally out, as Joab expected they would, when they appeared before them at that part of the city where valiant men were: *and fought with Joab*; at least with part of his army posted with Uriah: *and there fell some of the people of the servants of David*; which made David's sin the more heinous, that several lives were lost through the stratagem he devised to procure the death of Uriah; who could not be placed in a dangerous post alone, and therefore others must be sacrificed with him, as were: *and Uriah the Hittite died also*: which was the thing aimed at, and the end to be answered by this scheme.

Ver. 18. *Then Joab sent*, &c.] Messengers to David, as soon as Uriah was killed: *and told David all the things concerning the war*; how the siege had been carried on; what success they had had, good or ill; what their advantages and disadvantages; what men they had lost, and especially in one sally of the enemy upon them, for the sake of which the express was sent.

[1] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 1.

[m] Apollodorus de Deorum Orig. l. 2. p. 70.

Ver. 19. *And charged the messenger*, &c.] Gave him a particular direction and instruction what he should say at the close of his narrative, according as he should observe the king's countenance to be: *saying, when thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king*; giving an account of all the events that happened since the siege was begun to that time.

Ver. 20. *And if so be that the king's wrath arise*, &c.] Which might be seen in his countenance, or expressed in his words: *and he say, wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight?* as to expose the king's troops to the enemy on the wall, who by stones or darts greatly annoyed them, or sallied out on them, and killed many of them: *knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?* they must have known that, and therefore should have kept out of the reach of their shot.

Ver. 21. *Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubbesheth?* &c.] The same with Jerub-baal, who was Gideon, Judg. vi. 32. Baal, one part of his name, was the name of an idol, and sometimes called Bosheth or Besheth, which signifies shame, being a shameful idol; Gideon had a son called Abimelech, who was smitten, and it is here asked, by whom? *did not a woman cast a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez?* which should have been a warning not to go too near the wall of an enemy; the history is recorded in Judg. ix. 52, 53. *why went ye nigh the wall?* exposing your lives to so much danger, and by which so many lives were lost: *then say thou, thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also*; the whole has not been told, the worst of all is, as the messenger was to represent it, that brave gallant soldier Uriah is dead; this Joab ordered to be told last, as knowing very well it would pacify the king's wrath, and was the agreeable news he wanted to hear.

Ver. 22. *So the messenger went*, &c.] From Joab, from the army before Rabbah: *and came*; to David in Jerusalem, a course of 64 miles: *and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for*; all the events of the war hitherto.

Ver. 23. *And the messenger said unto David*, &c.] The particulars of his account follow: *surely the men prevailed against us*; the men of the city of Rabbah, the besieged there, in one onset they made upon them: *and came out unto us in the field*; the besiegers that lay encamped there; they sallied out upon them: *and we were upon them, even unto the entering of the gate*; rallied upon them, and drove them back, and pursued them to the gate of the city.

Ver. 24. *And the shooters shot from off of the wall upon thy servants*, &c.] Arrows out of their bows, or stones out of their engines; the Israelites following them so closely to the gate of the city, came within the reach of their shot from the wall: *and some of the king's servants be dead*; killed in the sally upon them, and by the shot from the wall: *and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also*; the messenger did not entirely obey the orders of Joab to wait and observe if the king's wrath arose, but was in haste to tell him the last piece of news; perhaps he had some suspicion, from the manner of Joab's telling him what he should say, that this would be acceptable to the king.

Ver. 25. *Then David said to the messenger*, &c.] Whom he dispatched again to Joab upon the delivery of his message: *thus shalt thou say to Joab*; in the name of David: *let not this thing displease thee*; be not grieved, and cast down, and intimidated at the repulse he had met with, and the loss of so many brave men, and especially Uriah; *for the sword devours one as well as another*: officers as well as soldiers the strong as well as the weak, the valiant and courageous as well as the more timorous; the events of war are various and uncertain, and to be submitted to, and not repined at, and laid to heart. David's heart being hardened by sin, made light of the death of his brave soldiers, to which he himself was accessory; his conscience was very different now from what it was when he cut off the skirt of Saul's robe, and his heart in a different frame from that in which he composed the lamentation over Saul and Jonathan: *make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it*; more closely besiege it, more vigorously attack it; assault it, endeavour to take it by storm, and utterly destroy it, razing the very foundations of it: *and encourage thou him*; which words are either said to the messenger to encourage and animate Joab in David's name, which is not so likely that a messenger should be employed to encourage the general; or rather the words of David to Joab continued, that he would *encourage it*, the army under him, who might be disheartened with the rebuff and loss they had met with, and therefore Joab is bid to spirit them up, to carry on the siege with vigour.

Ver. 26. *And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead*, &c.] The news of which were soon sent her by David, though it is very probable she knew nothing of the plot to take away his life; and, besides, David chose to have his death published abroad as soon as possible, the more to hide his sin: *she mourned for her husband*; expressed tokens of mourning by shedding tears, putting on a mourning habit, seeing no company, and this continued for the space of seven days, it may be, 1 Sam. xxxi. 7. as little time as possible was spent in this way, and the marriage hastened, that the adultery might not be discovered.

Ver. 27. *And when the mourning was past*, &c.] The seven days were at an end, or sooner; for he stayed not 90 days from the death of her husband, which the Jews in after-times enjoined[a], that it might be known whether with-child by her former husband, and so to whom it belonged; and because David did not wait this time, Abarbinel charges it upon him as an additional sin: *David sent, and fetched her to his house*; took her home to his palace to live with him: *and she became his wife*; he married her according to the usual form of marriage in those days: *and bare him a son*; begotten in adultery: *but the thing that David had done displeased the Lord*; or *was evil in the eyes of the Lord*[b]; for though it was not done in the eyes of men, being scarcely or very little known, yet was in the eyes of the Lord, which run to and fro throughout the earth, and sees all things that are done: the adultery was he had been guilty of with another man's wife was

[a] Misn. Yebamot, c. 11. sect. 6.

[b] ירע בעיני יהות malum in oculis Domini, Montanus.

abominable to the Lord, and for which, according to the law, both he and she ought to have been put to death, Lev. xx. 10. the murder of her husband, which he was accessory to, as well as the death of many others, and the marriage of her under such circumstances, were all displeasing to God, and of such an heinous nature, that his pure eyes could not look upon with approbation: the Jews[p] endeavour to excuse David from sin; from the sin of murder, by making Uriah guilty of rebellion and treason, as before observed; and from the sin of adultery, by affirming that it was the constant custom for men, when they went out to war, to give their wives a bill of divorce; so that from the time of giving the bill they were not their wives, and such as lay with them were not guilty of adultery; but for this there is no foundation: it is certain David was charged with it by the Lord; he himself owned it, and bewailed it, both that and his blood-guiltiness, and the following chapter abundantly proves it.

C H A P. XII.

NATHAN is sent to David to charge him with his sin, and convince him of it by a parable, ver. 1—6. which being accommodated and applied to David's case, brought him to a conviction and acknowledgment of it, and repentance for it, which was forgiven him, ver. 7—13. though he is told the child begotten in adultery should die, and it was quickly struck with sickness and died; and David's behaviour during its sickness and at its death is recorded, ver. 14—23. after which Solomon was born to him of the same woman, and had the name of Jedidiah given him by the Lord, which signifies the beloved of the Lord, and as a token of reconciliation, and a confirmation of his sin being forgiven him, ver. 24, 25. and the chapter is concluded with the taking of the city of Rabbah, and the spoil in it, and the usage of the inhabitants of it, ver. 26—31.

Ver. 1. *And the Lord sent Nathan unto David*, &c.] Quickly after the child was born begotten on Bathsheba, and when it was known and became the public talk of people, and the enemies of religion were full of it, and blasphemed on account of it, ver. 14. so that David was nine months or more without any true sense of his sin, his heart hardened, his graces dormant, the joys of salvation taken from him, and he without any communion with God, and having little concern about it; though perhaps he might have some pangs at times, which quickly went off; though some think he exercised repentance in a private way before; acknowledged his sin to the Lord, and had a sense of pardon, and before this time penned the 32d and 130th psalms on this occasion; but Nathan is sent to awaken and arouse him, to express a sense of his sin, and repentance for it in public, which he did by penning and publishing Psal. li. after Nathan had been with him; for though the Lord may leave his people to fall into sin, and suffer them to continue therein some time, yet not always; they shall rise again through the assistance of his spirit and grace, in the acts of repentance and faith, both in private and public: *and he came unto him, and said unto him*; he came as if he had a case to lay before him, and to have justice done, and he told the story as if it was a real fact, and so David understood it: *there were two men in one city*; pointing at David and Uriah, who both lived in Jerusalem: *the one rich and the other poor*: David the rich man, king over all Israel; Uriah a subject, an officer in his army, comparatively poor.

Ver. 2. *The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds.*] In which the wealth of men lay in those times and countries; these in the parable signify David's wives and concubines, which were many; he had six wives in Hebron, and he took more wives and concubines out of Jerusalem, when he was come from Hebron, ch. iii. 2—5. and v. 13. and besides his master's, or Saul's wives, given to him, ver. 8.

Ver. 3. *But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe-lamb*, &c.] Uriah had but one wife, who was much younger than he, called a lamb, an ewe-lamb, a little one. Abarbinel thinks Uriah had been a widower, and had children by another wife, supposed in the parable, and was much older than Bathsheba: *which he had bought*; for men in those times and countries did not receive portions with their wives, but gave dowries to them, and for them: *and nourished up*; as his own flesh, as husbands should their wives, Eph. v. 29. *and it grew up together with him, and with his children*; which Kimchi also supposes Uriah had by a former wife: *it did eat of his own meat, and drink of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter*; all which are expressive of the care, kindness, love, and tenderness of a loving husband, whose affections are endeared to his wife, making her partaker of all he has, and to share in whatever he eats and drinks, and in his dearest embraces; and as there were instances of creatures, lambs and others, particularly cade lambs, used in this way in a literal sense, to which the reference in the parable is, David had no suspicion of its being a parable. Bochart[q] has given many instances of creatures nourished and brought up in such a familiar manner.

Ver. 4. *And there came a traveller unto the rich man*, &c.] By which some understand Satan, who came to David, and stirred up his lust by the temptations that offered; who is a walker, as the word used signifies, that goes about seeking whom he may devour, and is with good men only as a wayfaring man, who does not abide with them; and whose temptations, when they succeed with such, are as meat and drink to him, very entertaining: but the Jews generally understand it of the evil imagination or concupiscence in man, the lustful appetite in David, that wandered after

[p] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 56. 1. Gloss. in ib.

[q] Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 46. col. 521, 522.

another man's wife, and wanted to be satiated with her: *and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that came unto him*; when his heart was inflamed with lust at the sight of Bathsheba, he did not go as he might, and take one of his wives and concubines, whereby he might have satisfied and repressed his lust: *but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that came to him*: sent for Bathsheba and lay with her, for the gratification of his lust, she being a young beautiful woman, and more agreeable to his lustful appetite. The Jews, in their Talmud[z], observe a gradation in these words, that the evil imagination is represented first as a traveller that passes by a man, and lodges not with him; then as a wayfaring man or host, that passes in and lodges with him; and at last as a man, as the master of the house that rules over him, and therefore called the man that came to him.

Ver. 5. *And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man*, &c.] That had done this, taking it for a real fact: *and he said to Nathan, as the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die*; which he said in the transport of his wrath and fury; otherwise a thief, according to the law of Moses, was not to be put to death, but to make restitution; and if he was not able to make it, then to be sold, but he was not to die for it; but David thought the crime was so greatly aggravated by being done by a rich man, and by the loss the poor man sustained, it being his all, and the fact, in all its circumstances, so cruel and barbarous, that the guilty person ought to die; how much more vehemently, and indeed with justice, would he have passed the sentence of death on him, or adjudged him to it, had it been put in the parable, that the rich man not only took the poor man's ewe-lamb, but killed the poor man himself? but this Nathan left out, that David might not take his meaning, as Abarbinel thinks, who then would have been upon his guard, and not have condemned himself; and hereby also Nathan had this advantage against him, that if this man deserved to die, who had only taken the poor man's ewe-lamb, then how much more ought he to die, who had not only committed adultery with Bathsheba, but had slain Uriah?

Ver. 6. *And he shall restore the lamb four-fold*, &c.] Which was according to the law in Exod. xxii. 1. but Kimchi thinks, because the word is of the dual number, it signifies double the number, and that the sentence was to restore eight lambs, because he being a rich man stole from the poor man; so Mr. Weemse[a] renders it, twice four, twice as much as was commanded in the law; for the Hebrews, he observes, double in the dual number till they come to seven: *because he did this thing*: committed this theft: *and because he had no pity*; on the poor man, but took his all. The Jews observe, that accordingly David was punished with the loss of four of his children, that which was born of Bathsheba, Amnon, Tamar, and Absalom; so most of the commentators, but Ben Gersom, instead of Tamar, has Adonijah.

Ver. 7. *And Nathan said to David, thou art the man*, &c.] The rich man, or who is designed by him in the parable, and answers to him[b]: *thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel*; that is, ordered Samuel to anoint him, who did, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 12, 13. to which this chiefly refers; and after that he was anointed first by the tribe of Judah, and then by all the tribes of Israel, by the appointment and providence of God; and this was great dignity he designed for him, and raised him to: *and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul*; when he persecuted him, and sought to take away his life.

Ver. 8. *And I gave thee thy master's house*, &c.] Not his palace at Gibeah, but rather his family, his wives, servants, wealth, and riches, all being confiscated through the rebellion of Ish-bosheth; or rather his kingdom he succeeded him in: *and thy master's wives into thy bosom*: though we read of no more than one that belonged to Saul, if he is meant by his master, excepting Rizpah his concubine, nor ever of David taking them into his bosom and bed; wherefore this can be understood only of his having them at his disposal, to give them to whom he pleased; the word may be rendered his *women*, as well as his *wives*, and may design his daughters, Merab and Michal, who were both given to David, though taken again and given to others: the Jews say, that Eglah, David's sixth wife, was the wife of Saul, ch. iii. 5. see the note there: *and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah*; the kingdom of both; gave him to be king over all the tribes of Israel: *and if* that had been *too little*; either his wives too few, as the Jews interpret it, or his kingdom too small: *I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things*; more and greater favours; and indeed such he had promised him, as a firm or stable house or kingdom, and that the Messiah should spring from him.

Ver. 9. *Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight?* &c.] The commandment referred to is the law of God, particularly the sixth and seventh precepts of it; which David had shewn no regard unto, and by his breaking them had slighted and despised them: *thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword*; and so had despised and broken the sixth command; for though he had not taken away his life with his own hand, he had plotted and contrived it, and had given orders to put him in such a position as would issue in it: *and hast taken his wife* to be *thy wife*; after he had defiled her, being another man's wife, and had taken such unlawful methods to make her his wife, whereby he had despised and broken both the sixth and the seventh commands: *and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon*; though he had not put him to death with his own sword, he had done that which was as bad or worse in some respects, he had exposed him to the sword of the Ammonites, by which it was taken away; and not his only, but that of some of the Israelites also, which gave that uncircumcised people reason to triumph over the

[z] T. Bab. Succah, fol. 52. 2. Jarchi, Kimchi, & Abarbinel in loc.
[a] Of the Moral Law, l. 2. ch. 10. p. 252. Vid. Gusset. Ebr. Comment. p. 776.

[b] ——— mutato nomine, de te
Fabula narratur. ———
Horat. Sermon. l. 1. Satyr. 1. ver. 69, 70.

children of Israel, and even to blaspheme the God of Israel.

Ver. 10. *Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house*, &c.] During his life, and as appeared in the slaughter of his sons Amnon and Absalom before his death, and of Adonijah quickly after, and in his posterity through their wars with the children of Israel, and other nations: *because thou hast despised me*; his commandments, and that in effect was despising him the lawgiver: *and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife*; which being repeated shews that it was very displeasing to God, and a very heinous crime in his sight.

Ver. 11. *Thus saith the Lord*, &c.] For what he said was not of himself, but under a spirit of prophecy: *I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house*: that is, evil persons, who should be guilty of evil things, and that as a chastisement of him for the sins he had committed, and those out of his own family, as Amnon and Absalom: *and I will take thy wives before thine eyes*; which is so expressed, because it was done in his life-time, and he knowing it, but not able to hinder it, though he did not, strictly speaking, see it with his eyes: *and give them unto thy neighbour*; or friend, meaning his son Absalom, as they were: *and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun*: pointing to the sun in the firmament, and which might be then shining in the room where they were; and which is represented by Homer[a] as seeing all things, and eyes are ascribed to it here in the original; the meaning is, that this fact should be done in the daytime, openly and publicly, and was fulfilled, when by the advice of Ahithophel a tent was spread on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel, ch. xvi. 22.

Ver. 12. *For thou didst it secretly*, &c.] Committed adultery with Bathsheba privately, and endeavoured to conceal it, by getting her husband killed in battle, and then marrying her as soon as he could to hide the shame of it: *but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun*; as the above fact was; that is, he would suffer it to be done, and so order it in his providence, that every thing should concur to the doing of it; as David's leaving his wives behind him, Ahithophel's wicked counsel he was suffered to give, and the lustful inclination Absalom was left unto, and not any of the people of Israel having religion, spirit, and courage enough to remonstrate against it.

Ver. 13. *And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord*, &c.] Which confession, though short, was a full one, arising from a thorough conviction of the evil of the sin he had been guilty of, accompanied with real brokenness of heart, sincere humiliation, and a sorrow after a godly sort, as the 51st psalm, that penitential psalm composed upon this occasion, shews: *and Nathan said unto David*; being fully satisfied with the sincerity and genuineness of his repentance, of which he gave proof by words and deeds, and being under the direction and impulse of the spirit of God: *the Lord hath put away thy sin*; would not charge it upon him, impute it to him, or punish him for it, but freely and fully forgive it, cast it behind his back, and into the depth of the sea; cause it to pass from him, and never more bring it against him; and which is the Lord's act, and his only, against whom sin is committed: *thou shalt not die*; though he should die a corporeal death, yet not by the immediate hand of God, or by the sword of justice as a malefactor, a murderer, and adulterer, as he, according to the law, deserved to die; nor should he die a spiritual death, though his grace had been so low, and his corruptions had risen so high; nor an eternal death, the second death, the just wages of sin.

Ver. 14. *Howbeit, because by this deed*, &c.] This complicated wickedness, adultery with Bathsheba, and the murder of her husband, and occasioning the death of others: *thou hast given great reason to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme*; to insult over Israel, and the God of Israel, and to magnify their own idols on account of the advantage they got, when Uriah and other Israelites were slain; and to speak ill of God as a respecter of persons, who had cast off Saul and his family from the kingdom, and yet established David in it, guilty of crimes the other was not; and of the word, ways, and worship of God, and of the true religion, as all hypocrisy and deceit, when men that made such pretensions to it were guilty of such atrocious crimes; wherefore to let such see and know that the Lord did not approve of and countenance such actions, but abhorred and resented them: *the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die*; which would be a visible testimony of God's displeasure at his sin, to all men that should hear of it, and know it; and being taken away in such a manner would be a great affliction to him, and the more as his affections were much towards the child, as appears by what follows; or otherwise the removal of it might have been considered as a mercy, since its life would have kept up the remembrance of the sin, and have been a standing reproach to him.

Ver. 15. *And Nathan departed unto his house*, &c.] His own house, which probably was in the city of Jerusalem, having delivered his message, and brought David to a sense of his sin, and declared to him from the Lord the forgiveness of it; yet for the honour of religion, and the stopping of the mouths of blasphemers, the death of the child is threatened and foretold, and then Nathan took his leave of him, having nothing more from the Lord to say to him: *and the Lord struck the child that Uriah's wife bare unto David*; for so she was, and not David's wife, when this child was begotten of her; and, as a mark of God's displeasure at the sin of adultery, the child was struck with a sore disease by the immediate hand of God: *and it was very sick*; even unto death, as the event shewed.

Ver. 16. *David therefore besought God for the child*, &c.] Perhaps went into the tabernacle he had built for the ark, and prayed to the Lord to restore the child, and spare its life; for though the Lord had said it should die, he might hope that that was a conditional threatening, and that the Lord might be gracious and reverse it, ver. 22. *and David fasted*; all that day: *and went in*; to his own house from the house

[a] Odyss. 11. ver. 109. & 12. ver. 389.

of God: *and lay all night upon the earth;* would neither go into, nor lie upon a bed, but lay on the floor all night, weeping and praying for the child's life, and especially for its eternal welfare; he having through sin been the means of its coming into a sinful and afflicted state.

Ver. 17. *And the elders of his house arose,* and went *to him, to raise him up from the earth,* &c.] To persuade him to rise up, and sit upon a seat, and go to bed, after having taken some food; these were some of the chief officers at court, and had the management of the affairs of his household: *but he would not;* they could not persuade him to it: *neither did he eat bread with them;* that evening, as he had used to do; they being the princes of his court, who were wont to sit at table with him.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass on the seventh day, that the child died,* &c.] Not the seventh day from its being taken ill, but from its birth; for it can't be thought that David should fast seven days: *and the servants of David feared to tell him that the child was dead;* lest he should be overwhelmed with over-much sorrow: *for they said, behold, while the child was yet alive, we spake unto him;* to rise from the ground, and eat food: *and he would not hearken unto our voice;* we could not prevail upon him to do the one nor the other: *how will he then vex himself if we tell him that the child is dead?* or should we acquaint him with it, *he'll do mischief** to himself, to his body; he'll tear his flesh to pieces, and cut and kill himself; this they were afraid of, observing the distress and agony he was in whilst it was living, and therefore they concluded these would increase upon hearing of its death.

Ver. 19. *And when David saw that his servants whispered,* &c.] For they said the above to one another with a low voice, that he might not hear them, though in the same room with them: *David perceived the child was dead;* he guessed it was, and that this was the thing they were whispering about among themselves: *therefore David said unto his servants, is the child dead? and they said, he is dead;* for putting the question to them so closely, they could not avoid giving the answer they did, and which he was prepared to receive, by what he had observed in them.

Ver. 20. *Then David arose from the earth,* &c.] From the floor on which he lay: *and washed, and anointed* himself, *and changed his apparel;* neither of which he had done during his time of fasting: *and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped;* went into the tabernacle he had built for the ark of God, and then in prayer submitted himself to the will of God, and acknowledged his justice in what he had done; gave thanks to God that he had brought him to a sense of his sin, and repentance for it, and had applied his pardoning grace to him, and given him satisfaction as to the eternal welfare and happiness of the child, as appears from ver. 23. *then he came to his own house;* from the house of God, having finished his devotion there: *and when he required;* ordered food to be brought in: *they set bread before him, and he did eat;* whereas before, while the child was living, he refused to eat.

Ver. 21. *Then said his servants unto him, what thing is this that thou hast done?* &c.] Or what is the reason of such conduct and behaviour? they knew what was done, but they did not know the meaning of it, which is what they inquired after: *thou didst fast and weep for the child,* while it was *alive;* prayed with fasting and weeping for it, that it might live and not die: *but when the child was dead thou didst rise and eat bread;* and appeared cheerful; this seemed strange to them, when they expected his sorrow would be increased.

Ver. 22. *And he said, while the child was yet alive,* &c.] And so there was hope it might be continued: *I fasted and wept;* or sought the Lord by prayer, and fasting, and weeping, that the threatening might not take place, that the child's life might be spared: *for I said;* within himself, thus he reasoned in his own mind: *who can tell* whether *God will be gracious to me, that the child may live?* and in hope of this he kept praying, fasting, and weeping; he could not tell but God might repent of the evil he had threatened, as in some cases he has done; see Joel ii. 13, 14. Jon. iii. 9, 10. Abarbinel thinks that David fasted and wept to hide this matter from his wife, and his servants, and did not let them know that this was in his punishment, that the child should die.

Ver. 23. *But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast?* &c.] And pray; it is to no purpose, no end can be thought to be answered by it: *can I bring him back again?* from the state of the dead, bring him to life by fasting, and praying, and weeping; that is not to be expected: *I shall go to him;* to the state of the dead, to the grave, where his body was, or would be; to heaven and eternal happiness, where his soul was, as he comfortably hoped and believed: from whence it appears, that the Old-Testament saints did not suppose an annihilation at death; but believed the immortality of the soul, a future state after death of eternal life and bliss: *but he shall not return to me;* in the present mortal state, though at the resurrection they should meet again.

Ver. 24. *And David comforted Bathsheba his wife,* &c.] Which is the first time she is so called, Uriah being dead, and David having married her; which, though at first displeasing to the Lord, because of the circumstances attending it, was afterwards confirmed by him. Bathsheba no doubt was very much distressed, and greatly disconsolate, on account of the sin she had committed, and because of the wrath and displeasure of God, and because of the death of the child, which was a token of it; and she might have some scruples in her mind whether it was lawful to continue cohabiting with David. Now David comforted her, by telling her that God had pardoned that iniquity they had been guilty of, and that he would give them another son, who should succeed him in the throne, and build an house for his name: *and went in unto her, and lay with her,* as his wife: *and she bare a son;* at the proper time; *and he called his name Solomon;* either the Lord called him so, or David by his direction; for this name was given before his birth, 1 Chron. xxii. 9. the Keri or marginal reading is, *and she called his name*

* ועשה רעה και ποιηση κακα, Sept. faciat malum, Pagninus, Montanus; malum *sibi* inferet, Syr. Ar.

&c. that is, Bathsheba, who had been informed by David that this was the name the Lord would have him called by, which signifies *peaceable*: and the birth of this son was a confirmation of the peace and reconciliation between God and them, and which his name carried in it; as well as pointed to the peaceable times that should be during his reign, and in which he was a type of Christ, the Prince of peace; who is the author of peace between God and men by the blood of his cross, and from whom spiritual peace flows, and by whom eternal peace and happiness is: *and the Lord loved him*; and was to him a father, and he to him a son, as was promised, ch. vii. 14. This love and affection of the Lord to Solomon was signified to David by Nathan, as follows.

Ver. 25. *And he sent by the hand of Nathan the prophet*, &c.] Either David did; he sent by him to Bathsheba, to acquaint her with the name of the child, that it was to be Solomon; which is not so likely: or *he*, *David*, *delivered* it *into the hand of Nathan the prophet*; to educate it, instruct it, and bring it up in the nurture of the Lord; or rather the Lord sent a message by Nathan the prophet to David, that he loved Solomon: *and he called his name Jedidiah, because of the Lord*: that is, David also called him by this name, because of the love of the Lord unto him; for Jedidiah signifies *the beloved of the Lord*; a name and character which well agrees with the Messiah, Solomon's antitype, Matt. iii. 17. and xvii. 5.

Ver. 26. *And Joab fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon*, &c.] Of his being sent against it, and of his besieging it, we read in ch. xi. 1. but it can hardly be thought that he had been so long besieging it, as that David had two children by Bathsheba; but the account of the finishing of it is placed here, that the story concerning Bathsheba might lie together without any interruption: *and took the royal city*; or that part of it in which the king's palace was, and which, as Abarbinel observes, was without the city, as the palaces of kings now usually are.

Ver. 27. *And Joab sent messengers to David*, &c.] To acquaint him how he had proceeded, and what success he had had: *and said, I have fought against Rabbah*; laid siege to it, and skirmished with parties that sallied out upon them: *and have taken the city of waters*; the same with the royal city, and so the Targum here renders it; so called because situated by the water-side; Adrichomius says [x] the river Jabbok flowed round about it: or it abounded with fountains of water, from whence the other part of the city, or what was properly the city Rabbah, was supplied with water; and which communication being cut off, it could not hold out long, which Joab being sensible of, therefore sent for David. Junius and Tremellius render the words, *I have intercepted the water from the city*; with which the account of Josephus [y] agrees, who says, that he cut off the water from them, and precluded other supplies, so that they were in great distress for want of food and drink; and in like manner it was taken by Antiochus some hundreds of years after; for the historian says [z] the siege by him lasted long, and they could not prevail, because of the multitude of men in it, until one of the prisoners shewed them a subterraneous passage, through which they came and fetched water; which they stopped up with stones and such-like things, and then through want of water it yielded.

Ver. 28. *Now therefore gather the rest of the people together*, &c.] The rest of the soldiers in the land of Israel, and come to Rabbah: *and encamp against the city*; invest it in form: *and take it*: upon a surrender or by storm; for it could not hold out long: *lest I take the city, and it be called after my name*; so great a regard had Joab, though an ambitious man, to the fame and credit of David his king: so Craterus [a], at the siege of Artacaena, being prepared to take it, waited the coming of Alexander, that he might have the honour of it.

Ver. 29. *And David gathered all the people together*, &c.] The soldiers that were with him, or near him; which was done partly to recruit Joab's troops, who, by the continuance of the siege, and the sallies of the enemy on them, might be greatly diminished; and partly to make conquests of other cities of the Ammonites, and to carry off the spoil of them: *and went to Rabbah*; which must be after the death of Uriah, and very probably during the time of Bathsheba's mourning for him: *and fought against it, and took it*: by assault.

Ver. 30. *And he took their king's crown from off his head*, &c.] The crown of Hanun the king of the Ammonites, who now fell into his hands, and whom he stripped of his ensigns of royalty, who had so shamefully abused his ambassadors: (*the weight whereof was a talent of gold with the precious stones*:) or, *and a precious stone*; there might be more, as our version suggests, but there was one in it remarkably large and valuable; Josephus [b] says it had in it a very precious stone, a sardonyx; and this, according to the Talmud [c], was of the value of a talent of gold. A talent was equal to 3,000 shekels, as appears from Exod. xxxviii. 25, 26. and was in value, according to Brerewood [d], of our money, 4,500 pounds; but according to Bishop Cumberland [e] 5,067 pounds three shillings and ten pence. This crown was of the same value with the golden candlestick in the tabernacle, Exod. xxv. 39. and some think that value here is meant, and not the weight, a talent of gold being very heavy; according to Bishop Cumberland [f], 93 pounds 3 quarters; some say 113 pounds 10 ounces, and more; too great a weight to be borne on the head by Hanun or David; but, what with the gold and precious stones about it, it might be equal in value to a talent of gold; but weight is expressly mentioned, and the crowns of the eastern princes were of great bulk and weight, as well as value: Athenaeus [g] makes mention of one made of 10,000 pieces of gold, placed on the throne of King Ptolemy, and of some of two cubits, of six, yea, of sixteen cubits.

[x] Theatrum T. S. p. 34.
[y] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 7. sect. 5.
[z] Polyb. Hist. l. 5. p. 414.
[a] Curt. Hist. l. 6. c. 6.
[b] Ut supra.

[c] T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 44. 1.
[d] De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4.
[e] Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 4. p. 121.
[f] Ib. p. 119.
[g] Apud Paschalium de Coronis, l. 9. c. 8. p. 597.

Some[h] are of opinion that this crown was not the crown of the king of Ammon, but of Milcom or Molech, their idol, and that the proper name should be retained in the version, and that David had a crown made of it he could bear; but if, as others[i], the Syriac talent is meant, which was but the fourth part of an Hebrew one, the difficulty is greatly lessened; for it seems to be the same crown David afterwards wore, as follows: *and it was set on David's head;* to shew that the kingdom was translated to him, or was become subject to him; as Alexander, on the conquest of Darius, put the Persian diadem on his own head[k], in token of that monarchy being translated to him: though, after all, the phrase, *from off*, may be rendered *from above* or *over*[l] his head, and so it was set *above* or *over* the head of David, being supported by some means or other, that its weight did not bear thereon. However, Paschalius, who wrote a learned work, *De Coronis*, must be mistaken when he says[m] this seems to be the first use of a crown in the kingdom of Judah, there being no mention of a crown before, either of Saul or David, only of anointing; since express mention is made of Saul's crown, ch. i. 10. though his observation may be just, that this crown, allowed to be worn by David, was a pledge of the renewal of his royal dignity, and of his acceptance with God upon his repentance for his above sins: *and he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance;* which, or at least part of it, was dedicated to the building of the sanctuary, ch. viii. 11, 12.

Ver. 31. *And he brought forth the people that were therein,* &c.] Not all the inhabitants of the place, but the princes of the children of Ammon, the counsellors of Hanun, who advised him to use David's ambassadors in so shameful a manner, and others that expressed their pleasure and satisfaction in it: *and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron;* whereby they were cut asunder, as some were by the Romans and others[n], or their flesh torn to pieces, and they put to extreme pain and agony, and so died most miserably; see 1 Chron. xx. 3. *and made them pass through the brick-kiln;* where they burnt their bricks, by which they were not only scorched and blistered, but burnt to death; so the word in the Keri, or margin, signifies, which we follow; but in the text it is, they caused them to pass through Malcem, the same with Milcom or Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon, 1 Kings xi. 5, 7. unto which they made their children pass through the fire, and burnt them; and now in the same place they themselves are made to pass through, and be burnt, as a righteous punishment of them for their barbarous and wicked idolatry. The word used in the Greek version, according to Suidas[o], signifies an army, or a battalion of men drawn up in a quadrangular form, like a brick; and in the same sense Josephus[p] uses it; hence a learned man[q] conjectures that David's army was drawn up in the like form, through which the Ammonites were obliged to pass, and as they passed were assailed with darts, and killed; a like punishment to which is what the Italians call *passing through the pikes: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon;* to the inhabitants of them; that is, the chief, who had expressed their joy at the ill usage of his ambassadors: this he did to strike terror into other nations, that they might fear to use his ambassadors in such-like manner. This action of David's shewing so much severity, is thought by most to be done when under the power of his lust with Bathsheba, in an hardened and impenitent state, when he had no sense of mercy himself, and so shewed none; which is too injurious to his character; for this was a righteous retaliation of this cruel people, 1 Sam. xi. 2. Amos i. 13. which may be observed in other instances, Judg. viii. 6, 7. 1 Sam. xv. 33. but the charge of cruelty in David will be easily removed by following the translation of a learned[r] man, and which I think the words will bear, *and he obliged the people that were in it to go out, and put them to the saw,* to cut stones; *and to the iron mines,* to dig there; *and to the axes of iron,* to cut wood with; *after he had made them to pass with their king* out of the city. *So David and all the people returned unto Jerusalem;* in triumph, and with great spoil.

CHAP. XIII.

THIS chapter relates some of the evils that were to arise out of David's house, and which were similar to the evils committed by him; the deflouring of his daughter, and the murder of his eldest son: the story is this; Amnon falls in love with Tamar, his sister, and grew lean upon it, which being observed by a friend of his, inquires the reason of it, which having got out of him, forms a scheme for obtaining his desire, and which succeeded; for by it he had the opportunity of ravishing his sister, ver. 1—14. the consequences of which were extreme hatred of her, hurrying her out of doors, lamentation and mourning on her part, grief to David, and enmity in the heart of Absalom to Amnon, which put him upon meditating his death, ver. 15—22. and which was brought about after this manner. Absalom had a sheep-shearing, to which he invited the king and all his sons, and to which they all came excepting the king, ver. 23—27. when Absalom gave orders to his servants to observe Amnon when he was merry, and at his word smite him and kill him, as they did, ver. 28, 29. tidings of which soon came to the ears of David, and these aggravated, that

h Vid. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 78. H. & in Paralipom. fol. 83. M. Weemse of Jewish Weights, p. 141.
i Pfeiffer. Difficil. Script. Loc. cent. 2. loc. 87.
k Diodor. Sic. l. 17. p. 549.
l מעל desuper, Montanus, supra caput David, Munster.
m Ut supra, l. 10. c. 10. p. 695.
n Suetonius in Vita Caii, c. 27. Vid. Herodot. l. 2. c. 139.
o In voce πλινθίον.
p Antiqu. l. 12. c. 4. sect. 4.
q Menochius de Repub. Heb. l. 8. c. 3. col. 752.
r Danzii Commentat. de mitigat. David in Ammon. crudel. Jenæ 1710, apud Michael. in 1 Chron. xx. 3. Vid. Stockium, p. 392.

all the king's sons were killed, which threw the king into an agony; but Jonadab endeavoured to pacify him, by assuring him that only Amnon was dead, the truth of which soon appeared by the coming of the king's sons, ver. 30—36. but Absalom fled to Geshur, where he remained three years, when David's heart began to be towards him, and to long for him, who was to bring more evil against him, ver. 37—39.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass after this,* &c.] After the sin of David with Bathsheba, his repentance for it, and pardon of it, and the birth of Solomon as a token of reconciliation; yet after all this the divine threatenings must take place; they had begun already in the death of the child begotten in adultery, and others here follow: *that Absalom the son of David had a fair sister, whose name was Tamar:* she was his sister both by father and mother's side; the mother of them was Maacah, the daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; she was a very comely person, her name signifies a palm-tree: *and Amnon the son of David loved her;* not in an honourable way, to make her his wife, but in a lustful manner, to make an harlot of her; he was David's eldest son by Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, ch. iii. 2.

Ver. 2. *And Amnon was so vexed,* &c.] Distressed, straitened, and perplexed in his mind through unruly and unbridled lusts that raged in him: *that he fell sick for his sister Tamar;* as Antiochus son of Seleucus did for his mother-in-law Stratonice, who, to cure him of it, was delivered to him by his father[r]: *for she was a virgin;* and so kept very recluse from the company of men, that he could not come at her; so Philo[s], speaking of the Jewish women, and particularly virgins, says, that they were shut up in their chambers, and through modesty shun the sight of men, even those of their own house; hence they are called עלמות, from a word which signifies to hide; and Phocylides[t] the poet advises to the shutting of them up in like manner: *and Amnon thought it hard for him to do any thing to her:* that it was difficult to have access to her, almost impossible, what he despaired of, and what, if attained to, would be wonderful and amazing; he was at his wits' end how to contrive any scheme to get at her, and obtain his desire.

Ver. 3. *But Amnon had a friend,* &c.] Though in the issue his friendship proved his ruin: *whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother:* so that they were own cousins, the same with Shammah, 1 Sam. xvi. 9. *and Jonadab was a very subtle man:* a very penetrating man into the dispositions of men, and could judge by their countenances what they were, and the affections of their minds, and had a talent in forming schemes; he was wise to do evil, was wickedly cunning.

Ver. 4. *And he said unto him, why* art *thou, being the king's son, lean from day to day?* &c.] Or *morning by morning*[u]; he was the king's eldest son, heir to the crown, fed at his table, had every thing to make him gay and cheerful, and yet pined away; his flesh wasted[w], his countenance waxed wan and pale, and especially in the mornings; in the day-time he met with diversions which, in some measure, took off his thoughts from the object his mind was impressed with, but in the night-season they were continually employed about it; so that he could have no rest and sleep, which made him look ruefully in the morning; and this man had a suspicion of his case, and therefore put this and the following question to him: *wilt thou not tell me?* who am so nearly related to thee, and who have such a particular value and affection for thee: *and Amnon said unto him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister:* he does not call her his sister, but Absalom's sister, to lessen his sin of unlawful love to her, which, being thus closely pressed, and by a friend, he could not conceal.

Ver. 5. *And Jonadab said unto him,* &c.] Being a subtle man, he presently formed a scheme to relieve him, and open a way for the enjoyment of what he desired: *lay thee down on thy bed, and make thyself sick:* feign thyself sick, pretend that thou art so, by lying down on the bed, and making complaints of one kind or another: *and when thy father cometh to see thee;* as he quickly would, after hearing of his illness, being very affectionate to his children: *say unto him, I pray thee let my sister Tamar come, and give me meat:* here he is directed to call her not Absalom's sister, but his own, the more to cover his ill design upon her: *and dress the meat in my sight, that I may see it, and eat it at her hand:* pretending that his stomach was very weak and squeamish, that he could not eat any thing which his servants dressed for him, and which he did not see done with his own eyes.

Ver. 6. *So Amnon lay down, and made himself sick,* &c.] Took the advice of his cousin Jonadab, and acted according to it: *and when the king was come to see him;* as he quickly did, after he had heard of his illness: *Amnon said unto the king;* who perhaps inquired of his appetite, whether he could eat any thing, and what: *I pray thee let my sister Tamar come;* he calls her sister, as Jonadab had directed, the more to blind his design; though it is much that so sagacious a man as David was had not seen through it; but the notion he had of his being really ill, and the near relation between him and Tamar, forbad his entertaining the least suspicion of that kind: *and make me a couple of cakes in my sight;* heart-cakes, as the word may be thought to signify; called so either from the form of them, such as we have with us, or from the effect of them, comforting and refreshing the heart: *that I may eat at her hand;* both what is made by her hand, and received from it.

Ver. 7. *Then David sent home to Tamar,* &c.] Who perhaps was not in the king's palace, but at her brother Absalom's house, ver. 20. *saying, go now to thy brother Amnon's house;* who also had a separate house and equipage, being the king's son, and his eldest son: *and dress him meat;* such as he may desire, and his stomach will bear.

Ver. 8. *So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house,* &c.] In obedience to the king's commands, and in

[r] See the Universal History, vol. 2. p. 519. Ed. fol.
[s] In Flaccum, p. 977.
[t] Poem. admon. v. 203, 204.
[u] בבקר בבקר in mane in mane, Montanus.
[w] Fecit amor maciem —— Ovid Metamorph. l. 11. Fab. 11. v. 793.

affection to her brother, with an innocent breast, having no suspicion of any design upon her chastity: *(and he was laid down:)* upon a couch or bed in his chamber, as being sick as was pretended, into which she was introduced: *and she took flour, and kneaded it;* made it into a paste: *and made cakes in his sight;* a kind of fritters of them, as in the Talmud [y]: *and did bake the cakes;* or fried them in a frying-pan, in oil.

Ver. 9. *And she took a pan, and poured them out before him*, &c.] Out of the frying-pan, in which they were, into another dish; and all this was done in his presence, that he might see and know of what, and in what manner it was made, that his stomach might not recoil at it: *but he refused to eat;* for that was not what he wanted: *and Amnon said, have out all men from me;* as if company was troublesome to him, and he wanted rest, &c. *and they went out every man from him;* at his orders, that he might get some sleep, as he seemed desirous of it.

Ver. 10. *And Amnon said unto Tamar, bring the meat into the chamber*, &c.] An inner chamber, at a greater distance, where they might be more secret, and out of the reach of the hearing of any of his domestics: *that I may eat of thine hand;* this he pretended, though his design was of another kind: *and Tamar took the cakes which she had made, and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother;* being quite innocent herself, and having no suspicion of a brother having any ill design upon her, she made no scruple of going into an inner chamber alone with him.

Ver. 11. *And when she had brought them unto him to eat*, &c.] Not only into the chamber, but to the side of the bed or couch where he had laid himself, or sat, in a proper position to answer his purpose: *he took hold of her*, by the arm, or threw his hands about her: *and said unto her, come, lie with me, my sister;* one would think the relation he observes she stood in to him would have checked him from making so vile a motion.

Ver. 12. *And she answered him, nay, my brother*, &c.] Which carried in it a reason sufficient for her denial, that he was her brother, and she his sister, and therefore should not offer such an indignity to her: *do not force me;* which was another forbidding expression, signifying she would never freely yield to his will; and to force her, to defile her against her will, to commit a rape upon her, would be very criminal indeed: *for no such thing ought to be done in Israel;* among God's professing people, who were better taught and instructed; and to give into such impure practices would bring a dishonour upon them, and upon the religion they professed; she urges the honour of religion, and the reputation of Israel, and the glory of the God of Israel: *do not thou this folly;* as all sin is, especially such an impure and indecent action as this.

Ver. 13. *And I, whither shall I cause my shame to go?* &c.] She desires him to consider her reputation, which would be lost; was she to go into a corner, into a place the most private and retired, yet she would blush at the thought of the crime committed; and still less able would she be to lift up her face in any public company; nor could she ever expect to be admitted into the matrimonial state; in short, her character would be entirely ruined: *and as for thee, thou shalt be as one of the fools in Israel;* as the vilest and basest and most abandoned in the nation; who ought of all men to be most careful of his reputation, being a prince in Israel, and heir-apparent to the throne: *now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king;* to give me to thee in marriage: *for he will not withhold me from thee;* this she said, either as ignorant of the law, which forbids such marriages, or as supposing the king had a power to dispense with it, and, rather than he should die for love, would; though she seems to say this, and any thing that occurred to her mind, to put him off of his wicked design for the present, hoping then she should be delivered from him; besides, she was not his sister by the mother's side, and, as the Jews say, was born of a captive woman before she was proselyted and married to David, and so was free for Amnon [z]; and others say [a] she was the daughter of Maacah by a former husband, and not by David.

Ver. 14. *Howbeit, he would not hearken unto her voice*, &c.] His lust was so inflamed and enraged, that he could not attend to any arguments, though ever so forcible, that were offered to him: *but being stronger than she, forced her, and lay with her;* whether she cried out or no, as the law directs in such cases, Deut. xxii. 25, 26, 27. is not said; she might, and nobody hear her and come to her assistance; or she might not choose to expose her brother to his servants.

Ver. 15. *Then Amnon hated her exceedingly*, &c.] Having gratified his lust, his conscience stung him for it, that he could not bear the sight of the object that had been the instrument of it; and it may be the sharp words she had used, representing him as one of the fools in Israel, and perhaps she used sharper words still after he had abused her, filled him with hatred to her: *so that the hatred wherewith he hated her was greater than the love wherewith he had loved her;* a like instance of love being changed into hatred, after the gratification of lust, we have in Honorius towards his sister Placidia [b]: *and Amnon said unto her, arise, be gone;* without calling her by her name, or owning the relation she bore to him, using her as the basest and vilest of creatures. This conduct was very brutish, as well as imprudent, and foolish to the last degree; had he had any regard to his own reputation, he would never have turned her out of doors so soon, and in such a public manner; but so it was ordered by divine Providence, that his sin might be made known, and so the murder of him for it by Absalom was brought on, and both were suffered as a correction and chastisement to David for his sins of adultery and murder.

Ver. 16. *And she said unto him, there is no cause*, &c.] For such treatment as this: *this evil in sending me away is greater than the other that thou didst unto me;* not that this was a greater sin, but it was a greater evil or injury to her, that being done secretly, this

[y] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 1.
[z] Maimon. Hilchot Melacim, c. 8. sect. 8. Kimchi in 2 Sam. xiii. 1.
[a] R. Moses Kotzensis, pr. affirm. 122.
[b] Olympiodorus apud Grotium in loc.

openly; being turned out in that open manner, it might look as if she was the aggressor, and had drawn her brother into this sin, or however had consented to it; had it been kept a secret, she would not have been exposed to public shame and disgrace, and she might have been disposed of in marriage to another; it would not have been known to the grief of her father, to the revenge of Absalom, and to the dishonour of religion; besides, the sin of Amnon might have been more easily excused, if any excuse could be made for it, as that it arose from the force of lust, and a strong impure affection, but this from barbarity and inhumanity: *but he would not hearken unto her*: but insisted upon her immediate departure.

Ver. 17. *Then he called his servants that ministered unto him*, &c.] His domestic servants that waited on him: *and said, put now this woman out from me*: she not willing to depart at once, he ordered her to be put out immediately by force; using her and speaking of her in a very rude and scandalous manner, calling her *this*, leaving it to be supplied, as they would understand it, this base woman, this strumpet, *&c. and bolt the door after her*: that she might not return; this was more disgraceful still.

Ver. 18. *And* she had *a garment of divers colours upon her*, &c.] Of embroidered work, which made her the more observable, and her shame the more manifest. Whether this was interwoven with threads of divers colours, or embroidered with figures of flowers, animals, *&c.* and wrought with the needle, or was painted with different colours, or made up of pieces of various colours, is not certain. See the note on Gen. xxxvii. 3. but according to Braunius [c] it was neither, and so the coat of Joseph, but was a garment with sleeves, reaching down to the ankles, and pieced at the borders with fringe; and, indeed, garments of flowers and divers colours were such as in other nations, as in Athens, harlots wore [d], and not virgins, as follows: *for with such robes were the king's daughters* that were *virgins apparelled*: which they wore to distinguish them both from common people, and from married persons of the same quality: *then the servants brought her out, and bolted the door after her*: laid hold on her, and brought her out by main force; thrust her out of doors, and turned the key upon her.

Ver. 19. *And Tamar put ashes on her head*, &c.] In token of sorrow and distress; see Josh. vii. 6. *and rent her garment of divers colours that* was *on her*: signifying that her virginity was rent from her in a forcible manner, or that she was ravished: *and laid her hand on her head*: through grief and shame; see Jer. ii. 37. *and went on crying*: from Amnon's house to her brother Absalom's, as one abused and injured.

Ver. 20. *And Absalom her brother said unto her*, &c.] Either meeting her in the street, or rather when come to his house: *hath Amnon thy brother been with thee?* been rude with thee, and lain with thee, which is the meaning of this modest expression; which he guessed at, having heard of her being sent to his house, and knowing his lustful disposition, and seeing her in such a forlorn condition: he calls him Aminon, for so it is in the Hebrew text, and not Amnon, by way of contempt, as Kimchi observes: *but hold now thy peace, my sister*: be silent, take no notice of this matter, say nothing of it to the king, nor any other, keep it in thine own breast, and make thyself easy: *he is thy brother, regard not this thing*: it is thy brother that has done it, and not so disgraceful as a meaner person, done in the heat of lust, and a youthful one, and should be forgiven; besides, to divulge it would bring disgrace upon the whole family, and no recompense would be obtained by telling the king of it, since he was his son, his first-born, and heir to the crown; this he said not out of love of Amnon, but as desirous of gratifying private revenge upon him for it when opportunity should serve. *So Tamar remained desolate in her brother Absalom's house*: not seeing any company, being filled with grief and shame, and none applying to her as a suitor, knowing she was vitiated; how long she continued here, or lived after this, is not certain; no mention is made of her afterwards.

Ver. 21. *But when King David heard of all these things*, &c.] Of Amnon's ravishing Tamar, and turning her out of doors in that inhuman manner he did, and of her distress upon it: *he was very wroth*: with Amnon; but we read not of any reproof he gave him, nor of any punishment inflicted on him by him. Abarbinel thinks the reason why he was not punished was because his sin was not cognizable by a court of judicature, nor was punishable by any way, or with any kind of death inflicted by the sanhedrim, as stoning, burning, *&c.* nor even by scourging, because there were no witnesses; but the punishment of it was cutting off, *i. e.* by the hand of God. The Jews say [e] a law was made on this, that virgins or unmarried persons should not be alone; for if this was done to the daughter of a king, much more might it be done to the daughter of a private man; and if to a modest person, much more to an impudent one.

Ver. 22. *And Absalom spake unto his brother Amnon neither good nor bad*, &c.] That is, said nothing at all to him about the rape of his sister; not that he was sulky with him, and would not converse with him at all; for then Amnon would have mistrusted that he was meditating revenge, and therefore would have been upon his guard; but on the contrary he talked freely, and in appearance friendly, on other things, the better to dissemble his hatred of him, and his design to avenge the injury of his sister: *for Absalom hated Amnon*; or, *though* [f] he hated him, yet he behaved in this manner towards him: *because he had forced his sister Tamar*: who was so by father and mother's side, and so near and dear unto him, and therefore resented the injury done her.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass after two full years*, &c.] Two complete years after the rape was committed; so long Absalom kept it in his mind, and was contriving how to avenge it; he let it alone so long, that it might be thought by the king and Amnon, and all the family, that it was quite worn out of his mind, and entirely forgotten by him, and therefore might the more safely confide in him: *that Absalom had sheep-*

[c] De Vest. Sacerdot. Heb. l. 1. c. 17. sect. 21.
[d] Suidas in voce [illegible].

[e] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 1.
[f] כי quamvis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator, Pool, & Patrick.

shearers in Baal-hazor, which is beside Ephraim; though a prince, the son of a king, he had his flocks, and attended to the care of them, and had shearers to shear them at the proper time of the year, which it now was. The Chinese shear their sheep three times a year, in the spring, summer, and autumn; but the first time of shearing yields the best wool [g]. The place of shearing them was, no doubt, near where they were kept in Baal-hazor, in the plain of Hazor, as the Targum, and so some versions; which was a city in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 25. and near to Ephraim; not that it was a city in the tribe of Ephraim, as Josephus says [h]; but it was near to another city called Ephraim, perhaps the same as in 2 Chron. xiii. 19. and in John xi. 54. it lay to the north-east of Jerusalem, as you go to Jericho, and is thought by Reland [i] to lie between Beth-el and Jericho; and, according to Eusebius [k], it was eight miles from Jerusalem; though Jerom [l], through mistake, says twenty; and both these places, according to Bunting [m], were eight miles from Jerusalem; it seems to be the same place that was spoken of in the Misnah [n], called Ephraim in the valley, and which is said to be the second place in the land of Israel for fine flour, and might have its name from its fruitfulness: *and Absalom invited all the king's sons:* to the sheep-shearing: that is, to the feast which was usually made at such times, and still is; see Gen. xxxviii. 12. 1 Sam. xxv. 2, 8, 11, 36.

Ver. 24. *And Absalom came to the king,* &c.] At Jerusalem, to invite him in person: *and said, behold now, thy servant hath sheep-shearers;* persons employed in shearing his sheep; and this being a time of entertainment and joy, *let the king, I beseech thee, and his servants, go with thy servant;* he invited the king and the whole royal family to go with him to Baal-hazor, and partake of the sheep-shearing feast; for by *his servants* are not meant the king's domestic servants, his guard and retinue, but his sons, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 25. *And the king said to Absalom, nay, my son, let us not all now go,* &c.] He did not object to the invitation entirely, he was willing some of the family should go, but not all; it seems probable that he particularly excepted himself and his eldest son, the heir to his crown, for the reason following: *lest we be chargeable unto thee;* one or two persons more, supposing them to be private persons, would have added but little to the expense, if any; but as David was a king, he must have come with the retinue of a king, with a large number of servants and guards, and must be entertained as such; and Amnon, his eldest son, and heir-apparent to the crown, must make a figure suitable to his quality, which would have considerably raised the expense; and perhaps Absalom's estate he had to live upon might be but small, which David knew, and therefore chose not to be burdensome to him: *and he pressed him;* urged him to go; not that he expected he would, or really desired he should, but this he did to hide his intention, that he might have no suspicion of his design against Amnon; or otherwise he might think he would not have been so pressing upon him to go with him: *howbeit he would not go, but blessed him;* thanked him for the invitation he gave him, and wished him much happiness and pleasure at his entertainment with his friends.

Ver. 26. *Then said Absalom, if not,* &c.] If it is not thy pleasure to go with me, if I cannot have the honour of thy company: *I pray thee, let my brother Amnon go with us;* let me have the next mark of honour that can be given me, the presence of the king's eldest son, and heir to the crown; he seems to express affection for him, and a particular desire of his company, as if all ill will towards him was removed from him, and this would be a public declaration of reconciliation between them: *and the king said unto him, why should he go with thee?* he particularly, he more than any other; David seems to have suspected some design, and it is strange he should not; and yet if he had, it is much, notwithstanding the pressing arguments used, he should let him go; or he might think it would be more expensive to have him than the rest, and therefore asks why he should desire his company above all others.

Ver. 27. *But Absalom pressed him,* &c.] Which one would think would have increased his suspicion, if he had any, or have raised it in him; but his mind was blinded, that Amnon's incest might be punished, and the threatening to David and his house be fulfilled on account of the affair of Uriah and Bathsheba: *and he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him;* if he had any suspicion at all, he might choose they should all go, that they might protect and defend him, if any attempt was made upon him; or, as others think, that no exceptions might be taken, as might be, if Amnon had gone alone.

Ver. 28. *Now Absalom had commanded his servants,* &c.] Before he and his guests were set down to the entertainment: *saying, mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine;* as he was determined to make him if possible, and as he supposed he would be, knowing his inclination to drink: *and when I say unto you, smite Amnon, then kill him;* smite him that he die, and be sure he is dead before you leave him: *fear not, have not I commanded you?* who am your lord, the king's son, and will then be heir to the crown; fear not, I'll protect you; let all the blame be laid to me, if any; I'll be answerable for it, you have nothing to do but to obey my commands: *be courageous, and be valiant;* shew yourselves to be men of courage and valour, not fearing the king's sons, or any in company, or what will be the consequences of it; do your business effectually, and leave all with me; it is very reasonably supposed that Absalom had not only in view to revenge the rape of his sister, but to get himself next heir to the crown.

Ver. 29. *And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded,* &c.] They smote him, and killed him, when he gave the word: *then all the king's sons arose;* from the feast, imagining they were all designed to be slain: *and every man gat him up upon his mule, and fled;* creatures much used in Judea in-

[g] Semedo's History of China, part 1. ch. 3.
[h] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 8. sect. 2.
[i] Palestina Illustrat. tom. 1. p. 377.
[k] Apud Reland, ib. & p. 490. & tom. 2. p. 765.
[l] De loc. Heb. fol. 91. A.
[m] Travels, &c. p. 143, 263.
[n] Menachot, c. 8. sect. 1.

stead of horses, which, though they might not be bred, might be used [o].

Ver. 30. *And it came to pass while they were in the way*, &c.] On their road homewards, before they got to Jerusalem: *that tidings came to David:* perhaps brought by one who was at the entertainment, who upon seeing Amnon smitten, immediately rose up and fled with the news of it to David: *saying, Absalom hath slain all the king's sons, and there is not one of them left;* which he might suppose was the design of Absalom, and was done before that time; however, so it was ordered in Providence, that David, that rejoiced at the news of the death of Uriah, might be terrified with the tidings of the death of all his sons; and for a while it was as if it was really so, which occasioned the following behaviour in him.

Ver. 31. *Then the king arose, and tore his garments*, &c.] In token of extreme grief and sorrow, as Jacob did when he was shewn the coat of Joseph, supposing him to have been slain, as David thought all his sons were, Gen. xxxvii. 34. *and lay on the earth;* on the bare ground, another token of mourning; so Job did on hearing the death of his sons, Job i. 20. *and all his servants stood by with their clothes rent;* did as David did, in imitation of him, joining with him in expressions of sorrow; these were his courtiers, ministers of state, and principal officers in his household.

Ver. 32. *And Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother*, &c.] The same that advised Amnon to feign himself sick, to get Tamar sent to him, that he might enjoy her, ver. 3. *answered and said;* said in answer to the report brought to the king, which threw him into such an agony: *let not my lord suppose* that *they have slain all the young men the king's sons;* he did not believe it himself, and would not have the king entertain such a thought, and distress himself with it: *for Amnon only is dead;* he is very positive, and speaks with great assurance; it looks as if he was in the secret, and knew of the plot against Amnon's life; and, if so, he must be a very wicked man, first to form a scheme whereby Amnon might come at Tamar to ravish her, and then be accessory to the murder of him, as he must, if he knew of the design against his life, and did not acquaint him and the king of it; and this seems to be confirmed by what follows: *for by the appointment of Absalom this hath been determined, from the day that he forced his sister Tamar;* that is, the slaying of Amnon; the meaning is, either that Absalom had given orders to his servants to slay him, whenever they had an opportunity; or it was *in the mouth of Absalom* [r], as it may be rendered; he used to declare it to his intimate friends, that it was the purpose and resolution of his heart to kill Amnon some time or another; and this he had taken up from the time of his sister Tamar's being forced, and because of that, of which Jonadab had intelligence by some means or another; and who speaks of this rape without any seeming emotion, as if he had no concern at all in it.

Ver. 33. *Now therefore let not my lord the king take the thing to his heart*, &c.] Neither suppose it, nor be troubled for it: *to think that all the king's sons are dead;* which was not to be thought, nor could any good reason be given for such a supposition: *for Amnon only is dead;* he repeats it again with great assurance, which seems to confirm the suspicion of him before suggested; though some think he said this not from certain knowledge, but by conjecture.

Ver. 34. *But Absalom fled*, &c.] He who promised his servants protection could not protect himself, and who no doubt fled with him; he knew what he had done was death by law, and that there was no city of refuge for such sort of murder as this, and he had no reason to hope the king would suffer so foul a crime as this to pass unpunished: *and the young man that kept the watch lifted up his eyes, and looked;* to the way that led from Absalom's house to Jerusalem, to see if he could spy any other messenger on the road from thence: *and, behold, there came much people by the way of the hill-side behind him;* that is, behind the watchman, who, looking round him, saw them; these people were the king's sons and their attendants, who, being at some distance, the young man could not discern who they were; they did not come the direct road from Absalom's house, but came a round-about way, for fear, as R. Isaiah rightly conjectures, lest Absalom should pursue, or send pursuers after them, and slay them; though others, as Kimchi, think this refers to the hill, and that the sense is, that the watchman saw them coming from the way which was behind the hill, and began to see them when they came to the side of it, which was the way that led to the city, surrounded by mountains, see Psal. cxxv. 2.

Ver. 35. *And Jonadab said to the king, behold, the king's sons come*, &c.] For as they came nearer, it was plainly discovered that they were the king's sons, seen on the side of the hill: *as thy servant said, so it is;* he seems to applaud himself, and exult at his penetration and foresight.

Ver. 36. *And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of speaking*, &c.] As soon as the above words were out of his mouth: *that, behold, the king's sons came;* into the palace, and into the apartment where the king was: *and lifted up their voice and wept;* not being able to tell the sorrowful news with their mouths, but declared it by gestures: *and the king also and all his servants wept very sore;* they joined the king's sons in weeping, and were the more moved to it by their weeping, and the rather, since hereby the news of Amnon's murder was confirmed.

Ver. 37. *But Absalom fled*, &c.] As before related, but here repeated for the sake of what follows: *and went to Talmai, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur;* his mother's father, see ch. iii. 3. where he might hope for protection and safety: *and David mourned for his son every day;* or *all the days* [s], *i. e.* of the three years Absalom was in Geshur, about the end of which he was comforted concerning Amnon, as the following verses shew. Some think it was for Absalom he mourned, but rather for Amnon. The reason why he mourned for him, when he did not for his child by Bathsheba, who died, because that was an infant, this a grown man, and heir to his crown, and was

[o] Vid. Misn. Celaim, c. 8. sect. 1.

[r] על פי אבשלום in ore Absalom, V. L. Vatablus.

[s] כל הימים cunctis diebus, V. L. omnibus diebus, Pagninus, Montanus.

slain by the sword of his brother, and so fulfilled a threatening to himself on account of his own sin, which, hereby no doubt, was brought fresh to his mind.

Ver. 38. *So Absalom fled*, &c.] This is the third time it is mentioned, and the reason of it here Abarbinel thinks is, that when he first fled to his grandfather, he used to stand openly in the court of his palace, and go with him wherever he went from place to place; but when he understood that his father mourned so for the death of Amnon, he was afraid he would send some person to lay hold on him, and take vengeance on him; and therefore he would go no more with the king from place to place, but went and abode in Geshur always, which was a fortified city, as it follows: *and went to Geshur, and was there three years*: and never went out of it, until he was fetched by Joab, as the next chapter relates; nor is there any thing in this and the preceding verse disturbed and mutilated, as Spinosa [f] intimates, but the whole is very expressive and emphatical.

Ver. 39. *And* the soul of *King David longed to go forth unto Absalom*, &c.] In like manner it is supplied and paraphrased in the Targum, because the word rendered *longed* is feminine; though it may be used to denote the effeminateness of David's disposition and carriage on this occasion. Aben Ezra thinks the word *wife* should be supplied, and then the sense is, that the wife of King David, the mother of Absalom, made supplication to him to send forth one of the young men to fetch Absalom, and that by her importunity to him she stirred up a longing desire in David after him. Abarbinel observes, from another writer of theirs, that all the three years David was mourning for his son, he went out continually to seek to take vengeance on Absalom; but after that time, the mother of Absalom, or Tamar his sister, or his daughter, was importunate with the king, and restrained him from going forth to seek vengeance on Absalom; and when he was comforted concerning Amnon, that woman found means to restrain him from going out, and he restrained his servants from going forth against Absalom; and so he observes the word is used for withholding or restraining in Psal. xl. 10. and this agrees with several ancient versions, as the Vulgate Latin, "King "David ceased to persecute Absalom;" and the Septuagint, "King David ceased to go out to Absalom;" and the Syriac version, "and King David abstained from going out after Absalom:" *for he was comforted concerning Amnon, seeing he was dead*; and could not be brought back from the grave, though Absalom might be from his exile, to which he had an inclination; but he knew not how to do it, consistent with justice and his own honour.

C H A P. XIV.

THIS chapter relates that Joab, perceiving David's inclination to bring back Absalom, employed a wise woman of Tekoah to lay before him a feigned case of her's, drawn up by Joab, whereby this point was gained from the king, that murder might be dispensed with in her case, ver. 1—20. which being applied to the case of Absalom, and the king finding out that the hand of Joab was in this, sent for him, and ordered him to bring Absalom again, though as yet he would not see his face, ver. 21—24. and after some notice being taken of the beauty of Absalom's person, particularly of his head of hair, and of the number of his children, ver. 25, 26, 27, it is related, that after two full years Absalom was uneasy that he might not see the king's face, and sent for Joab, who refused to come to him, till he found means to oblige him to it, who, with the king's leave, introduced him to him, ver. 28—33.

Ver. 1. *Now Joab the son of Zeruiah*, &c.] The general of David's army: *perceived that the king's heart was towards Absalom*; and longed to have him returned, though he knew not how to bring it about with credit to himself, his crime being so foul, and worthy of death. This Joab perceived by some words he now and then dropped, and by his conduct, not seeking by any ways and means to bring him to justice, and being now reconciled to the death of Amnon; wherefore Joab devised a way to make known to him his own mind, and the sense of the people, which would serve to encourage him to restore him; and the rather Joab was inclined to take such a step, as he knew it would establish him in the king's favour, and ingratiate him into the affection of Absalom, the next heir to the crown, as well as please the people, whose darling he was. Though Abarbinel is of opinion that Joab proceeded upon another view of things, not because he saw the heart and affection of David were towards Absalom, but the reverse; that though David restrained himself and his servants from going out after Absalom, yet Joab knew that the heart of the king was against him, and that his heart was to take vengeance on him, though he did not go out to seek him; he perceived there was still enmity and hatred in his heart to take vengeance on Absalom, and therefore he took the following method to remove it, and reconcile his mind to him; and so the Targum, "and Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the heart of the king was to go "out against Absalom;" and it may be observed, that when Joab had so far prevailed upon him as to admit him to bring him back to Jerusalem, he would not suffer him to see his face, nor did he for two years after.

Ver. 2. *And Joab sent to Tekoah*, &c.] Which Kimchi says was a city in the tribe of Asher, and others in the tribe of Benjamin, but it seems rather to be in the tribe of Judah, 2 Chron. xi. 5, 6, according to Jerom [g], it was twelve miles from Jerusalem, though in another place [h] he says it was but nine; of this place

[f] Tractat. Theolog. Politic. c. 9. p. 176.
[g] Proem. in Amos, & Comment. in Jer. vi. 1.
[h] De loc. Heb. in voce *Elthel*, fol. 91. B.

was Amos, and some think[a] the woman after mentioned was his grandmother. It was proper to lay the scene of the affair to be proposed to the king at some distance, that it might not soon and easily be inquired into: *and fetched thence a wise woman:* one much advanced in years, as Josephus says[b], whose years had taught her wisdom by experience; a woman of good sense, and of a good address, apt at expression and reply, and knew how to manage an affair committed to her; and among other things, perhaps, was famous for acting the part of a mourner at funerals, for which sometimes women were hired; however, she was one that was talked of for her wisdom and prudence, and Joab having heard of her, sent for her as one for his purpose. The Jews[c] say, that Tekoah was the first place in the land of Israel for oil, and because the inhabitants were much used to oil, wisdom was found among them: *and said unto her, I pray thee feign thyself to be a mourner;* a woman of a sorrowful spirit, and in great distress, and shew it by cries and tears: *and put on now mourning-apparel;* black clothes, such as mourners usually wore: *and anoint not thyself with oil;* as used to be done in times of feasting and rejoicing, to make them look smooth, and gay, and cheerful, and of which there might be much use at Tekoah, if so famous for oil: *but be as a woman that had a long time mourned for the dead;* her countenance pale and foul with weeping, her mourning-clothes almost worn out, *&c.*

Ver. 3. *And come to the king,* &c.] At his palace, in the above condition and circumstances: *and speak on this manner unto him;* something to the following purpose he dictated to her: *so Joab put the words in her mouth;* the substance of what she should say; the fable she was to deliver as her own case might be framed by Joab, and which she delivered word for word exactly as he put it, and the application of it; but as he knew not what questions the king would ask her, so he could not dictate to her what to reply, unless he supposed this and the other, and so formed answers; but this he left to her prudence, and for the sake of which he chose a wise woman to manage this affair.

Ver. 4. *And when the woman of Tekoah spake to the king,* &c.] Or after she had spoken to him, being introduced by Joab, as is probable; when she had saluted him with God save the king, or May the king live, or some such-like expressions: *she fell on her face to the ground, and did obeisance;* to him as her king, in reverence of his majesty: *and said, help, O king;* signifying that she was in great distress, and came to him for assistance and deliverance.

Ver. 5. *And the king said unto her, what aileth thee?* &c.] Or what is thy case? What is the condition, and what the circumstances, that thou art in, which require help and assistance? intimating that he was ready to grant it on knowledge thereof; however, he was ready to hear what she had to say: *and she answered, I am indeed a widow woman;* of a truth a widow, as the Targum; she was really one, a widow indeed, as in 1 Tim. v. 3, 5. not one that was separated from her husband, he being alive, or divorced from him on any account; and therefore she adds, *and mine husband is dead;* and has been a long time; this she said to move the pity and compassion of the king, who, as the supreme magistrate in God's stead, was a father of the fatherless, and the judge of the widow.

Ver. 6. *And thy handmaid had two sons,* &c.] Two are observed, that her case might suit with Amnon and Absalom: *and they two strove together in the field;* they quarrelled, and fought in the field, where there were no witnesses of what they did to each other; whereby she would suggest that Amnon was killed in the field, of which there were no witnesses, and therefore Absalom ought not to die; whereas it was in Absalom's house, at his table, and where the rest of the king's sons were present, and witnesses of it: *and there was none to part them;* which, had there been, might have prevented the sad disaster; this, as Abarbinel thinks, is pointed at David, who when Amnon forced Tamar, did not correct him for it, nor seek to make peace between the brethren, and hence followed what had happened: *but the one smote the other, and slew him;* as say the accusers of him that is living; for the fable supposes there was none with them; however, she suggests, as the above writer observes, that one gave the first blow, and so was the aggressor; and that he that was smitten rose up in his own defence, and in his passion slew him that smote him; which is observed to lessen the crime, and to intimate that Amnon was the aggressor, who first began the sin and quarrel, in ravishing Tamar, and so reproaching Absalom; and therefore his blood was upon his own head.

Ver. 7. *And, behold, the whole family is risen against thine handmaid,* &c.] Who had sheltered her son, that slew his brother, from the avenger of blood; and not only the next akin, the avenger of blood, but even all the kindred and relations of the deceased, those of her husband's family rose up as one man, demanding justice: *and they said, deliver him that smote his brother, that we may kill him for the life of his brother whom he slew;* pretending great regard to the deceased, and a zeal for justice, when the main thing aimed at was to get the inheritance into their own hands, as appears by what follows: *and we will destroy the heir also;* and hereby she would insinuate to the king, that the reason why the rest of the king's sons spake against Absalom to him, and stirred him up to punish him with death, was because he was heir to the crown, and they thought by removing him to make way for themselves: *and so they shall quench my coal that is left;* she had but one son, as she represents her case, who was like a coal left among ashes, in the ruins of her family; the only one to support her, keep alive her family, and bear up and continue her husband's name; and, as the Targum, "they "seek to kill the only one that is left;" and so the family be extinct: *and shall not leave to my husband neither name nor remainder upon the earth;* should he be delivered up to them and slain; but herein the fable or apologue differed greatly from the case it was in-

[a] In Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 78. 1.
[b] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 8. sect. 4.
[c] T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 85. 2.

tended to represent; for had Absalom been put to death, as the law required, David had sons enough to inherit his throne, and keep up his name.

Ver. 8. *And the king said to the woman, go to thine house,* &c.] Go home and make thyself easy: *and I will give charge concerning thee:* intimating that he would inquire into her case; and if it was as she had represented it, he would give orders that she should not be disturbed, or be obliged to deliver up her son, and that he should be safe from those that sought his life.

Ver. 9. *And the woman of Tekoah said unto the king, my lord and king,* &c.] With much vehemence, and yet with great respect, fearing an inquisition into her case; which it would not bear, being a fable, and being very desirous of having sentence on it immediately pronounced: *the iniquity be on me and on my father's house:* let the crime be imputed to me and my family, and punishment inflicted on us for it, if I have misrepresented the case, told lies, and deceived the king: *and the king and his throne be guiltless:* let neither he nor his kingdom be charged with any sin, or suffer any damage on that account: or else the sense is, supposing that the king through much business should forget and neglect this affair; and her son should be put to death, through the violence and rage of the family; then she wishes that the fault and punishment of such neglect might not fall upon the king and his kingdom, but upon her and her family: in this form she put it, for the honour of the king, and because she would not be thought to wish ill to him and his kingdom; yet tacitly suggests, that should this be the case, he and his kingdom must expect to answer and suffer for it.

Ver. 10. *And the king said, whoever saith* ought *unto thee,* &c.] Demanding her to deliver up her son to justice, and reproaching her for not doing it: *bring him to me;* give him in charge to a proper officer to be brought before me, and I'll chastise him for it: *and he shall not touch thee any more;* give her any further trouble, by words or deeds.

Ver. 11. *Then said she, I pray thee, let the king remember the Lord thy God,* &c.] Who is a God gracious and merciful, and imitate him in shewing mercy to the distressed; pitying their case, having compassion upon them, and relieving them, as she hoped he would commiserate her case, and provide for the safety of her son. Some think she desires not only to give his word, but his oath, for her son's safety: *remember the Lord thy God:* i. e. make mention of him, as men do when they swear by him; swear to me by the Lord thy God: *that thou wouldest not suffer the revengers of blood to destroy any more, lest they destroy my son,* or, *from multiplying the avenger of blood* *; that there might not rise one after another to destroy her son: her meaning is, that the king would swear to her, and give out a general prohibition, an universal edict, that no one should slay her son; otherwise if only the avenger of blood that was next of kin was forbidden, others would rise up one after another, so that he would never be in safety: *and he said, as the Lord liveth;* if she desired an oath, he granted her request, and swore by the living God: *there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth;* so far shall his life be from being touched, or taken away, that the least hurt shall not be done him, as this proverbial expression signifies.

Ver. 12. *Then the woman said, let thine handmaid, I pray thee, speak one word unto my Lord the king,* &c.] Having gained her point, and gotten a decree from him confirmed by an oath, that her son though he had killed his brother should not die; she proceeds to accommodate the parable, and apply it to the case of Absalom, and improve it in his favour: *and he said, say on;* gave her leave to say what she had further to observe to him; see Luke vii. 40.

Ver. 13. *Wherefore then hast thou thought such a thing against the people of God?* &c.] That they would be so wicked as to slay my son, or that they are the people of God that would slay Absalom; people so cruel could not be reckoned such, as the king's sons; so Abarbinel; who gives it as the sense of Ephodæus, that by the people of God are meant Absalom, and his men; or Absalom only, one man being sometimes called people, Exod. xxi. 8. and she expostulates with the king how he could entertain such a thought, as to seek to take away his life, when he had so fully expressed himself in her case on behalf of her son, who had slain his brother; or rather the meaning is, why he should think of doing such a thing as this, so contrary to the will of the people of Israel, the people of God, who would be greatly offended and grieved at it; so contrary to their wishes, which were to see him fetched back from an Heathenish court and country, where he was in danger of being corrupted, and to be restored to his father's favour and to his country, that he might be upon the spot at his death, to succeed in the throne and kingdom; for the provocation that Absalom had to kill Amnon had greatly lessened the evil in the esteem of the people: *for the king doth speak this thing as one which is faulty;* he contradicts and condemns himself, in swearing that her son who had killed his brother should not die, nor an hair of his head be hurt, but should be in the utmost safety; and yet he sought to put his own son to death for a like crime, as the next clause explains it: *in that the king doth not fetch home again his banished;* meaning Absalom, who was in a foreign country, an exile, and in danger of falling into idolatry; not daring to come home, lest his father should order him to be put to death; and which he might justly fear he would, should he return without leave, since he sought not by any means to fetch him back.

Ver. 14. *For we must needs die,* &c.] As all must, herself, the king, and his sons, and indeed all men; this is the common case and lot of men; particularly she insinuates that David must die, and that there must be a successor named, and perhaps a dispute would arise about one; which might be fatal, if Absalom was not recalled in his life-time; and that Amnon must have died in a little time if he had not been killed by his brother; and Absalom, he must die also quickly, and therefore what signifies taking away his life? he may as well live a little longer; this, however

* מהרבות גאל הדם a multiplicando redemptorem sanguinis, Montanus; so the Tigurine version.

plausible, was but bad reasoning in the case of a malefactor: *and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again;* which sinks into the earth, and can't be got out of it again; so men, when they die, are buried in the earth, and can't be gathered or restored to life again, until the resurrection of the dead; and since Amnon is dead, and he can't be brought to life again, it is best to be easy, and not seek to take away the life of another; which is to bring him into the same irrecoverable state and condition: *neither doth God respect any person:* the words in the original are, *God doth not take away the soul* or *life*[p]; of every offender, but spares them notwithstanding the crimes they have committed; and therefore it became the king to be sparing and merciful to offenders, and particularly to his own son; and perhaps she may tacitly have respect to David himself, who had been guilty both of murder and adultery, either of which deserved death; and yet God had not taken away his life, but in his great mercy had spared him; and therefore, since he had received mercy, he should shew it: or *God hath not taken away* his *soul or life;* the life of Absalom; he had not cut him off himself by his immediate hand, nor suffered the king's sons to take away his life, nor any other to seize upon him, and bring him to justice, whom David might have employed; but had by his providence protected and preserved him; so that it seemed to be his will and pleasure that he should not be put to death: *yet doth he devise means that his banished be not expelled from him:* from his word, worship, and ordinances, as Absalom was; and by protecting him by his providence, it looked as if it was his will, and he would find out ways and means for bringing him back to his country, his father's court, and the sanctuary of the Lord; even as, by the law concerning the cities of refuge for the manslayer, provision was made that at the death of the high-priest the exiled person might return to his country.

Ver. 15. *Now therefore that I am come to speak of this thing unto my lord the king,* &c.] Of the case of Absalom, under a feigned one of her's: it is *because the people have made me afraid:* having heard of their whisperings, murmurings, and uneasiness among them, because Absalom was not sent for home, fearing there would be an insurrection in the nation, or an invasion of it by Absalom at the request of his friends; in which he might be supported by the king of Geshur; or however that disputes would arise about the succession, at the death of David; on these accounts she determined to speak to the king, and hint them to him in the manner she had done; though some understand this of the discouragement the people laid her under, telling her the king would not hear her; nevertheless she was resolved to make trial: *and thy handmaid said, I will now speak unto the king; it may be the king will perform the request of his handmaid:* not only with respect to her own son, as feigned; but with respect to Absalom, the grand thing in view.

Ver. 16. *For the king will hear,* &c.] She was fully persuaded of it, as now he had heard her: *to deliver his handmaid out of the hand of the man* that would *destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God:* he had given his word and his oath that he would deliver her son from the avenger of blood, that neither he nor any other should destroy him; which would have been the destruction of her and her whole family out of the land of Israel, the land which God had chosen for his inheritance, and had given to the people of Israel to be theirs; and since the king had heard her, and granted her this favour, she doubted not but that he would deliver his own son from death, and restore him to the inheritance of the land, where he might worship the Lord God of his fathers, of which he was now deprived.

Ver. 17. *Then thine handmaid said, the word of my lord the king shall now be comfortable,* &c.] Or, *for rest*[q]; what will give ease and satisfaction not only to her, but to all the people of Israel, when they shall hear of the king's intention and resolution to bring back Absalom: *for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king;* as they are very wise, knowing, and understanding creatures, so was David: *to discern good and bad;* to hear both the one and the other, and to discern the difference between them, and choose and pursue what is right, as in all other things, so in the present case: *therefore the Lord thy God shall be with thee;* as to counsel and advise, so to assist in performance, and to prosper and succeed; the Targum is, "the Word of the Lord thy God shall be for thine "help."

Ver. 18. *Then the king answered and said unto the woman,* &c.] Understanding plainly what she meant by all this, that the case she brought was a feigned one, and that the intention of it was to let him know the sense of the people with respect to Absalom, and the recall of him: *hide not from me, I pray thee, the thing that I shall ask thee;* he suspected that this was not a scheme of her own, but some considerable person had formed it, and made use of her to execute it, which was what he desired to know: *and the woman said, let my lord the king now speak;* ask what question he pleases, I am ready to answer.

Ver. 19. *And the king said,* is not *the hand of Joab with thee in all this?* &c.] That is, is not this done by the advice, assistance, and direction of Joab? did not he form this scheme for thee, and direct thee to this method, and put thee upon prosecuting it? *and the woman answered and said,* as *thy soul liveth, my lord the king;* what I am about to say is as sure as thou art alive; though this may be only a wish that he might long live and be happy; nothing is more desirable than thy valuable life: *none can turn to the right hand or the left from ought that my lord the king hath spoken;* he has hit upon the truth of the matter; there is no dissimulation or prevarication to be used; the thing cannot be denied; *for thy servant Joab he bade me, and put all these words in the mouth of thine handmaid:* he sent for me, and laid his commands on me, and directed me what to say to the king, and how to conduct this affair.

Ver. 20. *To fetch about this form of speech hath thy*

[p] ולא ישא אלהים נפש & non tollet Deus animam, Montanus; so the Tigurine version.

[q] למנחה ad requiem, Pagninus, Montanus; ad tranquillitatem, Tigurine version; ad quietem, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

servant Joab done this thing, &c.] Feigned a story in such form and manner as had been delivered to the king, that it might be accommodated and applied to the case of Absalom, and to transfer it in a figure to the king, to use the apostle's phrase, 1 Cor. iv. 8. *and my lord is wise, according to the wisdom of an angel of God*: as not only to understand the design of this fable or parable, but of such sagacity and penetration as to find out the author of it; and even *to know all* things *that* are *in the earth*: either in the whole world, or rather in the land of Israel; and it is to be understood not of all actions natural and moral done by men in it, which would be to ascribe omniscience to him; but of all political things, all things respecting civil government; that he had such a spirit of discerning of men and things, that nothing could be said or done, or scheme formed, but he got intelligence of it, and insight into it; and which was carrying the compliment to a great height.

Ver. 21. *And the king said unto Joab*, &c.] Who was present, or but at a little distance, waiting the issue of this affair: *behold now I have done this thing*: have agreed to recall Absalom, at the suit of this woman, which thou hast put her upon; or, according to the textual reading, *thou hast done this thing*[t]; contrived this scheme, to let me know the mind of the people with respect to Absalom, or to represent to me the propriety of sending for him home: *go, therefore, bring the young man Absalom again*; I give my consent to it, and you may send for him, or fetch him as soon as you please; it is thought he calls him a *young man*, to extenuate his crime, that it was done in youthful heat and passion, and therefore he should pass it over.

Ver. 22. *And Joab fell to the ground on his face, and bowed himself*, &c.] Or bowed so low as to the ground, in reverence of the king: *and thanked the king*: for giving him leave to fetch Absalom home, as if it was a favour done to himself: or *blessed*[u] him; wished all happiness and prosperity might attend him, in consequence of this grant, which he knew would be acceptable to the people: *and Joab said, to-day thy servant knoweth that I have found grace in thy sight, my lord, O king, in that the king hath fulfilled the request of his servant*: he might presume upon this, that as the king had given orders at his request to recall Absalom, who had murdered his brother, which was tacitly giving him a pardon; so he would forgive him the murder of Abner, and think no more of it; since he perceived now, which he had not so clearly perceived before from that time, that he found grace in his sight, or shared in his favour and good will, as now he saw he did.

Ver. 23. *So Joab arose and went to Geshur*, &c.] Where Absalom was with his grandfather, the king of the place; see ch. xiii. 37, 38. *and brought Absalom to Jerusalem*: from thence, which, according to Bunting[v], was the distance of 88 miles from it.

Ver. 24. *And the king said*, &c.] Very probably to Joab, when he informed him of Absalom's being come to Jerusalem: *let him turn to his own house*; depart from the king's palace, where Joab had brought him, and go to his own house, which was in Jerusalem; for here he had one before he fled to Geshur; see ch. xiii. 20. *and let him not see my face*; which he ordered, partly to shew his detestation of the crime he had been guilty of, and some remaining resentment in his mind at him on account of it; and partly for his credit among some of the people at least, who might think it was a crime so great as not to go unpunished, though others were of a different mind; and also for the greater humiliation of Absalom, who, the king might think, had not been sufficiently humbled for his sin, or had not truly repented of it: *so Absalom returned to his own house, and saw not the king's face*; in obedience to his father's orders.

Ver. 25. *But in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty*, &c.] Which is observed to account in some measure for the interest he had in the affections of the people, both now and hereafter: *from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him*: not any spot, freckle, wart, scurf, or scab; nothing deficient or superfluous in him; no disproportion of parts, nor any disagreeable feature; but an entire symmetry, and perfect comeliness, which made him very respectable. The Talmudists[w] make him to be of a gigantic stature.

Ver. 26. *And when he polled his head*, &c.] Or cut off the hair of it; for that was one thing, a good head of hair which he had, that made him look very comely and beautiful: *for it was at every year's end that he polled it*; or cut it off once a year; but the Jews say[x] he was a perpetual Nazarite: *because the hair was heavy upon him, and therefore he polled it*; it grew so very thick and long in one year's time, that he was obliged to cut it; and what might add to the weight of it, its being oiled and powdered; and, as some say, with the dust of gold, to make it look yellow and glistering: *he weighed the hair of his head at* 200 *shekels, after the king's weight*: and a shekel being the weight of half an ounce of avoirdupois weight, as Bishop Cumberland[z] has shewn from various writers, the weight of his hair must be 100 ounces; which was a very great weight indeed on his head. Some think that the price it was sold at, and not the weight of it, is meant; which they suppose was sold to women for ornament about their temples, and the money given either to the poor, or for the use of the sanctuary; and reckoning a shekel at two shillings and sixpence, as some do, the value of it came to 25 pounds of our money; but the above-mentioned writer[y] reduces it to about two shillings and fourpence farthing; which makes the value somewhat less; but inasmuch as it is not so probable that a person of such rank should sell his hair, nor does it appear that any such use was made of hair in those times as suggested; and this being said to be according to the king's weight or stone, by which all weights were to be regulated, it is best to understand this of the

[t] עשית Keri, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[u] ויברך & benedixit, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[v] Travels, &c. p. 146, 148.

[w] T. Bab. Niddah, fol. 24. 2.

[x] Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Nazir, c. 1. sect. 2. Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 194. 2. Gloss. T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 2.

[z] Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4. p. 103.

[y] Ibid. p. 104.

weight, and not of the price of his hair; which, according to Josephus [a], was five pounds; but, according to the above account, it must be six pounds and a quarter. The Jews say [a] this weight was according to what the inhabitants of Tiberias and Zippore used, but don't tell us what it was.

Ver. 27. *And unto Absalom there were born three sons, &c.*] Who very probably died young; and the rather it may be thought so, since their names are not given, and more especially since it is said that Absalom had no sons, and therefore erected a pillar to keep up the remembrance of his name; unless it can be thought that that was set up before he had any sons, which is not so likely; see ch. xviii. 18. *and one daughter, whose name was Tamar;* and whom he named after his sister Tamar, who was ravished by Amnon; the Septuagint version in some copies adds, "and she became the "wife of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, and bore to "him Abia;" and so says Josephus [b]; see 1 Kings xv. 22. 2 Chron. xi. 20. *she was a woman of a fair countenance;* as was her aunt, after whom she was named, ch. xiii. 1. by this it appears that she lived to woman's estate, though the sons of Absalom died young.

Ver. 28. *So Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, &c.*] After his return from Geshur: *and saw not the king's face:* all that time; which was owing either to the king's resentment of the fact committed by him, or to state-policy.

Ver. 29. *Therefore Absalom sent for Joab, to have sent him to the king, &c.*] To introduce him into his presence, being uneasy to be thus confined at his own house, and not suffered to come to court: *but he would not come to him;* knowing the king's mind, and being unwilling to disoblige him by a troublesome solicitation: *and when he sent again the second time, he would not come;* knowing his business with him; and perhaps between the first time of his sending and this he had sounded the king about it, and found it was not agreeable to him to admit him to access to him as yet.

Ver. 30. *Therefore he said unto his servants, &c.*] That did his business for him in the field, in keeping his flocks, and tilling his ground: *see Joab's field is near mine;* for great personages in those days attended to husbandry: *and he hath barley there, go and set it on fire;* it being ripe, and so capable of being fired, and therefore must be some time in March or April, when barley-harvest began; he served Joab as Samson did the Philistines, Judg. xv. 4. which shews him to be a bold, and revengeful, and ungrateful man, to use his friend, and the general of the king's army, after this manner: *and Absalom's servants set the field on fire:* as their master had bid them, and which is no wonder; for as they murdered Amnon at his command, they would not stick at burning Joab's field, when he bid them do it: see ch. xiii. 28, 29.

Ver. 31. *Then Joab arose, and came to Absalom unto his house, &c.*] Provoked at what he had done, and to know the reason of it; and which was answering Absalom's end: *and said unto him, wherefore have thy servants set my field on fire?* which was not only injurious to his property, but a malicious action.

Ver. 32. *And Absalom answered Joab, &c.*] Neither denying the fact, nor being ashamed of it, nor asking pardon for it; but endeavouring to vindicate it, by giving a reason as he thought sufficient for it: *behold, I sent unto thee, saying, come hither, that I may send thee to the king;* which was assuming great authority over a person in such an high office as Joab was; had he been king, he could not have used more, to send for him, and command his attendance, and send him on what errand he thought fit, as here: *to say, wherefore am I come from Geshur?* why did the king send for me? why did not he let me alone where I was? to what purpose am I brought hither, since I am not admitted to court? it had been *good for me* to have been *there still;* and better, where he lived in a king's court, and had honour and respect shewn him, suitable to his rank; and where he had his liberty, and could go where he pleased; and where this mark of his father's displeasure, not suffering him to see his face, would not be so manifest as here, and so less disgraceful to him: *now therefore let me see the king's face:* that is, speak to the king, and intercede for me, that I may see his face; which he was so importunate for, not from affection to the king; but that being at court, he might be able to ingratiate himself among the courtiers and others, and carry the point which his ambition prompted him to, supplant the king, and seize the crown: *and if there be any iniquity in me, let him kill me;* signifying he chose to die, rather than to live such a life he did: but of being put to death he was not much afraid; presuming partly upon his innocence, thinking that the killing of his brother was no crime, because he was the aggressor, had ravished his sister, and for it ought to die; and since justice was delayed, and not done him, he had committed no iniquity in putting him to death; and partly on his father's affection to him, which he was sensible of; at least he had reason to believe he would not now put him to death; for had he designed that, he would have ordered it before now, since he had had him so long in his hands.

Ver. 33. *So Joab came to the king, and told him, &c.*] What Absalom had said to him: *and when he had called for Absalom;* sent messengers to his house to order him to come to him: *he came to the king, and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king;* made a very reverend bow to him, according to the custom of those times, throwing himself at his feet in great submission to him: *and the king kissed Absalom;* in token of his reconciliation to him; which laid the foundation of his after-troubles from him, related in the following chapters.

[a] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 8. sect. 5.
[a] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 10. 2.

[b] Ut supra.

CHAP. XV.

THIS chapter relates how that Absalom by various artful methods stole away the hearts of the people of Israel, ver. 1—6. that pretending a vow he had made, he got leave of the king to go to Hebron to perform it, ver. 7, 8, 9. where he formed a considerable conspiracy, ver. 10, 11, 12. of which David having information, thought it advisable to depart from Jerusalem, both for his own safety, and the good of the city, which he did with his family, and guards, and much people, ver. 13—18. though he would have persuaded Ittai the Gittite to have returned, but could not prevail upon him, ver. 19—23. however, he sent back the priests and the Levites with the ark, lest any hurt should come to that, ver. 24—29. and as he and the people went up the mount of Olives weeping, it was told him that Ahithophel was among the conspirators, on which he put up a prayer that his counsel might be infatuated, ver. 30, 31. and Hushai the Archite coming to him at that juncture, he sent him back to Jerusalem to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, and to send him word by the priests what he should hear there from time to time, ver. 32—37.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass after this*, &c.] After the reconciliation of David and Absalom, and the latter was admitted to court again: *that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses*; to make himself look grand and respectable among the people; perhaps he got these from his grandfather at Geshur in Syria: *and fifty men to run before him*; which added to his pomp and magnificence; and such great personages in aftertime have had; Nero the Roman emperor never went on a journey with less than 1,000 calashes, and a great number of men that ran before him [c]: and this was tacitly setting himself up for king, at least preparing for it, as Adonijah afterwards did in the same way and manner, 1 Kings i. 5.

Ver. 2. *And Absalom rose up early*, &c.] Every morning, to shew how diligent and industrious he should be, and closely apply himself to business, was he in any office under the king, and especially when he should be king himself; this he did to ingratiate himself into the affections of the people: *and stood beside the way of the gate*; either of the king's palace, so Josephus [d], or of the city, where courts of judicature are held: the former seems most probable by what follows: *and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment*; that had a controversy with another man on any account, and came to the king to have it decided according to law, or the rules of justice and equity: *then Absalom called unto him, and said, of what city art thou?* which question he asked, only to lead on to some further discourse: *and he said, thy servant is of one of the tribes*; that is, of one of the cities of the tribes of Israel, and not of a city of another nation.

Ver. 3. *And Absalom said unto him*, &c.] After some further talk, and finding he had a suit at law to bring on, and either seeing it drawn up in writing, or hearing his account of it, at once declared, without hearing the other party: *see, thy matters are good and right*; thy cause is a good cause, and if it could be heard by proper persons there is no doubt but things would go on thy side, and thou wouldest carry thy cause: *but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee*; the king is grown old himself, and his sons are negligent, and don't attend to business, and there are none besides them appointed to hear causes; and he suggested, as appears by what follows, that he was not in commission, but if he was, or should be appointed a judge, he would attend to business, and people should not go away after this manner, without having justice administered unto them.

Ver. 4. *Absalom said, moreover*, &c.] To the same persons, at the same time: *oh that I were made judge in the land*; by which it appears that he had no office under the king; partly either because of his crime, and so not thought fit, and partly because he appeared to be an ambitious aspiring man, and so it was thought not safe to put him into any office: *that every man that hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice*; at once, without any further trouble, or coming often, and in vain, and to no purpose.

Ver. 5. *And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance*, &c.] To pay his respects, and bow to him, as being the king's son, a prince of the blood, and heir to the crown, as was supposed: *he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him*; he put out his hand and shook hands with him, or took him about the neck and kissed him, and by this free, familiar, affable, and courteous manner, strangely won upon and gained the affections of the people, as follows. Fortunatus Schacchus [e] thinks he put forth his hand to be kissed by them, and then kissed them, which was more than was usual.

Ver. 6. *And in this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment*, &c.] Told them there was none to be had, wished that he was in office to administer it to them, and behaved in the above loving manner towards them: *so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel*; got the affections of the people in a private and clandestine manner, and robbed the king of them, who had the best right unto them.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass after* 40 *years*, &c.] Or four years; so long it was from the reconciliation of Absalom to David, as Josephus [f] says; and so read Theodoret on the place, the Syriac and Arabic versions: but some say it was either forty years from the time Israel first had a king; and which might be an era of reckoning with the Jews, as the era of Seleucidæ was with the Greeks, on the like account; or from the time Saul slew the priests at Nob, as Jerom [g]; or from the time of David's being anointed

[c] Suetonius in Vit. Neron. c. 30. Vid. Senecæ, Ep. 87. & 123.
[d] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 1.
[e] Elæochrism. Myrothec. l. 2. c. 34. col. 954.

[f] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 1.
[g] Trad. Heb. in 2 lib. Reg. fol. 78. M.

by Samuel; or this was the year of Absalom's age, or of David's reign: but these, and other attempts made to account for this passage, are not entirely satisfactory; and therefore one may be tempted to conclude there must be a mistake in the copy, of *arbaim* for *arba*, forty for four; which makes it quite easy, and confirms the first sense: *that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the Lord, in Hebron;* not what he vowed in Hebron; for according to his own account he had vowed it in Geshur, as in the following verse; but his request is, that he might pay it in Hebron; which place he fixed upon, being his native place, and where David was anointed king; and which, being about 20 miles from Jerusalem, was at a proper distance to lay the scene of his conspiracy in, and bring it to perfection.

Ver. 8. *For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria*, &c.] When at his grandfather's court there: *saying, if the Lord will bring me again indeed to Jerusalem;* which he might be sincerely desirous of: *then I will serve the Lord;* but it is a question whether he ever made a vow to this purpose, or concerned himself about serving the Lord; but it rather may be, this was a lie of his, now framed in order to get leave of the king to go to Hebron.

Ver. 9. *And the king said unto him, go in peace*, &c.] He gave him leave to go, and wished happiness and prosperity might attend him: *so he arose and went to Hebron;* with a company of men, whose number is after mentioned.

Ver. 10. *But Absalom sent spies throughout all the land of Israel*, &c.] To sound the disposition of the people towards him, to insinuate things into their minds in favour of him, and to improve every opportunity of recommending him to their esteem and affections: *saying, as soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet;* in any place; and which it is probable he employed men to sound in many places: *then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron;* which is the cause of the trumpet's sounding; and by this means they would learn how the people stood affected to him, whether the news was grateful or no.

Ver. 11. *And with Absalom went 200 men out of Jerusalem, that were called*, &c.] Invited by him to go with him, and partake of his peace-offerings, as the payment of his vow in Hebron; part of which was made a feast of for his friends, whomsoever he should think fit to invite, as he did to the number of 200, and for the entertainment of whom a large provision ought to be made; the Jews[k] have a tradition, that he had leave of his father only to invite two to go with him, and that he asked two more unknown to the first, and so on, two after two, until they amounted to two hundred: *and they went in their simplicity;* to partake of the feast of the peace-offerings, to which they were invited; being quite harmless and upright in their intentions, having no thought of disloyalty and rebellion in their breasts: *and they knew not any thing;* of an intended conspiracy; howbeit, doubtless many of them were drawn into it when got thither; and as these may be supposed to be some of the principal men of Jerusalem, it was a great weakening of David's interest, and laid a considerable foundation for Absalom to begin upon.

Ver. 12. *And Absalom sent for Ahithophel, the Gilonite, David's counsellor*, &c.] To advise with about this treasonable affair he was engaged in, and to get out of him David's secrets, who was reckoned the best counsellor in the land; and he might rather hope he would come to him, if he was the grandfather of Bathsheba, as say the Jews, ch. xi. 3. and xxiii. 34. since he might be disgusted with and resent David's adultery with Bathsheba his granddaughter, and the murder of her husband Uriah: him he sent for, *from his city*, even *from Giloh;* a city in the tribe of Judah, in the mountainous part of it, near to Hebron, where Absalom now was; and, according to Bunting[l], 20 miles from Jerusalem, see Josh. xv. 48, 51, 54. *while I offered sacrifices;* not Ahithophel, but Absalom, his peace-offerings at Hebron, to which he invited Ahithophel to come and partake of: *and the conspiracy was strong;* or there was a great number in the conspiracy, who were assembled together: *for the people increased continually with Absalom;* being drawn to him by the comeliness of his person, his affable behaviour, the pomp and magnificence in which he appeared, the great number of the principal inhabitants of Jerusalem with him, and he the king's eldest son, and so heir to the crown; whereas it might begin to be rumoured about, that David designed Solomon, a son of Bathsheba, a young prince, to be his successor, which did not meet with general approbation at first.

Ver. 13. *And there came a messenger to David*, &c.] Perhaps one of the 200 that went with Absalom, ignorant of his design; which, when discovered, he disapproved of, and got away from him, and came to David, and informed him how things were: *saying, the hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom;* to make him king.

Ver. 14. *And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem*, &c.] His courtiers and ministers of state, the officers of his household, as many of them as were with him in the city; for some of them very probably were in the country, as Ahithophel was, and some might be along with Absalom, whom he had invited to his peace-offerings: *arise, and let us flee;* it is much that a man of such courage and valour as David should be so intimidated at once as to meditate a flight as soon as he heard of a conspiracy forming against him: *for we shall not else escape from Absalom;* his fears ran so high, that he fancied he would be upon them presently: *make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly;* which still more clearly shews the panic he was in: *and bring evil upon us;* kill them, or make them prisoners: *and smite the city with the edge of the sword;* the inhabitants of it, should they make resistance.

Ver. 15. *And the king's servants said unto the king*, &c.] In answer to him, and to shew that they were quite conformable to his pleasure: *behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint;* or *choose*[k], whether to prepare to fight, and defend him and the city, or to depart and make their escape.

[k] Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 9. fol. 194. 4.
[l] Travels, &c. p. 149.

[k] יבחר elegerit, Pagninus, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

Ver. 16. *And the king went forth*, &c.] Which determined the case: *and all his household after him*: his family and his court; they followed his example, and attended him in his flight: *and the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house*: not to defend it, which they were unable to do, but to look after the household goods and furniture, that they were not damaged by the conspirators; though one would think they could be of little service, and may wonder what he should leave them behind for; but this seems to be ordered by the overruling providence of God, to bring about what was threatened him, ch. xii. 11. and it is much he had not thought of it; but it was hid from his eyes, that it might be fulfilled.

Ver. 17. *And the king went forth*, &c.] From Jerusalem; which is repeated, that it might be observed in what a hurry and fright he was: *and all the people after him*: his family, court, and servants, and as many of the people of Jerusalem as chose to go with him: *and tarried at a place that was afar off*: when they had got at some distance from the city, they stopped and stayed a while: it could not be a great way from it, for they had not as yet passed over the brook Kidron, ver. 23.

Ver. 18. *And all his servants passed on beside him*, &c.] Or at his hand or side; his household servants walking perhaps some on one side of him, and some on the other, see ch. xvi. 6. *and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites*; which were his body-guards, see ch. viii. 18. *and all the Gittites, 600 men which came after him from Gath*; which either came with him from Gath, when he conquered that city, and took it out of the hands of the Philistines, ch. viii. 1. compared with 1 Chron. xviii. 1. and who might become proselytes, and be incorporated into the commonwealth of Israel, and into David's army, a troop of men, of which Ittai, after mentioned, was captain; or else these were Israelites, so called, because with David they sojourned in Gath a while, when he fled from Saul; and so Josephus[l] says, they were companions of him in his first flight, when Saul was living; and this number is just the number of the men that were with him at Gath, 1 Sam. xxvii. 2, 3. and it may be David kept a troop of men always of the same number, to whom he gave this name in memory of them, having been a set of trusty and faithful men to him: these, with the Cherethites and Pelethites, *passed on before the king*; in this form and manner David and his men marched in their flight.

Ver. 19. *Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite*, &c.] Who was over the band of Gittites, the 600 men, ver. 22. *wherefore goest thou also with us?* one should think the king should not have discouraged any from joining and following him, when his numbers were not very large, and he in such fear on account of Absalom: *return to this place*; to Jerusalem, where his station was: *and abide with the king*; with Absalom, who set himself up for king, and whom the people perhaps had proclaimed as such in Hebron, where the conspiracy began: *for thou art a stranger, and also an exile*: not a native of Israel, but of another nation, and at a distance from it, and therefore not altogether under the same obligations to attend David in his troubles as others were; and by this it seems that he was a Gittite by nation, whatever the 600 men were, and rather favours the first sense given of them in the preceding verse.

Ver. 20. *Whereas thou camest* but *yesterday*, &c.] From Gath, or from an expedition he and his men had been on: *should I this day make thee go up and down with us?* wander up and down from place to place with David, when he was but just come off a journey, weary and fatigued: *seeing I go whither I may*; where it will be most safe for me, I know not where; may be obliged to flee here and there, which would be very inconvenient to Ittai in his circumstances: *return thou, and take back thy brethren*; the 600 men under him, and whom David could ill spare at this time, and yet, consulting their ease, advises to return to Jerusalem with them: *mercy and truth be with thee*; the Lord shew mercy and kindness to thee, in that thou hast shewn favour and respect to me, and make good all his promises to thee, who hast been true and faithful to me.

Ver. 21. *And Ittai answered the king, and said*, &c.] With an oath, as follows: as *the Lord liveth, and as my lord the king liveth*; which he took to confirm what he after says, and to put an end to the debate between them: *surely, in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be*; signifying that he would attend him wherever he went, hazard his life in his cause, and live and die with him.

Ver. 22. *And David said unto Ittai, go, and pass over*, &c.] It being his resolution to abide with him, he urged him no more to depart, but bid him pass over the brook Kidron before him: *and Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men*: the 600 Gittites that were under his command: *and all the little ones that were with him*; that belonged to him and his men, and no doubt their wives also.

Ver. 23. *And all the country wept with a loud voice*, &c.] The people that came out of the country-villages round about, upon the report of the king's leaving Jerusalem, because of his son's conspiracy against him; these wept when they saw him in the circumstances in which he was, obliged to fly from a rebellious son: *and all the people passed over*; the people that were with David passed over Kidron, and so the Cherethites, and Pelethites: *the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron*; this explains what place it was they passed over, which is not before mentioned, but is particularly named in the account of the king's passing over it; over which same brook the Messiah, his antitype, passed a little before his sufferings and death; of which brook see the note on John xviii. 1. It is often by Josephus[m] called a valley, sometimes a brook, it having little water, except in winter; Mr. Maundrell[n] says, it ran along the bottom of the valley of Jehoshaphat, a brook in the winter-time; but without the least drop of water in it all the time, says he, we were in Jerusalem; and so Reland[o], that

[l] Ut supra, sect. 2.

[m] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 1. sect. 5. & l. 9. c. 7. sect. 3. De Bello Jud. l. 5. c. 2. sect. 3. c. 4. sect. 2. c. 6. sect. 1.

[n] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 102.

[o] Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 1. p. 294, 351.

in summer-time it ceases to be a river, and has the name of a valley; and Le Bruyn says[p], it is at present dried up; it runs along the valley of Jehoshaphat, and is not above three paces broad; it has no other but rain-water, which flows from the adjacent hills: *and all the people passed over to the way of the wilderness;* which lay between Jerusalem and Jericho.

Ver. 24. *And, lo, Zadok also,* &c.] The priest, as he is called, ver. 27. *and all the Levites, were with him,* with Zadok, or with David, and indeed with both; but the former is rather meant here, being the immediate antecedent: *bearing the ark of the covenant of God:* these were the Kohathite Levites, whose business it was to bear the ark when carried from place to place, Numb. iii. 31. and iv. 15. and vii. 9. called the ark of the covenant, because the law, which was the covenant between God and the people, was put into it: *and they set down the ark of God:* from off their shoulders, on which they carried it: *and Abiathar went up;* who was the high-priest, and whose business it was to attend the ark, and inquire before it, as occasion required; he went up very probably to the mount of Olives, after mentioned: *until all the people had done passing out of the city;* for from the top of that mountain he could see the city of Jerusalem, and the people as they passed out of it, and observe when they were all come out, or however ceased coming, and so knew when it was a proper time to march forward.

Ver. 25. *And the king said unto Zadok, carry back the ark of God into the city,* &c.] The reason of which is not easy to account for, since being carried back, it would fall into the hands of the conspirators; and now the priests were with it to care care of it, and there might be occasion to inquire at it before the Lord; but David thought it being a sacred thing would not be violated by Absalom and his men, and that it would be safest in its own habitation or tabernacle, which David had built for it; for, that the reason of it should be, what Procopius Gazæus suggests, cannot be given into, that he could not bear to carry about him the law, which accused of adulteries and murders: *if I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord,* if he will appear for me, be on my side, and deliver me from those who have risen up against me: *he will bring me again;* to Jerusalem, and to his palace there: *and shew me* both *it and his habitation;* the ark, and the tabernacle he had erected for it, ch. vi. 17.

Ver. 26. *But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee,* &c.] As a king, or in his temporal prosperity, though he might and had delight in him as a chosen vessel of salvation, as a saint and child of God, and in his spiritual and everlasting welfare: *behold,* here am *I;* his humble servant, ready to be, and do and suffer whatever is his pleasure: *let him do to me as seemeth good unto him;* strip me of all the ensigns of royalty, dispossess me of my crown and kingdom, and dispose of me as seems good in his sight; who is a sovereign Being, and has a right to do with his creatures what he pleases.

Ver. 27. *And the king said unto Zadok the priest, art* not *thou a seer?* &c.] A prophet, as well as a priest, see 1 Sam. ix. 9. or a seeing, knowing, man; one that can penetrate into men and things, and so might be of more service to David at Jerusalem than with him; wherefore he said to him, *return into the city in peace;* to the city of Jerusalem with peace, quietness, and satisfaction of mind; where he doubted not, at least hoped and wished, he would be in safety and prosperity, being one of the Lord's priests: *and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar;* the one was of the line of Eleazar, and the other of the line of Ithamar.

Ver. 28. *See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness,* &c.] Towards the way of which David and the people went when they came over Kidron, ver. 23. *until there come word from you to certify me;* of the truth of the conspiracy, of the number of the conspirators, and who they are, what progress they have made, whether come to Jerusalem, and how they behave there, if come; or of any thing relative hereunto he could get intelligence of.

Ver. 29. *Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem,* &c.] That is, ordered it to be carried, and took care that it was carried, by the Kohathite Levites, and they themselves attended it: *and they tarried there;* at Jerusalem; though their two sons that went with them entered not into the city, but stayed at a place called En-rogel, at some little distance from it, ch. xvii. 17.

Ver. 30. *And David went up by the ascent of* Mount *Olivet,* &c.] So called from the olive-trees that grew upon it, which is often mentioned in the New Testament, and where our Lord Jesus Christ, the antitype of David, often was, in his state of humiliation, and from whence he ascended to heaven after his resurrection; it was about a mile from Jerusalem, to the east of it: *and wept as he went up;* thinking perhaps of the wickedness and rebellion of his son, of his own hard case, to be obliged to quit his metropolis and palace, and make his flight afoot; and perhaps also of his own sins, which were the cause of his calamities: *and had his head covered;* with his mantle, with which he enwrapped himself as a mourner, ch. xix. 4. so the Egyptians used to cover their heads in mourning, and the Romans in after-times[q]; so Megara in sorrowful circumstances is represented as having her head covered with a garment[r]: *and he went barefoot;* in token of mourning also, and like one forlorn, and going into captivity, see Isa. xx. 2. Mic. i. 8. *and all the people that was with him covered every man his head;* as David did, and in imitation of him, and sympathizing with him; and which was sometimes done when men were ashamed and confounded, Jer. xiv. 3, 4. *and they went up, weeping as they went up;* the mount of Olivet, grieved for their king, and the distresses and calamities that were coming upon them.

Ver. 31. *And* one *told David,* &c.] That came either from Hebron or from Jerusalem: *Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom;* Absalom sent

[p] Voyage to the Levant, ch. 48. p. 186.
[q] Vid. Solerium de Pileo, sect. 2. p. 14, 19.

[r] Senec. Hercul. furens, act. 2.

for him, and it seems he came to him, and continued with him, see ver. 12. *and David said, O Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness*: either suffer him to give foolish counsel, or confound the schemes projected by him, and let them not be carried into execution; for God can, and sometimes does, disappoint crafty counsellors, that they can't perform what they devise, but they are taken in their own craftiness, and their counsel is carried headlong, Job. v. 12, 13. this prayer was answered, ch. xvii. 14, 23.

Ver. 32. *And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top* of the mount, *&c.*] Of the mount of Olives: *where he worshipped God*: by prayer and praise; here very probably he composed and sung the third psalm, which, as the title shews, was made when he fled from Absalom: *behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him, with his coat rent, and earth upon his head*; in token of mourning, and as a bringer of bad tidings, see ch. i. 2. perhaps he was an inhabitant of Archi, at least originally, which lay on the borders of the tribe of Ephraim, Josh. xvi. 2. from whence he had his name.

Ver. 33. *Unto whom David said*, &c.] After he had heard what he had to say, and what tidings he brought: *if thou passest on with me*; in his march and flight: *then thou shalt be a burden to me*; being to be maintained by him; and David having but scanty provisions, and so could not receive useless persons, as Hushai might be, perhaps an old man, that could be of no service to him, and unfit for travelling, and so would rather be an hinderance than an help unto him.

Ver. 34. *But if thou return to the city*, &c.] To the city of Jerusalem, from whence it seems he came: *and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king*; as he was by usurpation, and by the proclamation of the people with him. David directs him to address him thus, that he might have no suspicion of him, having been an old friend of his: as *I have been thy father's servant hitherto*; perhaps in the character of a counsellor, as it should seem, since as such he was afterwards employed by Absalom: *so will I now also be thy servant*; in whatsoever thou shalt please to employ me under thee: *then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel*; for being taken into Absalom's service, and made one of his counsellors, he would be privy to the advice of Ahithophel, and so be able to counterwork him.

Ver. 35. And hast thou *not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the priests?* &c.] To assist in forming schemes directly opposite to Ahithophel's, or to whom he could communicate the secrets of Absalom's court: *therefore it shall be* that *what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house*; Absalom's, who had now got possession of the house and palace of David: *thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests*; to whom he might have recourse without suspicion, pretending he had business with them as priests, on religious accounts, to offer sacrifices for him, *&c.*

Ver. 36. *Behold*, they have *there with them two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's* son, *and Jonathan, Abiathar's* son, &c.] As in ver. 27. not that they were in the city with them, but they were near it, ch. xvii. 17. with whom they had a communication: *and by whom ye shall send unto me every thing that ye can hear*; that is, by the sons of the priests; he telling the priests how things were at court, and they sending their sons with messages to David; which was a good scheme to get intelligence, and easy to be put into execution.

Ver. 37. *So Hushai David's friend came into the city*, &c.] The city of Jerusalem, by the direction and persuasion of David, and in obedience to him, in order to serve him to the uttermost: *and Absalom came into Jerusalem*: just at the same time; so that he knew not that Hushai had been out of it, and been with David, and which also appears from what he said to him, ch. xvi. 17.

C H A P. XVI.

In this chapter is an account of Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, getting his inheritance by misrepresentation of him, and by presents to David, ver. 1—4. and of Shimei's cursing David as he passed along, which David bore patiently, and would not suffer others to avenge it on him, ver. 5—14. and of Hushai's offer of his service to Absalom, who admitted him to be of his privy-council, ver. 15—19. and of the counsel which Ahithophel gave, ver. 20—23.

Ver. 1. *And when David was a little past the top* of the hill, &c.] Of the mount of Olives, the ascent of which he is said to go up by, and to come to the top of it, ch. xv. 30, 32. *behold, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, met him*: of whom see ch. ix. 2. *with a couple of asses saddled*; and so fit to ride on, but for the present he used them to another purpose: *and upon them* 200 *loaves of bread*; 100 on each ass very probably: *and* 100 *bunches of raisins*; or dried grapes, as the Targum: *and* 100 *of summer-fruits*; not in tale, but in weight, as apples, pears, plums, apricots, *&c.* so the Targum, an hundred pounds of figs: *and a bottle of wine*; a cask or flagon of wine: for a bottle, such as is in use with us, would have signified nothing in such a company.

Ver. 2. *And the king said unto Ziba, what meanest thou by these?* &c.] Are they to be sold, or are they presents? *and Ziba said, the asses* be *for the king's household to ride on*: for himself, his wives, and children, his courtiers, and the principal officers of his house; it being usual in those times and countries for great personages to ride on asses, see Judg. v. 10. *and the bread and summer-fruits for the young men to eat*: the king's menial servants, his guards and his soldiers: *and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink*; where no water was to be had, that their fainting spirits might be revived, and they be able whether to fight or march.

Ver. 3. *And the king said, and where is thy master's son?* &c.] The son of Saul, who was Ziba's master, meaning Mephibosheth: *and Ziba said unto the king, he abideth at Jerusalem*: as there was reason for it, since he was lame of both his feet, though he could

have rode upon an ass, and followed the king, as he proposed to do; but his servant deceived him, and carried off the asses to serve a purpose for himself, see ch. xix. 26. *for he said, to-day shall the house of Israel restore unto me the kingdom of my father:* his father Saul; which was far from his thoughts; and a most wicked suggestion of his servant to blacken his character, and get his estate from him; nor was there the least probability of the kingdom coming to him, but all the reverse; for let it go how it would with David, Absalom, and not Mephibosheth, stood fair for the kingdom.

Ver. 4. *Then said the king to Ziba, behold, thine* are *all that* pertaineth *to Mephibosheth,* &c.] Being forfeited to the king by an overt-act of treason as they had been before by the rebellion of Ish-bosheth, but had been graciously restored to Mephibosheth; and had it been true what Ziba suggested, it would have been a righteous thing to have taken them from him; though it seems to be too hasty a step in David to take and give them away without further inquiry: *and Ziba said, I humbly beseech thee* that *I may find grace in thy sight, my lord, O king:* he had found favour already, but seems not to be sufficiently thankful for it, and satisfied with it, but craved more and other favours, when opportunity should serve.

Ver. 5. *And when King David came to Bahurim,* &c.] The Targum is, Alemath, perhaps the same that is said to be a city of the Levites, given unto them out of the tribe of Benjamin, 1 Chron. vi. 60. for the man next described, who was of this place, was a Benjaminite, ch. xix. 16. see the note on ch. iii. 16. David was not yet come to the city itself, but into the neighbourhood of it, the fields adjacent to it: *behold, thence came out a man of the family of Saul:* a descendant of a branch of his family, who had entertained a private grudge and secret enmity against David, to whom he imputed the fall of the family of Saul: *whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera:* which might be a name common in the tribe of Benjamin, one of Benjamin's sons being named Gera, Gen. xlvi. 21. Some say [s] he was the same with Nebat, the father of Jeroboam; but he was of the tribe of Ephraim, this of Benjamin: *he came forth, and cursed still as he came:* he came out of Bahurim, of which place he was, and all the way he came continued cursing David, until he came near unto him.

Ver. 6. *And he cast stones at David, and at all the servants of King David,* &c.] Not that he was within the reach of them, or could hurt them, by casting them at them; but this he did to shew his contempt of them, and to intimate that they deserved to be stoned, and especially David, at whose adultery he might point by it; *and all the people, and all the mighty men,* were *on his right hand, and on his left:* that is, of David; which is observed, not so much to indicate the safety of David's person, as the impudence and madness of Shimei, to cast stones at David when so guarded.

Ver. 7. *And thus said Shimei, when he cursed, come out, come out,* &c.] Or rather, *go out, go out* [t]; that is, out of the nation, where he deserved not to live, as he judged, and out of the kingdom, which he had usurped, as he supposed; and the repeating the words not only denotes his vehement desire to have him gone, but the haste he should make to get out, or he was liable to be overtaken by Absalom and his forces; upbraiding him also with the hurry he was in, and the speedy flight he was making: *thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial;* or wicked man; perhaps referring by these characters in the one to the murder of Uriah, and in the other to his adultery with Bathsheba; and these crimes coming fresh into David's mind hereby, might make him more mild and humble under his reproaches.

Ver. 8. *The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul,* &c.] Which he would suggest was shed by David, or, however, that he was the cause of its being shed; as if he had stirred up the Philistines to that battle in which Saul and his sons were slain, and had an hand secretly in the deaths of Ish-bosheth and Abner, all which were false insinuations; and it may be the seven sons of Saul before this time, though after related, were delivered into the hands of the Gibeonites to be hanged, to which respect may be had: *in whose stead thou hast reigned:* not by right, but by usurpation he suggests: *and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom:* in this he seems to contradict himself; for if David had got the kingdom by usurpation, it would rather have been delivered by the Lord into the hand of one of Saul's family, and not of David's: *behold, thou* art *taken in thy mischief:* punished for his sins; the mischief he had brought on others was retaliated to him: *because thou* art *a bloody man;* guilty of slaying, as the Targum, of shedding innocent blood, and so worthy of death.

Ver. 9. *Then said Abishai the son of Zeruiah unto the king,* &c.] A sister's son of his, and a general in the army, who could not bear to hear the king abused in this manner: *why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?* be suffered to do it with impunity; a *dog* he calls him, because of his vileness and baseness, and because of his impudence, and on account of his reproachful and abusive language, aptly signified by the snarling and barking of a dog; and a *dead* dog, as being useless, detestable, and abominable: *let me go over, I pray thee, and take off his head;* go over the plain where David and his men were, to the hill on which Shimei was, and strike off his head with his sword; which he could easily do, and soon put an end to his cursing.

Ver. 10. *And the king said, what have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?* &c.] It seems as if Joab, the brother of Abishai, joined with him in this request to have leave to take off the head of Shimei; and though David had to do with them as his relations, his sister's sons, and as they were generals in his army; yet in this case he would have nothing to do with them, would not take their advice, nor suffer them to take revenge on this man for his cursing him: *or what* is it *to me,* or *to you* [u]*?* what signifies his cursing? it will

[s] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 79. B.
[t] צא צא egredere, egredere, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

[u] מה לי ולכם quid mihi & vobis, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus.

neither hurt me nor you: *so let him curse;* go on cursing after this manner; don't restrain him from it, or attempt to stop his mouth: or, *for he will curse*[w]; so is the textual reading; you will not be able to restrain him, for the following reason: *because the Lord hath said unto him, curse David;* not by way of command, or a precept of his; for to curse the ruler of the people is contrary to the word and law of God, Exod. xxii. 28. nor by any operation of his spirit moving and exciting him to it; for the operations of the spirit are to holiness, and not to sin; but by the secret providence of God ordering, directing, and overruling all circumstances relative to this affair. Shimei had conceived enmity and hatred to David; God left him to the power of this corruption in his breast, opened a way in Providence, and gave him an opportunity of exercising it on him: it was not a bare permission of God that Shimei should curse David, but it was his will, and he ordered it so in Providence, that he should do it; which action was attended with the predetermined concourse of divine Providence, so far as it was an action; though, as a sinful action, it was of Shimei, sprung from his own heart, instigated by Satan; but as a correction and chastisement of David, it was by the will, order, and appointment of God, and as such David considered it, and quietly submitted to it: *who shall then say, wherefore hast thou done so?* for though Shimei might justly be blamed, and reproved for it, yet the thing itself was not to be hindered or restrained, it being according to the will and providence of God, to answer some good end with respect to David.

Ver. 11. *And David said to Abishai, and all his servants,* &c.] In order to make them easy, and reconcile them to this usage of him: *behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life:* meaning Absalom: *how much more now may this Benjamite do it?* who was not only of the same tribe that Saul was, but of the same family, and so bore an ill will to David because of his succession in the throne: *let him alone, and let him curse;* do nothing to restrain him, not even by words, and much less by any violent actions, and still less by taking away his life: *for the Lord hath bidden him;* in the sense explained in the preceding verse.

Ver. 12. *It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction,* &c.] Through the rebellion of his son, and now aggravated by the cursing of Shimei; that is, with an eye of pity and commiseration, and deliver him out of it: or *look upon my eye*[x]; for there is a various reading; the tear of mine eye, as the Targum; so Jarchi and R. Isaiah; the tears in it, which fell plentifully from it, on account of his troubles, and particularly the curses and reproaches of Shimei: *and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing this day:* he does not speak with assurance, yet with hope; he knew his sins deserved such treatment, but also that God was gracious and merciful, and pitied his children, and resented all ill usage of them; and therefore hoped he would favour him with such intimations of his love as would support him, comfort, refresh him, and do him good, see Rom. viii. 28.

Ver. 13. *And as David and his men went by the way,* &c.] In the high road that led to Bahurim, taking no notice of the cursing of Shimei, which made him bolder and more impudent; here is a large pause in the Hebrew text, in the midst of this verse: *Shimei went along on the hill-side over-against him:* as David and his men walked in the plain, he went on a range of hills that ran along right against them: *and cursed as he went;* continued his curses and imprecations, to which he was the more emboldened by the behaviour of David and his men: *and threw stones at him, and cast dust;* in a way of contempt, though the stones recoiled on his own head, and the dust flew in his own face, as the consequence of things shewed; and now David composed and penned the 7th psalm.

Ver. 14. *And the king, and all the people that were with him, came weary,* &c.] With their journey, and through grief and trouble at what they met with: *and refreshed themselves there;* that is, at Bahurim, with food and rest; which revived their spirits, and put as it were new life and soul into them, as the word used signifies. Josephus[y] says, when David came to Jordan, he refreshed his weary men.

Ver. 15. *And Absalom, and all the people, the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem,* &c.] At the same time that David and his people came to Bahurim; which, as Josephus[z] says, was a place near to Jerusalem; and, according to Bunting[a], was little more than a mile from it; though elsewhere[b] he makes it three miles; so that had not David made the hasty flight he did, he had fallen into the hands of Absalom: *and Ahithophel with him;* a famous counsellor, and who had been of David's privy-council, and chief in it, see ch. xv. 12, 31. and whom David refers to in Psal. lv. 12—14.

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass that when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom,* &c.] Who came into Jerusalem at the same time that Absalom did, and who, no doubt, took the first opportunity to make his court to him, ch. xv. 37. *that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king;* or *may the king live*[c], live long, and his kingdom be permanent; these words are very ambiguous, he might mean David, who was true and lawful king, though he would have them understood of Absalom, who was king by usurpation, in which he used great deceit and flattery; and that he might not be suspected of it, but be thought to be sincere and truly loyal to Absalom, he repeats the wish.

Ver. 17. *And Absalom said to Hushai, is this thy kindness to thy friend?* &c.] Meaning to David; though he would not mention his name, nor his title, nor even the relation of a father he stood in to him, only speaks of him as Hushai's friend: Hushai had professed great friendship to David, and David had been a friend to Hushai, had raised him to great honour in making him a counsellor, and had bestowed many favours and benefits on him, as Absalom knew full well; and therefore, to try his integrity, he puts this question, not

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[w] כי quia, Montanus.

[x] בעיני in oculum meum, Montanus; oculum meum lachrymantem, Munster.

[y] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 4.

[z] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 4.

[a] Travels, &c. p. 144.

[b] Ib. p. 150.

[c] יחי המלך vivat rex, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

as displeased with him, but overjoyed that such a trusty friend of David, and a wise counsellor of his, had deserted him, and come over to him and his party; nor does he mean to charge him with ingratitude, which he could not do without reproaching himself; on whom it might be justly retorted, is this thy kindness to thy father that begot thee, and has always expressed such a strong affection for thee, as to rebel against him? *why wentest thou not with thy friend?* with David, when he went out of Jerusalem; for Absalom knew not that Hushai had been with David, but thought he stayed behind at Jerusalem, when David fled, which made him less suspicious of him.

Ver. 18. *And Hushai said to Absalom*, &c.] In answer to his questions: *nay, but whom the Lord, and his people, and all the men of Israel choose;* here again he speaks very ambiguously; for this circumlocution, or descriptive character of the king of Israel, better agrees with David, whom he might bear in mind, than with Absalom; for the Lord had chosen David, and he was anointed by his order, and all the people of Israel had chosen and anointed him likewise; but as for Absalom, it was only a part of them that had declared for him, nor was there any evidence of the Lord's choosing him; though Hushai undoubtedly would be understood of him, and as interpreting the voice of the people to be the voice of God: *his will I be, and with him will I abide;* though he designed no such thing, which was a great piece of dissimulation and hypocrisy; and if he meant David, it was a piece of deceit and equivocation: there is a various reading in the first clause; we follow the marginal reading, לו, *to him* or *his*, but the textual reading is לא, *not;* and both may be taken in by rendering the words by an interrogation, *shall I, or should I not be his*[a]? I will; that is, be his servant, faithfully obey his commands, be closely attached to him, and continue with him as a loyal subject.

Ver. 19. *And again, whom should I serve?* &c.] Or *secondly*[b], a second reason is here given for serving Absalom: the first was the choice of God and the people, the second follows: should I *not* serve *in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence;* he signifies, that as the kingdom was not translated into another family, but continued in succession in David's house, the alteration made was of no great consequence: it was indifferent to him whom he served, the father or the son; and he could as freely, and would as faithfully serve the son as the father: nor did he think it any breach of friendship to David, nor would David resent it, that he should serve his son, and do the best offices, and give him the best counsel he could; and he seems to bespeak the office of a counsellor, in which he had been to David, that he might be admitted into the presence of Absalom, and be of his privy-council, and have the opportunity of giving his best advice.

Ver. 20. *Then said Absalom to Ahithophel*, &c.] Having two such able counsellors as he and Hushai, he directs his speech to Ahithophel, as being his first and chief counsellor: *give counsel among you what we shall do;* he orders them to form a counsel, consult among themselves what was proper to be now done at Jesusalem, whether it was right to stay here or pursue after David and his men. Absalom did not send to the high-priest to ask counsel of God, by Urim and Thummim before the ark, but wholly confided in his privy-council.

Ver. 21. *And Ahithophel said unto Absalom*, &c.] Either immediately of himself, without consulting with others; or after a consultation had been held between them, he as the president of it, and their mouth, gave the following advice; though the former seems rightest: *go in unto thy father's concubines, which he hath left to keep the house;* and lie with them; there were ten of them, ch. xv. 16. *and all Israel shall hear that thou art abhorred of thy father;* this fact will be so abominable to him, and he will so highly resent it, as never to forgive thee, and be reconciled unto thee: *then shall the hands of all that* are *with thee be strong;* he intimates that they were now weak, and did not act with spirit; they were fearful that David and Absalom would be reconciled, and then they should be reckoned traitors, and fall a sacrifice to David's vengeance, for their treason against him: but by Absalom's taking such a step as this, which would make him for ever the object of his father's hatred, their hands and hearts would be strengthened, and their fears removed, and they would not have the least jealousy of a reconciliation between them, and of their being left to the resentment of David. Some think this was not his only reason for giving this counsel, but also to revenge David's abuse of Bathsheba, his son's daughter, as she is supposed to be, ch. xv. 12. however, it was so ordered in Providence, that this advice should be given and taken, to fulfil the prophecy of the Lord to Nathan, ch. xii. 11.

Ver. 22. *So they spread Absalom a tent on the top of the house*, &c.] On the top of his father's palace; this, as houses in Jerusalem and Judea were, was built flat, Deut. xxii. 8. and it was on the very spot from whence David had a sight of Bathsheba, and conceived an impure lust after her. The Targum renders it, a canopy; which Kimchi describes as consisting of four pillars, upon and round about which curtains were hung: *and Absalom went in unto his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel;* they saw the tent or canopy erected, and saw him go into it, and might reasonably conclude he lay with his father's concubines, or half-wives, in it; and this being done in so public a manner fulfilled the prophecy, which said it should be done in the sight of the sun, and of all Israel, ch. xii. 11, 12. this shews how corrupt the people of Israel were at this time, at least those that were with Absalom, that there should be none to object to the counsel Ahithophel gave, nor any to remonstrate against the execution of it, but all seemed to look upon it with pleasure; nor even did Hushai, David's friend, oppose it; perhaps he saw it was to no purpose.

Ver. 23. *And the counsel of Ahithophel, which he had counselled in those days*, &c.] Both in the days of David, and in the days of Absalom, before and since

[a] לא אהיה non ero, Montanus; non essem ejus? Junius & Tremellius.

[b] השנית secunda, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus; secundo, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

the rebellion: *was as if a man had inquired of the oracle of God:* such an opinion was entertained of it, so well satisfied were they with it, and as confident of success in taking it, as if the Lord himself had been consulted by Urim and Thummim; this is a very great exaggeration of Ahithophel's counsel, and is observed as a reason why it was so readily taken, though so bad in the preceding instance: *so was all the counsel of Ahithophel, both with David and with Absalom:* Ahithophel was a crafty man, a time-server, that temporized with princes, and knew how to suit his counsels with their tempers and interests: to David he gave good counsel, what was acceptable with him, and to Absalom bad counsel, which was pleasing to him.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter relates the advice Ahithophel gave to march out speedily with a number of men in pursuit of David, which at first seemed agreeable, ver. 1—4. but Hushai's opinion being asked, and he giving counsel to raise a larger army, which required time, and was taken to, hereby the counsel of Ahithophel was defeated, ver. 5—14. upon which he hanged himself, ver. 23. these different counsels being communicated by Hushai to the priests, they found means to transmit them to David, with an instruction to him to pass over Jordan immediately; which he did, and pitched in Gilead, and whither he was followed by Absalom, ver. 15—26. and where he met with a supply of provisions for his army from some eminent persons in and near that place, ver. 27—29.

Ver. 1. *Moreover, Ahithophel said unto Absalom,* &c.] Either at the same time, or quickly after he had given the foregoing advice: *let me now choose out* 12,000 *men:* out of those that were with Absalom, which shews their number to be large; and 12,000 are pitched upon with respect to the 12 tribes of Israel, 1,000 from every tribe; Josephus has only 10,000: *and I will arise and pursue after David this night;* he took upon him to be general of the army, as well as a counsellor; or this he said to shew how confident he was of the success of his counsel, that if Absalom, or any other, should decline the conduct of the army upon it, as a hazardous attempt, he would undertake it himself; or rather it may be, he was not willing that Absalom should go out in person with the army, not so much for his own safety, as lest through his affection for the king he should spare him, when he fell into his hands, or they two should be reconciled; he proposed to do it that night, partly for expedition, no time being to be lost, and partly for the greater surprise of David and his men.

Ver. 2. *And I will come upon him while he is weary,* &c.] With travelling, and with grief, and when endeavouring to get some rest by sleep, and so surprise him unawares, when not on his guard, and in no posture of defence: *and weak-handed;* while the number of men with him is small, and before the people from different parts can come to his assistance: *and will make him afraid;* strike terror into him and his men, by surprising them suddenly in the night with such a number of men: *and all the people that are with him shall flee;* one one way, and another another, for their own security, and leave David alone: *and I will smite the king only;* dispatch him, and let the people flee without pursuing them.

Ver. 3. *And I will bring back all the people,* &c.] Meaning not the people only that were with David, that he would make them prisoners, and bring them with him; for he before proposed to let them make their escape; but to reduce all Israel to the obedience of Absalom at once, by executing this scheme which he had formed: *the man whom thou seekest is as if all returned;* meaning David, whom he speaks of contemptibly, and whose life it seems Absalom sought, as well as his crown; and he being dead, it would be all over at once with the people; they would immediately repair to their own habitations, and yield obedience to Absalom as the rightful heir and successor; all depended on his death, he intimates: from whence it appears that Abarbinel is wrong in suggesting that Absalom did not design to take away the life of his father, only to secure the kingdom to himself in his father's life-time, who he understood had disposed of it by his will to Solomon; but here Ahithophel plainly declares the intention of Absalom, nor would he have proposed in plain terms to take away the king's life, had Absalom been averse to it; and it is plain by what follows that the thing was pleasing to him: so *all the people shall be in peace;* both parties coalesce under the government of Absalom, and live peaceably under it, and so an entire end of the war.

Ver. 4. *And the saying pleased Absalom well, and all the elders of Israel.*] That were of the privy-council; for it was a well-contrived scheme to surprise David and his men by night, in the condition they were in; nothing like seizing an opportunity, and making quick dispatch in executing a villainous design; only it is strange that Absalom could so easily come into a scheme to take away the life of so indulgent a father, which is only to be accounted for by his ambition; but it is stranger still that the elders of Israel should be pleased with it, and agree to and determine upon the death of a prince, who had so many years ruled them with justice and equity, clemency and mercy; and fought their battles for them, and raised their nation to such a pitch of glory it never had before.

Ver. 5. *Then said Absalom, call now Hushai the Archite also,* &c.] For it seems he was not at the council-board at this time; whether he was as yet admitted to it is not certain: there is something very remarkable in the providence of God, to incline Absalom to have the opinion of Hushai upon this point, when the counsel of Ahithophel was so universally approved of; and Hushai also being well known to have been an intimate friend and confident of David's, and not so settled and established in the interest of Absalom, and such a sworn friend of his as Ahithophel was; this

can only be ascribed to the will of God, to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, and the wisdom of divine Providence in blinding the mind of Absalom with respect to his counsel, and inclining it to take the opinion of Hushai: *and let us hear likewise what he saith*; which he might say without any diffidence about the *counsel* given, but knowing that in the multitude of counsellors there is safety; and Hushai being a wise and good counsellor, he might hope and expect that he would give the same advice, and so strengthen and confirm it.

Ver. 6. *And when Hushai was come to Absalom*, &c.] Into the council-chamber, very probably: *Absalom spake unto him, saying, Ahithophel hath spoken after this manner*; and then related the counsel he had given as before: *shall we do after this saying?* is it right to proceed on this scheme, and carry it into execution? *if not, speak thou*: thy mind freely, without any reserve, or fear of giving any offence.

Ver. 7. *And Hushai said to Absalom*, &c.] Having leave to give his opinion freely: *the counsel that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time*; he owns that Ahithophel was a good counsellor, and that the counsel he gave was for the most part, if not always, good, but what he gave at this time was not so; the wisest of men may sometimes be mistaken. Abarbinel thinks he respects his former counsel, particularly that that was good, advising him to defile his father's bed; but this was not, for which he gives the following reasons.

Ver. 8. *For (said Hushai) thou knowest thy father and his men, that they* be *mighty men*, &c.] Men of courage and valour, and not such weak-handed and weak-hearted men, and so easily intimidated, as Ahithophel suggests: *and they* be *chafed in their minds*; or *bitter in soul*[f]; not merely filled with trouble and anguish, and depressed in their spirits, on account of that, as the phrase sometimes signifies; but enraged and full of wrath at the rebellion raised against their prince, which obliged them with him to quit their habitations; and now being desperate, their all lying at stake, their wives and children, their families and estates, they would fight furiously in the defence of the king and themselves, and not so soon flee as Ahithophel had represented: *as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field*; a bear is a very furious creature, and especially a she-bear, and the more when it has whelps, and more so when deprived of them[g], when it ranges about in the field, and in its fury attacks whomsoever it meets with; see the note on Hos. xiii. 8. *and thy father is a man of war*; not only bold and courageous, but expert and skilful in all the arts of war, and not easy to be surprised and circumvented, as Ahithophel intimated: *and will not lodge with the people*; in the camp, but at some distance from it; partly to prevent any traitorous design upon him in it, and partly that he might not be surprised by the enemy, knowing that their chief view was to seize his person; and therefore as it would not be easy to find him where he was, he could not be smitten alone, as Ahithophel proposed.

Ver. 9. *Behold, he is hid now in some pit, or in some other place*, &c.] Some lurking-place, as he was acquainted with many when he fled from Saul, and where he preserved himself from him; so that he could never take him, as he would now from Absalom, as he insinuates: but this is not all; not only by this means he would shelter himself, and be in safety; but lying thus concealed with others, and in ambush, there would be danger of his starting out of his hiding-place when opportunity should offer, and falling on some of Absalom's troops unawares: *and it will come to pass, when some of them be overthrown at the first*; that is, some of Absalom's party, on whom David and his men coming out of an ambush should fall, and make a slaughter among them first, before they could do any thing of consequence; and so having got the first advantage, it would serve to animate them, and dishearten their enemies: *that whosoever heareth it*; at that time, or the next day: *will say, there is a slaughter among the people that follow Absalom*; there has been a defeat of them, and that may cause a defection.

Ver. 10. *And he also* that is *valiant, whose heart is as the heart of a lion, shall utterly melt*, &c.] That is, whoever should hear of Absalom's forces, or a part of them, being routed, would be intimidated, though ever so courageous, or of such a lion-like temper and disposition; and even Ahithophel himself, notwithstanding all his boasted courage, his heart would fail, he would melt like water[h], Josh. vii. 5. should he meet with such a rebuff at first setting out. A lion is well known for its courage as well as strength, and has not only a fierce countenance, hence we read of lion-like men in their faces, ch. xxiii. 20. 1 Chron. xii. 8. but has a courageous heart, and from thence it is thought to have its name Labi, from *leb*, which signifies the heart; so Hercules is represented by the poet as having a lion's heart[i], and others also; though Leo Africanus[k] relates of some lions in Africa that are so naturally fearful that they will flee at the cry of children, particularly at a place called Agla; hence it became a proverb with the inhabitants of Fez to call blustering cowards the lions of Agla; and he speaks of great numbers of lions elsewhere[l], who are easily driven away with a small stick by the most timorous persons; but for the most part lions are very bold and daring, as well as strong, to which the allusion is here. Some apply this to David himself, who was a valiant man, and whose heart was like that of a lion, and so read the last clause with an interrogation: *shall he utterly melt?* no, he will not; he is not to be made afraid so easily as Ahithophel has intimated: *for all Israel knoweth that thy father is a mighty man, and they which be with him are valiant men*; this is so universally known that it cannot be denied.

Ver. 11. *Therefore I counsel*, &c.] My advice is as follows: *that all Israel be generally gathered unto thee, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, as the sand that is by the*

[f] מרי נפש amari animo, Pagninus, Montanus; amaro animo, V. L. Tigurine version, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[g] Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 6. c. 18. & 9. 1.

—— [illegible], Moschi Idyll. 2. ver. 45.

[i] [illegible], Homer. Iliad. 5. ver. 639. Iliad. 7. ver. 228. Odyss. 11. ver. 266. Vid. Hesiod. Theogoniam prope finem.

[k] Descriptio Africæ, l. 3. p. 400.

[l] Ib. p. 474.

sea for multitude: not all the inhabitants of the land, but such as are fit to bear arms, or that were soldiers, employed in military affairs, in keeping garrisons, guarding the coasts, *&c.* even the militia of the nation, from the extreme boundary of it on the north to the extreme boundary of it on the south; in such a direction lay Dan and Beer-sheba. This is opposed to the counsel of Ahithophel, which was only to select 12,000 men, and send them against David at once; and this is designed chiefly to gain time, since such a collection could not be made soon, and so David would have more time to get further off, and to prepare the better for his defence; and this advice might be the more agreeable to Absalom, as it promised a greater certainty of success through numbers, and might feed the vanity and ambition of that prince to have such a large army under him, as well as suggested that all Israel were on his side, and at his command, and might easily be gathered to him: *and that thou go to battle in thine own person*; this was another part of his advice opposed to the counsel of Ahithophel, who proposed to have the command of the 12,000 men himself, and to leave Absalom at Jerusalem; now Hushai suggests that it would be more to his interest and his honour to take command of the army himself, and go in person into the field of battle; since this would serve to animate his soldiers, when they saw their prince at the head of them, and he would have the glory of the victory, which he might insinuate hereby Ahithophel sought to deprive him of: it is in the Hebrew text, that *thy face* or *faces go to battle*[m], where he might be seen in person, and have the oversight and direction of things himself; the Targum is, "and "thou shalt go at the head of us all:" and this advice Hushai was directed to give, and which was taken, that Absalom might fall in battle.

Ver. 12. *So shall we come upon him in some place where he shall be found*, &c.] For such a numerous army, which would be spread abroad, could not well fail of finding him out, let him be in what lurking-place he would; whereas he might lie concealed, and escape so small a number as 12,000 men: *and we will light upon him as the dew falleth upon the ground*; whose drops are innumerable, and cover all the ground where they fall; and the phrase not only expresses their numbers, but the irresistible force they should come with, and the manner, secretly, unawares, opportunely; the Romans had a sort of soldiers, called from the dew *rorarii*, who carried light armour, and fought first in the battle, from whence they had their name, because dew falls before it rains[n]: *and of him, and of all the men that* are *with him, there shall not be left so much as one*; so that for the future Absalom would sit easy upon the throne, there being none left to molest him.

Ver. 13. *Moreover, if he be gotten into a city*, &c.] A strong fortified place, thinking to secure himself there, where he might hold out against those that were risen against him; the former part of the account supposes him in the field, where he would soon be detected, if hidden in a pit or any other place, or if he appeared openly would quickly be overthrown by the numerous forces of Absalom; and here it suggests, should he betake himself to a city for shelter, *then shall all Israel bring ropes to that city*; scaling-ropes, and thereby get upon and over the walls of it, and take it by storm; or engines worked with ropes, used for the demolishing of cities; so Tacitus speaks of *vincula tormentorum*, the bands or ropes of engines, as Grotius observes; the Targum renders it by *armies*, thus, "all Israel shall be gathered against the city, "and surround it with armies," besiege it in form, and so begirt it that David could not possibly make his escape out of it, nor could it hold out long against such numerous forces; or this is an hyperbolical expression, as Kimchi calls it, signifying that their numbers would be so many, that they could soon and easily demolish it: *and we will draw it into the river*; by the side of which it was built, or the ditch or trench around it, or the valley near it, that being built on an hill; and by this boasting, bragging, hyperbolical expression, he signifies that they should be able easily and utterly to destroy its walls, buildings, and towers, as if a number of men were to fasten a rope about any thing, and by their main strength, and through their numbers, draw it down whither they pleased: *until there be not one small stone found there*; and this being the case, David and his men must inevitably fall into their hands, and none escape.

Ver. 14. *And Absalom and all the men of Israel said*, &c.] That is, the elders, who before approved of the counsel of Ahithophel, ver. 4. *the counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel*; it appeared to them most plausible, and most likely to be attended with success: *for the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel*; for so it was to Absalom and his party the best and wisest that could be given them; but it was the Lord's will it should be defeated, and therefore the minds of Absalom and of the elders of Israel were blinded: *to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom*; his person and cause; that his cause might be ruined, and he himself slain in battle; see Prov. xix. 21.

Ver. 15. *Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests*, &c.] After he was returned from the council-board, he immediately went to these priests, who he knew were in the interest of David, and to whom he was to communicate, and by them transmit, what passed at Jerusalem, ch. xv. 35, 36. *thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel*; relating to them in express words what he advised to: *and thus and thus have I counselled*; telling them in what manner he had given his counsel.

Ver. 16. *Now therefore send quickly and tell David*, &c.] What has been advised to on both sides; *saying, lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness*; which reached to Jericho; this advice he gave, because he knew not whether his counsel would be abode by, though preferred; Absalom and the elders of Israel might change their minds, and Ahithophel might, by the strength of his oratory, prevail upon them after all to follow his advice; and therefore, to guard against the worst, he judged it most prudential in David to

[m] פניך הלכים facies tuæ euntes, Montanus, facies tua vadat, Pagninus.

[n] Valtrinus de Milit. Roman. l. 3. c. 3.

make all the haste he could from that place where he was, and not continue a night longer in it; for, if Ahithophel's counsel should take place, he would be in pursuit of him that very night: *but speedily pass over;* the river Jordan: *lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that* are *with him:* be destroyed by the forces Ahithophel should bring with him, which he would not be able to withstand.

Ver. 17. *Now Jonathan and Ahimaaz stayed by En-rogel,* &c.] Who were the sons of the priests; these did not go into the city of Jerusalem with their parents, when they were sent back by David, ch. xv. 27. but stayed by their direction at this place, which was near Jerusalem, and is called in the Targum the fuller's fountain, where they washed their clothes; and, as Kimchi and Jarchi say, by treading them with their feet, whence it had the name of Rogel, of which see the note on Josh. xv. 7. *(for they might not be seen to come into the city:)* having been charged by their parents to continue there for the sake of carrying intelligence to David, or because suspected by Absalom's party of carrying on such an intrigue: *and a wench went and told them:* what Hushai had communicated to the priests, and what was his advice to David; this girl is supposed by Kimchi and Abarbinel to be of the family of Zadok, by whom she was sufficiently instructed to tell her message, and of whom there would be no suspicion: *and they went and told King David:* the sons of the priests went and related to him all that had been transmitted to them.

Ver. 18. *Nevertheless, a lad saw them, and told Absalom,* &c.] Saw them conversing with the girl, and departing for David's army; according to Josephus[n], they were some horsemen that saw them about two furlongs from Jerusalem, and acquainted Absalom with it: *but they went both of them away quickly;* made all the haste they could with their message to David: *and came to a man's house in Bahurim;* where very probably they had been informed David had been, whither he came weary, and had refreshment, ch. xvi. 14. or rather, perceiving they were discovered and pursued, they turned in hither, the first place they came to, for safety: *which had a well in his court;* which they observed, and was the reason of their turning in: *whither they went down;* to hide themselves from their pursuers, it being dry, as sometimes wells were in the summer-time: Josephus says[p], a woman let them down by a rope.

Ver. 19. *And the woman took and spread a covering over the well's mouth,* &c.] This woman, very probably, was the man's wife of the house, as Abarbinel notes; who took a cloth, and spread it over the well's mouth, that it could not be seen or known that there was a well there: *and spread ground corn thereon:* just taken out of the mill, before it was sifted, whilst in the bran; or corn unhusked, or just threshed out, in order to be dried in the sun, and then parched; or wheat bruised for that purpose: Josephus says[q] they were locks of wool she spread: *and the thing was not known;* that the young men were in the well.

Ver. 20. *And when Absalom's servants came to the woman to the house,* &c.] Who were sent after them, had intelligence which way they took, and into what house they turned: *they said, where are Ahimaaz and Jonathan?* calling them by their names, being persons well known, and as to them, so to the woman of the house, as they supposed: *and the woman said unto them, they be gone over the brook of water;* the river Jordan; so the Targum, "they have already passed over "Jordan;" this was a lie she told them, which is not to be justified; the Vulgate Latin version, "they "passed over hastily, having drank a little water;" and so Josephus[r] in some copies: *and when they had sought and could not find* them; not only searched that house, but very probably others in Bahurim: *they returned to Jerusalem;* to give an account what success they had.

Ver. 21. *And it came to pass after they were departed,* &c.] The servants of Absalom: *that they came up out of the well;* the sons of the priests, being informed by the woman that they were gone; Josephus[s] says they were drawn up by the woman with a rope: *and went and told King David;* who was now in the plain of the wilderness, perhaps near Jericho, and not a great way from Jordan, to whom they related the whole of their message: *and said unto David; arise, and pass quickly over the water;* the river Jordan: *for thus hath Ahithophel counselled against you;* to come with 12,000 men, and fall upon him that very night; and it was not certain his counsel would be rejected; and therefore it was advisable for David to prepare against the worst.

Ver. 22. *Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and passed over Jordan,* &c.] Taking the advice of Hushai: *by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan;* they travelled all night, and before it was morning they had all passed the river in boats, or through the fords, and not one was lost in the passage, nor any deserted, see John xvii. 12. and now perhaps David penned the 42d and 43d psalms.

Ver. 23. *And when Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed,* &c.] But that of Hushai: *he saddled his ass;* or ordered it to be saddled: *and arose, and gat him home to his house, to his city;* which was Giloh in the tribe of Judah, ch. xv. 12. *and put his household in order;* made his will, and disposed of his estates, see Isa. xxxviii. 1. or *commanded his house* or *household*[t]; gave orders and instructions, both relating to himself when dead, where and how he should be buried, and to his family, how they should behave to one another and among their neighbours, and towards their superiors: and particularly, the Jews say[u], he gave them this charge, not to rebel against the government of the house of David: *and hanged himself;* so to his other sins added that of suicide, which was done deliberately, as the preceding clause shews; this he did, partly because his proud spirit could not bear it that his counsel should be slighted, and that of another be preferred to it; and partly because he plainly foresaw

[n] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 7.
[p] Ibid.
[q] Ibid.
[r] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 7. Hudson. not. in ib.

[s] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 9. sect. 7. Hudson. not. in ib.
[t] יצו אל ביתו praecepit ad domum suam, Montanus.
[u] T. Hieros. Sanhedrin, fol. 29. 1.

that the cause of Absalom would be ruined by neglecting his counsel and following that of Hushai's, whereby he himself would fall into the hands of David, and be put to death by him as a traitor; and he chose to die by his own hand, and not his; and the rather, to prevent the confiscation of his goods and estates as a traitor, and his heirs being deprived of them; though some think he died of a disease, by strangling or suffocation in the throat, was choked through grief and trouble; so R. Elias observes [w], that some say that this disease came upon him through the greatness of his grief of mind and trouble of soul, because his counsel was not taken, and he died of strangling; and they say this, because they reckon it an absurdity for so wise and understanding a man as he was to hang himself; but the case seems very clear that he did destroy himself; the Jews say [x] he was but 33 years of age when he died; for being a bloody and deceitful man, he did not live out half his days, Psal. lv. 23. which psalm was penned on his account; but one so young could hardly be a counsellor of David, and so famous for his wise counsel; and besides, if so young, could not be the grandfather of Bathsheba, as the Jews say: *and died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his father;* though he died an ignominious death, he had an honourable burial; it perhaps not being usual in those times to put any mark of infamy on those that destroyed themselves, by refusing them interment in the common burying-places of their friends and neighbours.

Ver. 24. *Then David came to Mahanaim,* &c.] A [y] city on the other side Jordan in the tribe of Gad, Josh. xiii. 26, 30. famous for its being the place where the angels of God met Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 1, 2. and was for some time the seat of Ish-bosheth the son of Saul, ch. ii. 8. *and Absalom passed over Jordan, he, and all the men of Israel with him:* not directly after David, but some time after, when, according to the counsel of Hushai, he had gathered all the warlike men of Israel to him that he could, and with this army pursued his father; not content to drive him to the other side Jordan, sought to seize his person, and take away his life, and so secure the crown and kingdom to him, of which he made no doubt, having such a numerous army, on which he relied.

Ver. 25. *And Absalom made Amasa captain of the host instead of Joab,* &c.] Who was along with David: *which Amasa was a man's son whose name was Ithra, an Israelite;* he is called Jether the Ishmaelite, 1 Chron. ii. 17. either because he was an Ishmaelite by birth, and being proselyted to the Jewish religion, was called an Israelite; or rather he was an Israelite by birth, and having sojourned in the land of Ishmael some time, was called an Ishmaelite, as Uriah the Hittite, and others; and when Amasa is called a *man's son,* it means a great man, as Kimchi observes: *that went in to Abigail, the daughter of Nahash, sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother:* so that Joab and Amasa, the generals of David and Absalom, were own cousins, sisters' children, and David uncle to them both; for Abigail and Zeruiah were David's sisters, 1 Chron. ii. 16. children of Jesse, whose name is here called Nahash, having two names, or this was his surname; though others think Nahash is the name of a woman, the wife of Jesse, and that these two sisters had two mothers, but one father; it seems by this expression, *went in to,* as if Amasa was not begotten in the conjugal state, but was illegitimate.

Ver. 26. *So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead,* &c.] Which belonged to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh; here the Israelites that were with Absalom encamped, in order to give battle to David and his men.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim,* &c.] When he first came thither, ver. 24. *that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon:* who was either the son, or rather the brother of Hanun king of the Ammonites, that used David's ambassadors in so shameful a manner, whom David overcame and deposed, and set up this brother in his room; who had shewed his dislike of his brother's conduct, and now makes a grateful return to David for his favours; though some say this was Hanun himself, as Jarchi, now become a proselyte, which is not so likely; others take this man to be an Israelite that continued in Rabbah, the metropolis of the Ammonites, after it was taken by David: *and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar;* the same that brought up Mephibosheth, from whom David received him, and took him off of his hands, for which now he requited him, see ch. ix. 5. *and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim;* a place that lay under the hills of Gilead [z]; it had its name from the *fullers* who dwelt here for the convenience of fountains of water to wash their clothes in.

Ver. 28. *Brought beds,* &c.] For David and his men, who, fleeing from Jerusalem in haste, could bring none with them, and therefore were ill provided whilst in the plains of the wilderness; the Septuagint version says there were ten of them, and that they were of tapestry, wrought on both sides, and such the ancients used [a], see Prov. vii. 16. and so ten basins in the next clause: *and basins, and earthen vessels;* to put their food and liquors in, and eat and drink out of, and for other services: *and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched* corn; or *kali,* which was made of the above corn ground into meal, and mixed with water or milk, and eaten with honey or oil, as there was another sort made of pulse, after mentioned: *and beans, and lentiles, and parched* pulse; or *kali,* made of these in the above manner. Some think [a] coffee is meant, but without reason.

Ver. 29. *And honey and butter,* &c.] Honey was much in use with the ancients; Homer [b] speaks of it as a part of the provisions at a feast, and as food with which persons were nourished and brought up; and the ancient Scythians lived on milk and honey [c]; and this and butter were pretty much the food of the people in Judea; see Isa. vii. 15—22. *and sheep,* with which and goats the land of Gilead abounded; see Cant. iv. 1, 2. *and cheese of kine;* made of the milk of cows,

[w] In Tishbi, p. 129. & David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 143. 2.
[x] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 106. 2.
[y] Fuller's Pisgah-View, B. 2. c. 3. sect. 10. p. 94.
[z] Vid. Aristophan. in Pluto, p. 55.

[a] Sterringa, Animadv. Philol. Sacr. p. 48.
[b] Iliad. 11. ver. 630. Odyss. 10. ver. 245. & Odyss. 20. ver. 79. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 11. Sueton. Vita Nero. c. 27.
[c] Justin e Trogo, l. 2. c. 2.

as it commonly is: *for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat*; and no doubt they brought wine with them for them to drink; the men that brought these, some brought one sort, and some another, or however different parcels of the same, and did not join in one present; for they came from different parts: *for they said, the people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness*; where they had been some time, and out of which they had just come, and so weary with travelling, and therefore brought beds to lie down and rest upon; and being hungry and thirsty, through want of bread and water in the wilderness, they brought them both eatables and drinkables; for though the latter is not expressed, it is to be understood, as the word *thirsty* supposes.

CHAP. XVIII.

IN this chapter is an account of David's review of his army, preparing it for battle with Absalom, and those with him, ver. 1—5. and of the defeat and flight of the rebels, ver. 6, 7, 8. and of the death of Absalom, and the manner of it, and of his burial, ver. 9—18. and of the news of it brought to David by different persons, ver. 19—32. and of his great grief and sorrow on that account, ver. 33.

Ver. 1. *And David numbered the people that were with him*, &c.] Which Josephus says [d] were 4,000; but one would think there should be more by what follows: *and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them*; he divided his army into companies, which consisted some of a thousand and others of a hundred; over each of which he set captains, to lead them on, direct, and command them in battle.

Ver. 2. *And David sent forth a third part of the people under the hand of Joab*, &c.] Very likely that which made the centre of the army, since Joab was the general of the army; though this distribution was made when David thought to have headed the army himself, and so made with respect to that: *and a third part under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother* who was next to Joab in the army, and fought with him against the Syrians and Ammonites, ch. x. 10, 11. *and a third part under the hand of Ittai the Gittite*; of whom see ch. xv. 19. of these two parts consisted the right and left wings of the army: *and the king said unto the people*: the soldiers, and particularly the officers: *I will surely go forth with you myself also*: in which he seemed very resolute and peremptory; and this he proposed to do, not merely to animate the soldiers with his presence, and to shew that he was willing to hazard his life with them, but chiefly for the sake of Absalom, to preserve his life, if possible.

Ver. 3. *But the people answered, thou shalt not go forth*, &c.] They were as resolute as David: *for if we flee away, they will not care for us*; to pursue after us; they will make no account of the victory; but if they could slay David, or get him into their hands, it would be more to them than if the whole army was routed: *but now thou art worth ten thousand of us*: not only in our own esteem, but in the account of the enemy, who had rather thou shouldest fall into their hands than 10,000 of us; and as the advantage to them, so the loss to us would be more than 10,000 men: *therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city*: either by sending them provisions or recruits, that might be there in reserve, if necessary; or by being ready to receive them into it should they be repulsed; or rather by his prayers to God for them; so the Targum, "now "it is better that thou pray for us out of the city;" that is, that the Lord would help us; and so most of the Jewish commentators understand it of helping them by his prayers and counsels.

Ver. 4. *And the king said unto them, what seemeth you best I will do*, &c.] Which was an instance of great condescension in him; and it was his wisdom and prudence to yield to them at such a time as this, and especially as their sentiments were founded on affection and loyalty to him: *and the king stood by the gate-side*: of the city of Mahanaim: *and all the people came out by hundreds, and by thousands*: and passed by him, to whom no doubt he gave his blessing and best wishes; and, as Abarbinel thinks, now it was he composed and said the 20th psalm, *The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble*, &c.

Ver. 5. *And the king commanded Joab, and Abishai, and Ittai*, &c.] His three generals, to whom he had committed his army divided into three parts: *saying, deal gently for my sake with the young man, even with Absalom*: he does not call him his son, being in rebellion against him, but the young man, who was young, and rash, and foolish, and so to be pitied; his request is, that they would spare him, and not take away his life, when in their power; that they would not aim at him, and push him hard, and fall upon him with wrath and fury; but if he fell into their hands, to take him alive, and bring him away, and not put him to death. This flowed from a natural affection to him, and a concern for the welfare of his soul, that he might not die in this sin; and also from a consciousness that it was for his own sins that he was raised up to rebel against him; and he seems to speak as if he was certain that the battle would go for him, and against Absalom; and which he might conclude from the answer of prayer he had in defeating the counsel of Ahithophel: *and all the people heard when he gave all the captains charge concerning Absalom*; not only the three generals, but all the captains of hundreds and thousands, and this was heard by the common soldiers as well as by the people of the city that were spectators on this occasion, see ver. 12.

Ver. 6. *So the people went out into the field against Israel*, &c.] Josephus [e] calls it a great field, with a wood behind it: *and the battle was in the wood of*

[d] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 10. sect. 1.

[e] Ut supra, sect. 2.

Ephraim: or near it[f] rather; not in a wood in the tribe of Ephraim, which lay on this side Jordan; whereas this battle was fought on the other side Jordan, in the land of Gilead, not far from Mahanaim, where was this wood; and which was so called, either from the slaughter of the Ephraimites here in the times of Jephthah, Judg. xii. 4, 5, 6. or from the Ephraimites feeding their cattle here and near it; for the Jews say[g], that Joshua gave them a grant to feed their cattle in any wood in any of the tribes of Israel; and lying near Jordan, they used to drive their cattle over to this place, from whence it had its name.

Ver. 7. *Where the people of Israel were slain before the servants of David*, &c.] That is, the people of Israel that were under Absalom, these were beaten by David's army: *and there was a great slaughter that day of* 20,000 *men*; including both those that fell in the field of battle, and that were slain in the pursuit; and this is to be understood only of Absalom's party.

Ver. 8. *For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country*, &c.] Or the warriors were scattered, as the Targum; Absalom's soldiers, their ranks were broken, and they were thrown into the utmost confusion, and ran about here and there all over the field or plain in which the battle was fought, and into the neighbouring wood: *and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured*; there were more slain in it than in the field of battle, what by one thing or another; as by falling into pits and on stumps of trees, and being entangled in the bushes, and could make but little haste, and so were overtaken by David's men, and slain; insomuch that, as Josephus[h] observes, there were more slain fleeing than fighting, and perhaps some might perish by wild beasts; so the Targum, "and the beasts of the wood slew more of the people "than were slain by the sword;" and so the Syriac and Arabic versions render the words to the same purpose.

Ver. 9. *And Absalom met the servants of David*, &c.] When his army was routed, he was in such a fright that he knew not which way to flee, and instead of flying from David's men, he fled in the way of them; but none of them attempted to slay him, nor even to stop him, but let him pass by them, knowing David's charge concerning him: *and Absalom rode upon a mule*; as was common for great personages to do in those days, ch. xiii. 29. *and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak*; and running full speed, Absalom could not guide him, nor stop, nor divert him from going under it: *and his head caught hold of the oak*; either the hair of his head was entwisted and entangled in the thick boughs of the oak; or rather his head was jammed into a forked branch of the oak: *and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth*; hung in the air between both, as unworthy to live in either: *and the mule that was under him went away*; and left him hanging in the oak.

Ver. 10. *And a certain man saw it*, &c.] Saw him in the above posture, one of David's soldiers: *and told Joab, and said, behold, I saw Absalom hanged in an oak*; caught by the neck in one, out of which he could not disengage himself, but there he hung, though alive.

Ver. 11. *And Joab said unto the man that told him*, &c.] That gave the above account of him: *and, behold, thou sawest* him; in reality; or, *didst thou see him?* is it a fact? *and why didst thou not smite him there to the ground*; kill him on the spot, that he might have dropped from the tree to the ground: *and I would have given thee ten* shekels *of silver*; on the news of it, for doing it, which was near 24 shillings of our money; Josephus says[i] 50 shekels; the Arabic version has it 10,000 talents of silver, too great a sum by far: *and a girdle?* which was a mark of great honour, and a token of a commission under him, and of investing him with a military office; see 1 Sam. xviii. 4. it used to be given as an honorary reward to soldiers that behaved well, as on the contrary it was reckoned a reproach to be ungirt, or the girdle to be taken away[k].

Ver. 12. *And the man said unto Joab*, &c.] Disdaining his proposal: *though I should receive* 1,000 shekels *of silver in mine hand*; or such a sum should be offered to me; the Arabic version is 1,000,000: yet *would I not put forth my hand against the king's son*; to smite him, and slay him: *for in our hearing the king charged thee, and Abishai, and Ittai*; his three generals: *saying, beware that none* touch *the young man Absalom*; so as to slay him; they were charged to abstain from it themselves, and to watch and observe others, and keep them from doing it.

Ver. 13. *Otherwise I should have wrought falsehood against mine own life*, &c.] Or *soul*; he should not only have exposed his life to danger, but acted falsely to the king, by going contrary to his orders; yea, would have done that which was contrary to his own conscience; and if he had buoyed himself up with the hope of impunity, or of a reward, he should have found himself mistaken; the textual reading is, *against his life*[l], or *soul*, the life of Absalom, by taking it away: *for there is no matter hid from the king*; this, though done ever so secretly, would have come to his knowledge by some means or another, and then I should have incurred his displeasure, and suffered for it: *and thou thyself wouldest have set thyself against* me; to accuse and bring him to justice; he would have been so far from protecting him, that he would have been the first man that would have insisted on it that he should be punished for it; or why dost not thou thyself set thyself against him, and smite him? thou mayest if thou pleasest, yonder he hangs, go and smite him.

Ver. 14. *Then said Joab, I may not tarry thus with thee*, &c.] It is not worth while to talk with thee any longer, nor must I lose time, and neglect my opportunity; I do not desire you to go and smite him, I'll go and do it myself: *and he took three darts in his hand*; or three rods, which were either all iron, or however the tops of them were iron spikes: *and thrust them through the heart of Absalom*; or through the midst of his body; for if he had thrust through his heart, properly speaking, he must have died instantly, whereas he seems to have lived after this: *while he was yet alive*; Joab found him alive when he came to him, and so he was when he thrust his darts through him: and so he was afterward; for the words may be ren-

[f] ביער ad sylvam, Junius & Tremellius; prope sylvam, Piscator.
[g] In Jarchi, Kimchi, & Abarbinel, in loc.
[h] Ut supra.

[i] Ut supra.
[k] Vide Lydium de re militare, l. 3. c. 6.
[l] בנפשו εν τη ψυχη αυτου, Sept. contra animam illius, Piscator.

dered, *being yet alive*, even after the darts were fixed in him, and even so deeply as to pierce through his body: *in the midst*, or *heart*, of the oak; into which the darts penetrated.

Ver. 15. *And ten young men that bare Joab's armour*, &c.] That waited upon him in the battle, to carry his armour, and supply him with it as he should have occasion; these, by his orders, *compassed about, and smote Absalom, and slew him:* they enclosed him that none might rescue him, and smote him with their spears or swords, or whatsoever armour they had, until it was a clear case that he was really dead. Joab in this disobeyed the king's order, but provided for the good of the nation, and the safety of the king. The Jews observe[m], that measure for measure was given to Absalom; he was proud of his hair, and therefore was hanged by it; he lay with ten concubines of his father, and therefore was smitten with ten lances or spears by ten young men; and he stole three hearts, the heart of his father, the heart of the sanhedrim, and the heart of the men of Israel, and therefore three darts were fixed in him.

Ver. 16. *And Joab blew the trumpet*, &c.] As the sign of a retreat: *and the people returned from pursuing after Israel;* upon the sound of the trumpet, the meaning of which they understood: *for Joab held back the people;* from shedding any more blood; the head of the conspiracy being removed, the thing would be crushed at once; and Joab neither chose to slay any more, nor take any prisoners, to be tried as traitors, being unawares, without thought, drawn into this rebellion.

Ver. 17. *And they took Absalom, and cast him into a great pit in the wood*, &c.] In the wood of Ephraim, near to which the battle was fought, and into which Absalom fled, and where he was slain: *and laid a very great heap of stones upon him;* his punishment was very exemplary; he was first hanged on an oak, and then thrust through with darts and swords, and then covered with stones, pointing to the death that a rebellious son, according to the law, ought to die, Deut. xxi. 21. though this might be done in honour of him as a king's son; for such *tumuli*, or heaps of stones or earth, were used by the ancients as sepulchral monuments, and the larger the more honourable[n]; see the note on Josh. vii. 26. and viii. 29. *and all Israel fled every one to his tent;* or to his city, as the Targum; every one returned to their own house, and to their own business, and so the rebellion ceased.

Ver. 18. *Now Absalom in his life-time had taken*, &c.] Had taken it into his head, had of himself devised it, as Kimchi explains it; he contrived the following scheme to perpetuate his memory: *and reared up for himself a pillar, which is in the king's dale;* or valley, the valley of Jehoshaphat; this pillar was of marble, as Josephus[o] says, and stood about two furlongs from Jerusalem. The author of Cippi Hebraici[p] places it at the bottom of the mount of Olives: this is observed to shew how vain are the devices and contrivances of men's hearts; Absalom intended to have been buried under or by this monumental pillar near Jerusalem, and, lo, he was buried in a pit, under an heap of stones, in a wood on the other side Jordan; whether his bones were ever removed hither it is not certain, though a notion has obtained that his grave was near this pillar. Rauwolff[q] says, that as you go from the valley of Jehoshaphat[r] to the Mount of Olives, you see below, towards your left hand, near unto the bridge of the river Cedron, an old square building like unto a steeple; this, although it is believed to this day, not only by Christians, but also by Turks and Moors, to be the grave of Absalom, as you shall see them fling stones into it as they go by, to revenge his undutifulness to his father, yet was he not buried there. Sandys[s] says, at the east end of the bridge (over Cedron), and a little on the north, stands the pillar of Absalom, being yet entire, and of a good fabric, rising in a lofty square, below adorned with half-columns, wrought out of the sides and corners, of the Doric form; and then changing into around, a good height higher doth grow to a point in fashion of a bell, all framed of the growing stone; against this there lies a great heap of stones, which increaseth daily, by Jews and Mahometans throwing stones as they pass by; so that the frontispiece of it, which faces the road, as Le Bruyn[t] says, looks like a mountain of stones; but as to the fabric itself, he says, there is not a finer piece of workmanship to be met with in all those parts; it takes up a compass of ground of 82 feet and an half square; the body, which is square, with its moulding, is one entire piece; and the coping, which is an ornament to it, and runs up into a point, taken with the rest of the work, is above 30 feet high; 20 columns, cut out of the same rock, add to the beauty of this pile; one sees through a broken window a great many pieces of antiquity that hang up in a chamber. Adrichomius also relates[u], from travellers, that in the king's valley is now a tower, and a large heap of stones, which is increased every day more and more; for Heathens and strangers passing by there have a custom to cast every one a stone at it, as it were revenging, according to the law, Absalom's rebellion against David his father, and curse him after this manner; let Absalom the parricide be cursed, and whoever unrighteously persecutes their parents are cursed for ever: *for he said, I have no son to keep my name in remembrance;* for though he had three sons, it seems they were all dead, see ch. xiv. 27. *and he called the pillar after his own name, and it is called unto this day Absalom's place:* or his *hand*[w], the work of his hand; some wrongly think it was in the form of an hand; it was an obelisk, or monument, erected to preserve his name; but since it became so infamous, it would have been better to have had it buried in oblivion. Such sepulchral monuments were used in other nations; so Minerva advised Telemachus[x] to go

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[m] Misn. Sotah, c. 1. sect. 8.
[n] Homer. Iliad. 23. ver. 245, 257.
[o] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 10. sect. 3.
[p] P. 26. Ed. Hotting.
[q] Travels, part 2. c. 21. p. 310, 311. Ed. Ray.
[r] So Benjamin. Itinerar. p. 43.

[s] Travels, l. 3. p. 147. Ed. 5.
[t] Voyage to the Levant, c. 48. p. 188.
[u] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 174.
[w] יד, Sept. manus, V. L. Montanus.
[x] Homer. Odyss. 1. ver. 297. Odyss. 2. ver. 243.

in quest of his father Ulysses, and if he could not find him, but was assured of his death, then to raise a signal or monument in memory of him, which he resolved to do.

Ver. 19. *Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok*, &c.] To Joab; for it seems he stayed with the army when he with Jonathan brought the message from Hushai to David: *let me now run, and bear the king tidings how that the Lord hath avenged him on his enemies*: which he thought would be very acceptable to hear of as soon as possible; and to be a messenger with tidings of a victory, as it was honourable, so likewise profitable then as now; though perhaps Ahimaaz might have no respect to the reward, as indeed none could be expected, since the death of Absalom would be so disagreeable to the king; but was desirous of it, that the king might be acquainted with the event of the battle as soon as might be.

Ver. 20. *And Joab said unto him, thou shalt not bear tidings this day*, &c.] Because Joab knew the tidings of Absalom's death would not be acceptable to the king; and Ahimaaz being a good man, and the son of a priest, for whom Joab had a respect, he would not send the tidings by him, which he was sensible would not recommend him to the king: *but thou shalt bear tidings another day*; when any salvation is wrought, or victory obtained, the tidings of which will be welcome: *but this day thou shalt bear no tidings, because the king's son is dead*: and thou must carry the news concerning his death, which it is not proper thou shouldest, being a priest, nor will it be to thine advantage.

Ver. 21. *Then said Joab to Cushi*, &c.] The Ethiopian, or blackamoor; who either was an Ethiopian by birth and proselyted, or he was an Israelite of a black complexion, and therefore so called; and was judged a proper person by the general to carry such dismal news to the king, as he knew it would be. Some Jewish writers[a] take him to be the same with Cush the Benjaminite, in the title of the 7th psalm; and that he is the same that told Joab he saw Absalom hanging in an oak, and declared that, if 1,000 shekels of silver were offered him, he would not have put forth his hand against him, ver. 10, 11, 12. though some think this was one of the ten young men that waited on Joab, and by his orders slew Absalom; but it would have been dangerous for one of these to have carried the tidings, had he been known by David to have done it: *go tell the king what thou hast seen*: by which it should seem that he was present when Absalom was killed: *and Cushi bowed himself unto Joab*; in reverence to him as his general, and in thankfulness for sending him on this errand: *and ran*; as fast as he could.

Ver. 22. *Then said Ahimaaz the son of Zadok yet again to Joab*, &c.] He could not be easy, even though a messenger was dispatched, but pressed Joab still: *but howsoever, let me, I pray thee, also run after Cushi*: only permit me to go after him, though not as a messenger: *and Joab said, wherefore wilt thou run, my son?* having a great affection for him, and concerned that he should take trouble on him to no purpose: *seeing thou hast no tidings ready*; no news to carry, but what Cushi is gone with, and so can have no audience of the king, nor any reward from him.

Ver. 23. *But howsoever* (said he) *let me run*, &c.] Be it as it may, I beg I may have leave; and being so very importunate, it was granted: *and he said unto him, run*; since he would take no denial: *then Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran Cushi*: who ran by the way of the mountains; which though the shorter way, that through the plain was easiest, and soonest run, though the longest.

Ver. 24. *And David sat between the two gates*, &c.] Of the city of Mahanaim; which being a fortified place had two walls, one within another, and in each wall a gate; and between these David sat, waiting for news of the battle: *and the watchman went up to the roof over the gate unto the wall*; the gate to the outward wall, over which was a tower, and on that a flat roof; to which the watchman went to observe if he could see an express coming; no doubt by David's orders: *and lifted up his eyes and looked*; that is, very diligently and wistfully: *and, behold, a man running alone*: which made him the more observable, and was the more likely to be a messenger.

Ver. 25. *And the watchman cried and told the king*, &c.] Called with a loud voice from the roof of the watch-tower to the king, sitting between the gates, and informed him what he saw: *and the king said, if he be alone* there is *tidings in his mouth*: for if the army was routed and fled, and were pursued, there would be more in company, or several running one after another; but being but one, it was highly probable that he was sent express: *and he came apace, and drew near*; which was another sign of his being a messenger, the haste he made towards the city.

Ver. 26. *And the watchman saw another man running*, &c.] At a further distance: *and the watchman called unto the porter*; that kept the gate, under which the watch-tower was: *and said, behold, another man runneth alone*; as the other, and has the same appearance of a messenger: *and the king said, he also bringeth tidings*: it being usual then, as now, to dispatch one messenger after another, as fresh accounts coming in made it necessary.

Ver. 27. *And the watchman said, me thinketh*, &c.] Or, *I see*[b]; I perceive, so it appears to me: *that the running of the foremost is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok*: who it seems was well known, and famous for his manner of running and swiftness in it, having been employed in carrying expresses before from Jerusalem to David, and his army, wheresoever they were; and some of these persons thus employed were very swift; we read[c] of one that was a king's messenger, that went from Jerusalem to Tyre, on the first of Elul, or August, in a night and a day; which, according to Bunting[d], was 100 miles: this watchman must be one of David's sentinels, who was well acquainted with the people about him: *and the king said, he is a good man, and cometh with good tidings*:

[a] Pirke Eliezer, c. 53.

[b] ראה אני ἐγὼ ὁρῶ, Sept. ego videns, Montanus; video, Tigurine version.

[c] T. Hieros. Taanioth, fol. 69. 2.

[d] Travels, p. 200.

he knew he was a man of courage, and therefore was not one that fled, but must be a messenger; and that he was well affected to him, and would never be the messenger of evil tidings to him.

Ver. 28. *And Ahimaaz called and said unto the king*, &c.] As soon as he came so near as to be heard by him, before he came up to him, he said with a loud voice: *all is well*; the king's army has had success, beat the rebels, and obtained a complete victory: or *peace*[e]; for it is but one word in the original, which signifies all happiness and prosperity, and this he wished the king; and so it is the same as if he had said, God save the king, may all happiness attend him: *and he fell down to the earth upon his face before the king*: when he came nearer to him, not only in reverence of him, but in thankfulness to God: *and said, blessed be the Lord thy God, which hath delivered up the men that lifted up their hand against my lord the king*; in which he ascribes the victory, not to Joab and his army, but to the Lord, to whom he gives thanks; and this agreeably to his character as a good man, and a priest of the Lord.

Ver. 29. *And the king said, is the young man Absalom safe?* &c.] Or, is there *peace*[f] to him? you say there is peace, and that prosperity and success have attended my army; but what peace has Absalom? is he well, and in safety? David seemed more concerned for him than for his army and the success of it; and even suggests as if it was nothing if Absalom was not safe, so great were his affections towards him: *and Ahimaaz answered, when Joab sent the king's servant*; which was Cushi, the first messenger, whose office perhaps it was to be one of the king's messengers, and therefore called his servant: *and me thy servant*; Ahimaaz himself who was sent after the other: *I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what* it was; he perceived that the tidings of the death of Absalom would be disagreeable to the king, and therefore concealed it from him; and though a good man, he cannot be excused from lying, for certainly he knew that Absalom was dead, as appears from ver. 19, 20. though indeed what he said might be true, that *after* Joab had sent him and Cushi, as the Targum paraphrases it, he saw a company of people gathered together in a tumultuous manner, the meaning of which he knew not; but then this was no other than an evasion.

Ver. 30. *And the king said unto him, turn aside, and stand here*, &c.] On the side of him, not far from him, until the other messenger came, that he might learn from them both the true state of the case: *and he turned aside, and stood still*; saying nothing more to the king, nor he to him.

Ver. 31. *And, behold, Cushi came*, &c.] A little after: *and Cushi said, tidings, my lord the king*; news is sent and brought by me, and good news it is: *for the Lord hath avenged thee this day of all them that rose up against thee*; they are either killed or dispersed; there is an entire victory over them, and deliverance from them.

Ver. 32. *And the king said unto Cushi, is the young man Absalom safe?* &c.] The same question that was put to Ahimaaz, ver. 29. which shews what lay nearest his heart, and was uppermost in his mind: *and Cushi answered, the enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is*: which was tacitly saying he was dead, and so David understood it; and he expressed it in such a manner, that David could not be displeased with the messenger; though the message was grievous to him.

Ver. 33. *And the king was much moved*, &c.] His affections were moved, his passions were stirred up; he was greatly troubled, distressed, and grieved: *and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept*; got out of sight and company as soon as he could; as his own dwelling was at some distance, he made haste to the chamber in the watch-tower, over the gate of the city, where the watchman was, to vent his grief; and could not suppress it till he got thither: *and as he went*; up the stairs to the chamber: *thus he said, O my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom!* which repetition expresses the vehemence of his affections, and how inconsolable he was on account of his son's death: *would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!* some think he said this on account of his eternal state, being satisfied of his own; but it may be it was only the effect of natural affection, indulged to too great a degree, and unbecoming so good a man in such a case; the Targum is, "I wish I had died for "thee, and thou hadst remained this day."

C H A P. XIX.

DAVID indulging to too much grief for the death of his son, is rebuked by Joab, and threatened with a revolt of the people from him, if he did not change his conduct, which he accordingly did, ver. 1—8. upon which the men of Israel were the first that moved for the bringing him back to Jerusalem, and the men of Judah were solicited to join with them in it, which was effected, ver. 9—25. and at Jordan, Shimei, that had cursed him, met him, and asked his pardon, and was forgiven, ver. 16—23. and when come to Jerusalem, Mephibosheth excused so well his not going out with him, that he had half his land restored to him, which had been given to his servant, ver. 24—30. and Barzillai, who had very liberally supplied the king, was allowed to return to his own city, and Chimham his son was taken to court, ver. 31—40. and a contention arose between the men of Israel and of Judah about the restoration of the king, which issued in an insurrection, as the next chapter shews, ver. 41, 42, 43.

Ver. 1. *And it was told Joab*, &c.] When returned to Mahanaim, or on his way to it; perhaps by the

[e] שלום εἰρήνη, Sept. pax, Montanus, Pagninus; salus, Tigurine version; salve rex, V. L.

[f] שלום לנער estne pax puero? V. L. pax puero, Pagninus, Montanus.

messengers he sent; and this report he had before he saw the king: *behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom*; for the death of him, instead of rejoicing at the victory obtained, and the deliverance from his enemies.

Ver. 2. *And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people*, &c.] They also mourned too, instead of expressing joy upon the occasion: *for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son*: this report was spread among them, which damped their joy, and hindered them from giving any tokens of it, as were usual at such times.

Ver. 3. *And the people got them by stealth that day into the city*, &c.] Did not march into it in companies, in a public and triumphant manner, as conquerors used to do; but entered in a private manner, one by one, or a very few together, not caring to be seen or known, at least by the king, as fearing they had incurred his displeasure: *but as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle*; as if they had been conquered, and not conquerors; nay, had acted a cowardly part, and ran away; and so cared not to be seen, lest they should be reproached, or suffer for their cowardice.

Ver. 4. *But the king covered his face*, &c.] And would not see his generals, and thank them for their services; but wrapped himself in his mantle, after the manner of mourners: *and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!* and this was some time, perhaps some days after he had received the news of his death, since Joab and the army were returned from the battle; had it been a sudden start of passion, upon first hearing the news, and had continued a few hours, it would have been more excusable; but to continue some days, as it is very probable it did, was very unbecoming.

Ver. 5. *And Joab came into the house to the king*, &c.] For by this time he was removed from the chamber over the gate to his own dwelling-house or palace, where he continued the same doleful ditty as at first: *thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants*; they can't lift up their heads, and look any in the face, nor one another; but behave as if they had committed some very great fault, in fighting with the rebels, and beating them: *which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons, and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines*; which in all probability would have been taken away, if the victory had been on the side of Absalom.

Ver. 6. *In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends*, &c.] Which though not strictly true, there was some appearance of it, which is here greatly exaggerated; in that he expressed so much grief and sorrow for Absalom his enemy, who had rebelled against him, and shewed so little regard to his friends, that had exposed their lives for him: *for thou hast declared this day*; by his conduct and behaviour, mourning for his rebellious son, and taking no notice of his faithful servants: *that thou regardest neither princes nor servants*; neither the officers of the army, the generals and captains, nor the common soldiers: since neither the one were admitted into his presence privately, nor had the other public thanks as they entered the city, as might have been expected: or *that thou hast no princes and servants*[s]; none that are accounted of as such; they are nothing with thee, in no esteem at all, as if thou hadst none: *for this day I perceive that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well*; this was carrying the matter too far; for though it would have been agreeable to David if Absalom had lived, and not been slain, yet not that his army should perish, or his people be destroyed; it would have pleased him well if both had lived.

Ver. 7. *Now therefore arise, go forth*, &c.] Arise from his couch, he was watering with his tears, and go forth from his house, where he had shut himself up retired from all company, to the gate of the city, where the people passed and repassed, and there was a concourse of them: this he said not by way of command, but by way of advice; though all along he seems to take too much upon him, and to speak unbecoming a subject, and not with that decency as was necessary in speaking to a king; but it may be observed, that a general of an army had great power over princes in those times; and presumed very much on their interest in the army, which led them sometimes not to behave with that decorum as became them: *and speak comfortably unto thy servants*; commend them for their courage and faithfulness, thank them for their services, and reward them suitably; at least give them assurance of it: *for I swear by the Lord*; by the Word of the Lord, as the Targum; this he said to arouse him, and make him bestir himself, and think what was proper for him to do: *if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night*; signifying that he would use his interest in the army to go off with it, and set up another king; and did not doubt of success, as well knowing what temper and humour the people were in through the king's conduct: *and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now*; for when he was persecuted by Saul he had a number of friends that adhered close to him; and when Ish-bosheth was set up against him by Abner as king of Israel, the tribe of Judah cleaved to him, anointed him their king, and abode by him; wherefore, should he now be abandoned by his army, his case would be worse than ever it had been.

Ver. 8. *Then the king arose, and sat in the gate*, &c.] Of the city, a public place, where the inhabitants met on divers accounts at times, and where there were always people passing and repassing: *and they told unto all the people*; or it was reported to the soldiers particularly: *saying, behold the king doth sit in the gate*; has laid aside his mourning, appears in public, and receives his friends, and attends to business: *and all the people came before the king*; to congratulate him on the victory obtained, to receive his thanks and his favours: *for Israel had fled every man to his tent*; or to his city, as the Targum; that is, those that followed Absalom; which is observed not on account of what goes before, but of what follows after; see ch. xviii. 17.

[s] אין לך שרים ועבדים non tibi principes & servi, Pagninus, Montanus; nihil tibi sint principes & servi, Piscator.

Ver. 9. *And all the people were at strife through all the tribes of Israel;* excepting the tribe of Judah; they blamed and reproved one another for taking part with Absalom in the rebellion, and especially for their coldness and backwardness in bringing back David to Jerusalem: *saying, the king saved us out of the hand of our enemies;* exposed his life to danger, fought our battles for us, and gained us victory over our enemies, and saved us from them, especially those next mentioned: *and delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines;* in the times of Saul, and since; which were benefits which ought to have endeared him to them, and were aggravations of the crime of those who had been concerned in the late rebellion; and were such as ought not to be buried in oblivion, and were proper arguments to engage them to return to their allegiance to him, and abide by it: *and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom;* being obliged to quit Jerusalem, and the land of Judea on this side Jordan, and to pass that river; not from a spirit of cowardice, but from tenderness to his son, he did not choose to fight against; and from a concern for his metropolis Jerusalem, lest that should be hurt, as well as for the safety of his person.

Ver. 10. *And Absalom, whom we anointed over us,* &c.] To be king; which either was really done by Absalom's party, or in effect by proclaiming and appointing him king: *is dead in battle;* which shews the thing was not of God, and by which means they were released from their oath of allegiance to him: *now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?* why so quiet and easy, so silent about it? nobody speaks of it, gives the least hint of it, or shews any concern about it; but the greatest coldness and indifference, as if it was a matter of no importance.

Ver. 11. *And King David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests,* &c.] Who were at Jerusalem, and in his interest; perhaps by Ahimaaz and Jonathan their sons: *saying, speak unto the elders of Judah;* particularly those that were at Jerusalem, with whom they had an interest: *why are ye the last to bring back the king to his house?* to his palace at Jerusalem, since David was of their tribe, and was first anointed their king: what might make them the more backward to it was their being so deep in the rebellion, which was formed and cherished among them, and brought to the height it was, through their connivance and encouragement, both at Hebron and Jerusalem; and therefore they might fear the resentment of David, and that he would not be easily reconciled unto them: *seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king,* even *to his house;* or he has received invitations from all the tribes of Israel to return to his house or palace at Jerusalem; and so this was a part of the message of David to the priests, to be told to the elders as an aggravation of their backwardness, and as an argument to excite them to their duty; though some think these are the words of the historian, to be inserted in a parenthesis, as in our version.

Ver. 12. *Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh,* &c.] Being of the same tribe, and therefore he should deal gently with them, as if they were parts of his body; and not be severe upon them, for the hand they had in the conspiracy, as they might fear: *and wherefore then are ye the last to bring the king back?* since they were so nearly related to him, and he so ready to forgive them.

Ver. 13. *And say ye to Amasa,* &c.] Who was the general of Absalom's army, and who might fear he should never be pardoned, whoever was, and looked upon his case as desperate; who had led on the army with Absalom against the king's forces, and fought them: art *thou not of my bone, and of my flesh?* nearly related to him, being his sister's son: *God do so to me, and more also;* than he had done to Absalom; or he imprecates the greatest evil upon himself that could be thought of or named: *if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab;* signifying that he would not only pardon the treason he had been guilty of, but raise him to the highest post in the army; and to assure him of it, of which he might be doubtful, considering what he had done to merit his displeasure, he makes this oath or imprecation. Joab had got his ill will by many instances, as by the murder of Abner, and now by slaying Absalom against his orders; and by his rude and insolent behaviour to him when lamenting the death of his son; he wanted to be rid of him, and now, having an opportunity of putting a valiant man into his place, and thereby attaching him to his interest, he was determined to make use of it.

Ver. 14. *And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as* the heart *of one man,* &c.] This the Jewish commentators generally understand of Amasa, that he used his interest with the men of Judah, and so wrought upon them, that they agreed as one man to send for the king, and bring him back; but it seems best to understand it of David, who by these gentle methods, kind messages, and affectionate speeches, powerfully inclined and engaged the hearts of the people towards him; so that they were unanimously and affectionately agreed to restore him: in this way David chose to return; he could have come without their leave, or any invitation from them, as he was their lawful king, and a victorious one, the rebellion being crushed; and had it in his power to chastise those concerned in it, and use them with severity; but he chose rather to gain the hearts of his people, and to come in a way peaceable to them, and honourable to himself: *so that they sent this word unto the king, return thou and all thy servants;* perhaps by the same messengers that David sent; or it may be, rather for honour's sake they deputed some of their principal men to wait on David, and invite him to return to them with all his retinue and army, promising allegiance and fidelity to him.

Ver. 15. *So the king returned, and came to Jordan,* &c.] From Mahanaim thither, which according to Bunting [i] was 28 miles: *and Judah came to Gilgal;* that is, the elders, or principal men of the tribe of Judah, came thither; which place, according to the same writer [k], was 12 miles from Jerusalem, and 4 from Jordan; and was the first place the Israelites came to when they passed that river in Joshua's time; but it seems to be rather more; see the note on Josh. ii. 1. and iv. 19. *to go to meet the king, to conduct the king*

[i] Travels, &c. p. 142.

[k] Travels, &c. p. 143, 143.

over Jordan; but then they must proceed further on, for Gilgal seems to be five or six miles on this side Jordan.

Ver. 16. *And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which was of Bahurim,* &c.] Of whom see ch. xvi. 5. *hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David;* he took the first opportunity to meet the king, and ask his pardon for his ill treatment of him when he fled from Jerusalem; for, hearing that Absalom was slain, and the victory was on the side of David, who was returning in triumph, he thought it advisable as soon as possible to make his submission, and entreat forgiveness, lest he should fall a just sacrifice to his vengeance; and a better opportunity he could not well have than to go along with the men of Judah, who met the king first of all.

Ver. 17. *And there were* 1,000 *men of Benjamin with him,* &c.] Of which tribe he was, and these were either a band of soldiers, of which he was the chiliarch; or tenants of his, which shewed him to be a great man; or his neighbours, and persons of some figure, whom he prevailed upon to come as intercessors for him: *and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul;* who had imposed upon David, and got his master's inheritance from him, knowing that David would be undeceived by Mephibosheth his master, when he came to Jerusalem; and therefore that he might be more tenderly dealt with, and come off the better, he was thus forward to meet the king, and pay his respects to him: *and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him;* which made a considerable appearance; see ch. ix. 10. *and they went over Jordan before the king;* to meet him on the other side, both Shimei and his 1,000 men, and Ziba with his sons and servants.

Ver. 18. *And there went over a ferry-boat to carry over the king's household,* &c.] His wives and children, who could not so well ford the river on foot: some will have this to be a bridge of boats, a pontoon; and Abarbinel thinks it might be a company of men, who carried the women and children on their shoulders, one after another: *and to do what he thought good;* to carry over whatever else the king pleased, besides his family: *and Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;* or just as he was about to come over, when he came to Jordan to take the boat in order to come over; for he went over Jordan to meet him, and therefore would take the first opportunity of coming into his presence, and fall down before him, and make his submission to him.

Ver. 19. *And said unto the king, let not my lord the king impute iniquity unto me,* &c.] That is, deal with him according to the desert of it, punish him for it, but forgive it; for non-imputation of sin is in effect the pardon of it: *neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day my lord the king went out of Jerusalem;* he desires that he would not only forgive, but forget it: he owns it was a perverse action, and aggravated by being done at the time when the king was in great trouble and distress: *that the king should take it to his heart;* and determine to avenge himself on him for it.

Ver. 20. *For thy servant doth know that I have sinned,* &c.] He was sensible of it, and sorry for it, and publicly acknowledged it before all the men he brought with him, and before all the servants of David; and as a token of the sincerity of his repentance, and as an earnest of his future fidelity, he made this early submission: *therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph, to go down to meet my lord the king;* but why does he make mention of the house of Joseph, when he was of the tribe of Benjamin? Kimchi says that Benjamin, Ephraim, and Manasseh, were called the house of Joseph; and it may be observed that it is sometimes used for all Israel, as in Psal. lxxx. 1. and he was the first of them that came, inasmuch as he came along with the men of Judah, who came first of all to fetch the king back; or Joseph may stand for the tribes of Israel, as distinct from Judah, and he was the first of them; some of the Jewish writers think he makes mention of the name of Joseph, because as the brethren of Joseph used him ill, and he returned good to them; so though he had used David ill, he hoped he would do as Joseph did, return good for evil: and others represent him as suggesting hereby to David, that all Israel had used him ill, and he worse than them all; and now he was come first, and they were all waiting what he would do to him, that if he received him kindly, all would come and make their peace with him.

Ver. 21. *But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said,* &c.] The same person that would have taken off the head of Shimei at the time he cursed David, if he would have given him leave, ch. xv. 9. *shall not Shimei be put to death for this?* this humiliation and acknowledgment he has made, shall he be forgiven on that account? shall so small a matter as this atone for so great a crime he has been guilty of, as that he shall not die? *because* or *though*[1] *he cursed the Lord's anointed;* is asking pardon sufficient to expiate so foul an offence, for which according to the law he ought to die? or for this action which he has done, as the Arabic version, in cursing the Lord's anointed.

Ver. 22. *And David said, what have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?* &c.] See the note on ch. xvi. 10. *that ye should this day be adversaries unto me?* or a Satan unto me, as the word is, by advising him to do what would be prejudicial to his interest; see Matt. xvi. 22, 23. as to use severity at such a time as this would have been; for had he immediately ordered Shimei to be put to death, though he deserved it, who was the first man that came to ask pardon, the Israelites in general, or all however concerned in the rebellion, would have concluded they must share the same fate, and so would not have submitted, but have raised a new rebellion against him; and some think Joab and Abishai had this in view, that they might keep their posts in the army: *shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel?* there shall not: the glory of this day shall not be sullied by the death of any; nor the joy of it be turned into sorrow in any family in Israel, as would, if any was put to death for what had passed during the rebellion: *for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?* and can and will do as I please; as he had been driven from his throne and palace, and was now invited back again, and upon his return, it was

[1] כי quamvis, vel cum tamen, Piscator.

as if he was made king anew, and afresh inaugurated into his office; and therefore no blood should be spilt on that day on which he was restored to his kingdom.

Ver. 23. *Therefore the king said unto Shimei, thou shalt not die*, &c.] This day by my hands, or order, or by the sword, 1 Kings ii. 8. *and the king sware unto him*: that he should not die for that offence, or for that only; but if he committed a new one, this oath was no longer binding on him, and not at all upon his heir and successor.

Ver. 24. *And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king*, &c.] Not down to Jordan, but Jerusalem; when the king was come thither, he came from his own dwelling to the king's palace; he is called the son of Saul, though he was his grandson, and grandsons are sometimes called sons; though in the Septuagint it is, the son's son of Saul; and the Syriac and Arabic versions are, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul: *and had neither dressed his feet*; had not cut his nails, as the Septuagint adds, his toe-nails; or rather had not washed his feet, as the Targum paraphrases it; which was frequently done in those countries, partly for refreshment, and partly to remove the filth of them contracted by walking bare-footed, or only with sandals; as also because of the ill smell of them, which was offensive: *nor trimmed his beard*; or shaved his upper lip, and took no care that the hair of his chin should be in any order; otherwise that was never shaved, to do it would be contrary to the law in Lev. xix. 26. *nor washed his clothes*; his linen clothes, his shirts, or any other that used to be washed; or *whitened* them, as the Targum, he had not sent them, his woollen clothes, to the fuller, to get out the spots, and whiten them. All these were tokens of mourning, and shewed him to be a sincere mourner for the king's departure, and the trouble he was in, since it was so long continued: *from the day the king departed, until the day he came again in peace*; which must be a considerable time, and therefore he must be in a most sordid and rueful condition.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass, when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king*, &c.] Perhaps from the place where his estate was; or, as the Arabic version, when he came from Jerusalem, from whence he went a little way to meet the king, as he was coming thither; for it was said he abode at Jerusalem, ch. xvi. 3. *that the king said unto him, wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?* when he departed from Jerusalem, being obliged to flee from thence because of Absalom; it is very probable David would never have asked him this question, knowing his lameness, had it not been for the suggestion of Ziba his servant, that he stayed at Jerusalem, hoping that the kingdom of his father would be restored to him, ch. xvi. 3.

Ver. 26. *And he answered, my lord, O king, my servant deceived me*, &c.] His servant Ziba, who, instead of saddling an ass for him by his order, went off with that and another himself, ch. xvi. 1. *for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass*; he not only determined this in his own mind, but gave orders to his servant to saddle one for him: *that I may ride thereon, and go to the king, because thy servant is lame*; and could not walk a-foot, being lame of both his feet, ch. iv. 4. and ix. 3. 13.

Ver. 27. *And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king*, &c.] By suggesting that he stayed at Jerusalem with a view to the kingdom, hoping that the quarrel between David and Absalom would issue in the restoration of it to his father's family; which was a mere calumny, he having had no such thought, nor was there any foundation for it: *but my lord the king is an angel of God*; for understanding and wisdom, to discern the falsehood of such suggestions: *do therefore what is good in thine eyes*; condemn him or acquit him; reject him or receive him into favour; he entirely submitted himself to him, to do with him as seemed good in his sight.

Ver. 28. *For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king*, &c.] Or *men of death*[*]; worthy of death, not on account of Saul's persecution, for which his family did not deserve to suffer; rather for the attempt of Ish-bosheth to get the kingdom from him, which might be deemed treason, and so the family attainted for it; though the sense may be only this, that their lives lay at his mercy, and that if he had dealt with rigour and severity towards them, as was usual for princes to do towards the family of their predecessors, who had any claim to the kingdom, put them to death, this would have been their case: *yet didst thou set thy servant among them that eat at thine own table*; which was shewing him great kindness, and doing him great honour: *what right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?* to ask any favour of him, or make any complaint to him.

Ver. 29. *And the king said unto him, why speakest thou any more of thy matters?* &c.] Of his father's family, and the injuries done by them to David, and of the benefits and favours which he had received from David, or of his temporal affairs, of his estate, which David had given away to Ziba: *I have said, thou and Ziba divide the land*; revoking his last grant to Ziba, which gave him all that belonged to Mephibosheth, ch. xvi. 4. he established his first decree, that Ziba should have half the profit of the land for tilling it, and the other half be given to Mephibosheth; he did not choose to punish Ziba for slandering his master, being inclined to clemency and mercy, and determined to shew no severity at that time; and might be in some fear of Ziba, being a considerable man, lest he should raise a new insurrection, if he bore hard upon him; besides, he might have a large share in his affection, having made a present to him in the time of his distress, and was one of the first that came to meet him upon his return, ver. 17. and ch. xvi. 1, 2.

Ver. 30. *And Mephibosheth said unto the king, yea, let him take all*, &c.] The whole estate, as David had given it to him; he was content that that last grant should stand: *forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house*; his palace in Jerusalem; which was a strong expression of affection for him, and loyalty to him.

Ver. 31. *And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim*, &c.] The place of his habitation, to Jordan, see ch. xvii. 27. *and went over Jordan with the king to*

[*] אנשי מות viris mortis, Montanus.

conduct him over Jordan; to accompany him over the river, and then take his leave of him.

Ver. 32. *Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even 80 years old,* &c.] Which was 10 years beyond the common term of man's life, and reckoned a very great age in David's time, and has been ever since, and still is, see Psal. xc. 10. *and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim;* had supported him and his family, furnished him with provisions, and all the necessaries of life, during his stay there: *for he was a very great man;* in wealth and riches, and was a very liberal man, and a man of great wisdom and good sense; and very probably was a man of great grace, which taught him his duty to his prince, and influenced him to shew mercy to him in distress.

Ver. 33. *And the king said to Barzillai, come thou over with me,* &c.] Over Jordan; Barzillai came with an intent to accompany the king over Jordan; but the king meant not only to go over Jordan, but when over to go further with him, even to Jerusalem: *and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem;* meaning, that he should dwell with him in his palace, and eat at his table, in return for feeding him at Mahanaim.

Ver. 34. *And Barzillai said unto the king,* &c.] In answer to the grateful proposal he made: *how long have I to live;* that could not be said with exactness by any; but it might be probably conjectured from the age he was of, and the infirmities that attended him, that he could not live long; it was but a short time he had to be in the world: *that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?* take so long a journey as that, seeing he might die before he got thither; and if he did not, since it could not be thought he should live long, he could not think of it, or judge it advisable at such an age to take such a journey, change his place of abode, and manner of living.

Ver. 35. *I am this day 80 years old,* &c.] Not that that day was precisely his birth-day, but that he was about such an age, very little under or over; very probably he was full that age: and *can I discern between good and evil?* signifying, either that his intellectual powers were impaired, and could not distinguish what was right and wrong, and so could be of no service to David in his privy-council, or any court of judicature, he was fit for no post or office under him; or that his natural senses were not quick to distinguish between good and bad, particularly between good and bad food, which he could neither discern by smell nor taste, as follows: *can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink?* have any gust or relish of, or take any delight or pleasure in eating and drinking; so that the most delicious food, and richest wines, and all the dainties of a king's table, would signify nothing to him: *can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?* either being so deaf that he could not hear them at all, or however not with any delight; the evil days being come upon him, in which he could take no pleasure in the diversions of a court: *wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?* he could neither take any pleasure himself, nor be of any service to the king, but on the contrary a burden to him; not only on account of his sustenance, and being obliged to have servants to attend him, which might be the least part of his burden, but his company would be disagreeable and troublesome, through the infirmities of old age upon him.

Ver. 36. *Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king,* &c.] That is, go a little way after he was over Jordan with him, and then return to his own city: *and why should the king recompence it with such a reward?* the sense is, why should the king recompence so trifling a thing as I have done, and which was but my duty, with such a reward, as to maintain me in so grand a manner at his court?

Ver. 37. *Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again,* &c.] To his own city, after he is gone over Jordan, and seen the king a little way on his journey: *that I may die in my own city;* the city of Rogelim, where perhaps he was born, and had lived all his days, and where it is natural for people to desire to die, even in their native place: and be buried *by the grave of my father, and of my mother;* or in their grave, as Kimchi and Ben Melech, in the sepulchre of his fathers, where men usually choose to be buried: *but behold, thy servant Chimham;* who was his son; and so the Syriac and Arabic versions express it, my son Chimham: *let him go over with my lord the king;* not only over Jordan, but to Jerusalem with him: *and do to him what shall seem good unto thee;* advance him, and put him into any post or office the king should think fit, or bestow a pension upon him, or give him an estate to live upon, or whatever he pleased.

Ver. 38. *And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me,* &c.] He admitted of him instead of his father: *and I will do unto him that which shall seem good unto thee;* he puts it to Barzillai, and leaves it with him to ask what he would for his son, and he would grant it. We nowhere read what it was that Barzillai asked, or whether he asked any thing; only this we read, that some hundreds of years afterward, there was a place called the habitation of Chimham near Beth-lehem, Jer. xli. 17. which makes it probable that David gave him a paternal estate of his there, since Beth-lehem was his city; and the Targum on that place is express for it; see the note there: *and whatsoever thou shalt require of me,* that *will I do for thee;* whatever suit he should make to him, or whatever favour he should ask of him hereafter, when returned to his own city, he would grant it to him, if it could be possibly done; such a sense should he always retain of his kindness to him.

Ver. 39. *And all the people went over Jordan,* &c.] That were with David: *and when the king was come over;* over Jordan, had got to the other side of it, whither Barzillai accompanied him: *the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him;* took his leave of him with a kiss, as friends were wont to do at parting, thanked him for all his favours, wished him well, and prayed to God to bless him with all blessings temporal and spiritual: *and he returned to his own place;* his own city Rogelim, having repassed the river Jordan.

Ver. 40. *Then the king went on to Gilgal,* &c.] Which, according to Josephus*, was 50 furlongs from Jordan, six miles and a quarter: *and Chimham went on*

* Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 4.

with him: after Barzillai had left them, and accompanied the king to Jerusalem: *and all the people of Judah conducted the king*: to Jerusalem; who came to meet him, ver. 15. *and also half the people of Israel*: or a part of them, as the word used signifies, and not always an equal half, so Kimchi observes; even such of Israel as went out with David at first, and the 1,000 men of Benjamin that came to meet him, ver. 17.

Ver. 41. *And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king*, &c.] A large number of them, the other part that did not come over with David, some of their principal men, who met him upon the road: *and said unto the king, why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen thee away*; secretly, privately, and unknown to them, and were bringing him back to Jerusalem: *and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?* him, and his family, and soldiers.

Ver. 42. *And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel*, &c.] Such of them as went down to fetch the king back, replied to the men of Israel that now met them, and objected to their conduct: *because the king is near of kin to us*; being of their tribe, and his palace was within their borders, and therefore they were proper persons to bring him home: *wherefore then be ye angry for this matter?* for bringing the king back, and being the first in it; for who so proper as they, not only to do their duty, but to shew their affection to the king as early as possible? *have we eaten at all of the king's cost?* they had maintained themselves at their own expense, going and returning; they had no self-interest or selfish views to serve, but on the contrary had been at a considerable charge to meet the king, and conduct him home: *or hath he given us any gift?* no, he had not, nor did they expect any; it was not with a view to any reward that they had taken this step, but purely out of affection to the king, and for the good of their country.

Ver. 43. *And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said*, &c.] They replied to them, as follows: *we have ten parts in the king*; being ten tribes, reckoning Simeon in the tribe of Judah, within which it lay, Josh. xix. 1. *and we have also more right in David than ye*; being more numerous than they; or, according to the Targum, they had more affection and good will towards David than the men of Judah, though he was of their tribe, and dwelt among them; since the rebellion was begun, and was cherished and carried on among them: *why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing back our king?* they were as ready and as desirous as they to fetch the king back; and since they were far the largest body of men, and the far greater part of the nation, they thought they ought to have been consulted in an affair of so much importance, and that doing it without them was slighting them, and casting contempt upon them, and insinuating as if they were enemies to the king; or, as the Targum expresses it, "was not my word first to bring back my king?" the first motion was from them, as appears from ver. 11. and therefore the thing should not have been done without them; they should have been apprized of it, that they might at least have joined them, and shared in the honour with them of bringing the king back: *and the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel*; not those that are here recorded, but what followed, and are not written, being so very warm and indecent; and David being silent in this hot dispute between them, which was interpreted taking the part of Judah, the men of Israel were incensed at it; and hence arose a new rebellion, of which more in the next chapter how it began, and was crushed.

CHAP. XX.

THIS chapter gives an account of a new rebellion raised by Sheba, ver. 1, 2. of David's shutting up his concubines unto the day of their death, whom Absalom had lain with, ver. 3. of Amasa being ordered to assemble the men of Judah to crush the rebellion, but being dilatory, Abishai is sent out with David's servants, and was followed by Joab with the men under him, ver. 4—7. and of the murder of Amasa by Joab, ver. 8—13. and of Sheba being shut up in the city Abel, ver. 14, 15. whose head, by the means of a wise woman, was delivered to Joab, and so an end was put to the rebellion, ver. 16—22. and, lastly, of the chief officers in David's camp and court, ver. 23—26.

Ver. 1. *And there happened to be a man of Belial*, &c.] A wicked man, as the Targum, a lawless, yokeless man, that had cast off the yoke of the law, and was without it, as Belial is by some interpreted; or one unprofitable and useless, yea, noxious and pernicious: this man, though, with respect to second causes, may be said to be there by chance, yet it was so ordered by the providence of God that he should be present at this time for the further fulfilment of the threatening to David, that the sword should not depart from his house: *whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite*: one perhaps that had been in the rebellion of Absalom, and had a grudge against David for the removal of the kingdom out of that tribe: *and he blew a trumpet*; which was done to draw off the Israelites from David, and gather a party to himself; *and said, we have no part in David*; so he interpreted what the men of Judah said, because they claimed kindred to David, the rest of the Israelites had no interest in him; thus they, who just before said they had ten parts in him, now had none at all: *neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse*; so he calls David by way of contempt, as if he was no king, but a private person, and a descendant from a mean family: *every man to his tent, O Israel*; there to consider what to do, and whom to choose to be their king, and let Judah take David for their king, and enjoy him alone, since they had so slighted, and dealt so injuriously and roughly with the rest of the tribes.

Ver. 2. *So every man of Israel went up from after David*, &c.] Those that met him on the road departed

from him, and went no further with him: and *followed Sheba the son of Bichri*: and made him their captain, who was the author of their mutiny and sedition: *but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan to Jerusalem*; never left him, after they had conducted him over Jordan, until they had brought him safe to Jerusalem.

Ver. 3. *And David came to his house at Jerusalem*, &c.] His palace there, which was in that part of the city called the fort of Zion, and city of David: *and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house*; when he fled from Jerusalem because of Absalom, ch. xv. 16. *and put them in ward*; partly as a punishment for easily yielding to the lust of Absalom, and partly that they might not be seen, which would bring to remembrance his sin: *and fed them*; he did not put them to death, nor put them away, but kept them thus confined, and made a proper provision for them, not suffering them to marry any other, and be maintained by them: *but went not in unto them*; into their apartments to lie with them, having been defiled by his son, ch. xvi. 22. *so they were shut up unto the day of their death*; kept in the ward till they died: *living in widowhood*; neither used by the king as his concubines, as they had been before, nor suffered to marry any other; or *in the widowhood of life*[*], which is so expressed, to distinguish it from widowhood made by death; this was such sort of widowhood as obtained whilst their husband was living; so the Targum, "widows of their husband "alive," or remaining.

Ver. 4. *Then said the king to Amasa*, &c.] Whom he had promised to make general of his army, ch. xix. 13. and by the following order declared him such: *assemble me the men of Judah within three days*; which was done by the sound of the trumpet, or by the proclamation of a herald; it seems that the men of Judah, who attended David to Jerusalem, were gone to their respective cities and places of abode, or there would have been no occasion for such a summons; though it is strange they should, when the men of Israel appeared so inclinable to a new rebellion: *and be thou here present*; to take the command of them.

Ver. 5. *So Amasa went to assemble* the men of *Judah*, &c.] To gather them together out of their several tribes, and bring them to Jerusalem: *but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him*; than the three days; whether this was owing to the remissness of Amasa, or the unwillingness of the people to serve under him, who had been Absalom's general in the late rebellion, or not having time sufficient allowed him, is not certain.

Ver. 6. *And David said to Abishai*, &c.] For it seems he would have nothing to say to Joab, being displeased with him for slaying Absalom, and having removed him from his posts; and therefore speaks to the next officer in his army, Abishai; though Josephus[p] says, he addressed himself to Joab, contrary to the express words of the text: *now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than* did *Absalom*: gain a greater party, and give more trouble to subdue him, unless suppressed in time: *take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him*; without waiting for Amasa, and the troops he was assembling; delays in such a case as an insurrection being dangerous, which ought to be nipped in the bud, and crushed as soon as possible; in order to which, he bids him take his servants that were about him, his body-guards, and pursue Sheba: *lest he get him fenced cities*; where he may secure himself, and hold out a siege a long time, and give a great deal of trouble: *and escape us*; for the present; or *escape our eyes*, as the Keri, or marginal reading is; we shall lose sight of him, and not know which way he is gone, if he is not pursued quickly.

Ver. 7. *And there went out after him Joab's men*, &c.] Who though he was removed from his post as general, yet might still have the command of a regiment: *and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites*; over whom Benaiah was, ver. 23. these attended David in his flight, and had now returned with him, ch. xv. 18. *and all the mighty men*; the military men that were at Jerusalem, as many as could be spared: *and they went out of Jerusalem to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri*; with Abishai at the head of them; Josephus[q] says there were 600, besides the soldiers at Jerusalem that went on this pursuit.

Ver. 8. *When they* were *at the great stone which is in Gibeon*, &c.] Which, according to Josephus[r], was 40 furlongs, or five miles from Jerusalem: what this great stone was, whether an obelisk, or what, is not certain; one of the greatest stones we read of was that which Semiramis cut out of the mountains of Armenia, which was 130 feet long, and 25 broad and thick[s]. This place was destinated for the rendezvous of David's forces, and hither Amasa came with what he had assembled together, and joined them, and took the command of them: for it follows, *Amasa went before them*; as the general of them: *and Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him*; who went along with his brother Abishai at the head of his own men, to which he was obliged by virtue of his commission; or went of himself to serve the common cause, and perhaps chiefly with a design to murder Amasa, whom he envied, because he was put into his post as general, and therefore accoutred himself for it; he put on, not a coat of mail, but a common garment which he girt about him, that it might be no incumbrance to him, or hinderance of him, in doing what he intended, but that he might more expeditiously execute it: *and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof*; the sword in the belt was not on his thigh, but on his loins, on the outside of his clothes, and was put into a sheath too large, and placed in such a position, that with the least motion, when he pleased, it would easily drop out of it, without drawing it, and so give no suspicion of his design: *and as he went forth*; to meet Amasa, just as he came to him: *it fell out*; the sword fell out of the sheath to the ground.

Ver. 9. *And Joab said to Amasa*, &c.] In a friendly manner, with all the air of pleasantry and good

[*] אלמנות חיות in viduitate vitæ, Pagninus, Montanus.
[p] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 11. sect. 6.
[q] Ibid. sect. 7.
[r] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 11. sect. 7.
[s] Diodor. Sic. l. 2. p. 100. Vid. ib. p. 55. Herodot. Euterpe, c. 111.

humour: art *thou in health, my brother?* this looked like a friendly salutation to ask of his health, and wish him it, and a loving appellation to call him brother; though they were near of kin, sisters' children, and so own cousins; thus he addressed him, to cover his design: *and Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him;* as was usual for the eastern people to do when they addressed and saluted one another in an affectionate way, and as the Turks and Arabs do to this day, as travellers relate. Barthius[t] has collected passages from the Greek poets, which shew it to be a custom, that when a man asked a favour of another, he caught hold of his beard with the right hand, and of his knee with the left; and in such a posture Joab might easily do what follows.

Ver. 10. *But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand,* &c.] In his left hand, for with his right hand he took him by the beard; he might see the sword drop out of the scabbard, and Joab take it up, which he supposed he did in order to put it into its sheath again, having no suspicion of his wicked design, and therefore not at all upon his guard to prevent it: *so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib;* in the same place where Abner smote Asahel, and Joab Abner; see ch. ii. 23. and iii. 27. and the notes there: he must strike him, as some observe, on the left side, because he was embracing him; and the stroke must be deadly, because he struck him in the pericardium, which compasses the heart round with water, to refrigerate it; for the nether part of the heart reacheth to the fifth rib; see John xix. 34[u]: *and shed out his bowels to the ground;* which fell out through the incision made by the sword: *and struck him not again;* he gave him such a home thrust, there was no need to repeat it, he dispatched him at once: *and he died;* and thus, though he was pardoned by David, and promoted to honour by him, yet the providence of God would not suffer him to go unpunished, for joining with Absalom in an unnatural rebellion against his uncle: *so Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri:* for Amasa being slain, Joab without any ceremony reassumed his post as general, and, with his brother Abishai under him, made all the haste they could in pursuit of the rebel.

Ver. 11. *And one of Joab's men stood by him,* &c.] By the body of Amasa; no doubt by the order of Joab, to satisfy the people as they came up, and reconcile them to this fact, and to exhort them not to stop, but to follow after Joab; for though Amasa their general was dead, Joab had taken the command of the army, and the pursuit was carried on with as much vigour as ever: *and said, he that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David,* let him go *after Joab;* he that likes Joab should be general, and is in the interest of David, let him make no stay here, but follow after Joab; Joab and David are put together, as if their interests were the same; though there seems to be an indecency in placing Joab first.

Ver. 12. *And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway,* &c.] By which it seems, that though the wound was mortal, and of which he died, that as yet there was life in him, and through the pain he was in, and the pangs of death on him, he rolled himself about in his own blood in the high road, where the fact was committed: *and when the man saw that all the people stood still;* gazing at the shocking sight, and could not be prevailed upon to go on: *he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field;* which was adjoining to it: *and cast a cloth upon him;* that the body might not be seen: *when he saw that every one that came by him stood still;* and so retarded the people in their march, to prevent which he took the above method, and it was a very prudent one.

Ver. 13. *When he was removed out of the highway,* &c.] Into the field, and covered over with a cloth, that he could not be seen: *all the people went on after Joab;* made no stop at all, knowing nothing of the matter, or what had happened: *to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri;* these were the troops that Amasa had been assembling, which followed one another after him; for Joab and Abishai, with their men, were at Gibeon first.

Ver. 14. *And he went through all the tribes of Israel,* &c.] That is, Sheba the son of Bichri, last mentioned, who passed through all the tribes of Israel to get as many to be of his party as he could, and to be proclaimed their king: or finding himself pursued, he passed on as fast as he could from place to place, through all the tribes, until at length he fixed for safety in a place after named; though Josephus[w] understands this of Joab pursuing Sheba through all the tribes of Israel with the forces under him; and to this sense the Syriac and Arabic versions, and so R. Isaiah interprets it; but the first sense is more generally received, that Sheba is meant, who passing through the several tribes, came *unto Abel, and unto Beth-maachah;* which were two places very near one another, if not one and the same place; since Abel is in the next verse called Abel of Beth-maachah, to distinguish it from any other place: it was a city that lay to the north of Israel near Syria; and from 2 Kings xv. 29, it appears to be in the tribe of Naphtali. There was one city of this name of Abel, six miles from Philadelphia, another 12 miles from Gadara, and a third between Paneas and Damascus, which, of the three, Reland thinks[x], is most eligible to be the place here meant; though he rather chooses to look for it in Galilee, to the west or south of Paneas, than to the east or north in the way to Damascus; and so Adrichomius[y] calls it a city of upper Galilee, 60 furlongs from Jordan; and though he also places it in the tribe of Naphtali, in the plain of the country of Berim (from whence perhaps were the Berites next mentioned), not far from Cæsarea-Philippi; see 1 Kings xv. 20. *and all the Berites;* the inhabitants of Beeroth, in the tribe of Benjamin, of which tribe Sheba was, they followed him hither, as in the next clause: *they were gathered together, and went also after him;* unto Abel; of these, see Josh. xviii. 25. 2 Sam. iv. 2, 3. though perhaps these Berim or Berites were nearer to Abel; or rather that was in their country, as has been observed by Adrichomius.

[t] Animadv. ad Claudian. de Raptu Proserp. l. 1. ver. 50. Vid. Homer. Iliad. 1. ver. 500, 501. Iliad. 8. ver. 371. & Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 2. c. 19.

[u] Weemse's Portrait of Man, p. 25.

[w] Ut supra.

[x] Palestina Illustrata, tom. 2. p. 519.

[y] Theatrum Terræ S. p. 101.

Ver. 15. *And they came and besieged him in Abel of Beth-maachah*, &c.] That is, Joab and Abishai, with the forces under them, who pursued him hither: *and they cast up a bank against the city*; which some understand of a warlike machine or engine, with which stones were cast; but it rather seems to be a bank of earth thrown up, for the better working of such engines to more advantage against the city, by throwing from thence darts into the city, or stones against the walls of it, to batter it down; such banks were used in sieges, as that Cæsar's soldiers raised in 25 days, which was 330 feet broad, and 80 feet high[a]; Kimchi interprets this of filling up the ditches round about the city with dust and earth, and so making it level, whereby they could come the more easily to the walls and batter them, or scale them, and take the city by storm: *and it stood in the trench*; the army under Joab stood where the trench round the city had been, now filled up: *and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall to throw it down*; with their engines, or whatever battering instruments they had; so, often, as Hesiod[a] says, a whole city suffers for one bad man.

Ver. 16. *Then cried a wise woman out of the city*, &c.] And such an one as the woman of Tekoah, supposed by some to be the governess of the city; but whoever she was, she well deserved the character of a wise woman; her conduct in this affair shews it: she cried with a loud voice, upon the wall of the city, to Joab's men, who were underneath battering it, *hear, hear*; which she repeated to make them hear: *say, I pray you, unto Joab, come near hither, that I may speak with thee*; tell your general I desire to speak with him; which was wisely done, to have nothing to say but to the general himself.

Ver. 17. *And when he was come near unto her*, &c.] As he did, upon the information of his men, that a woman on the wall had something to say to him: *the woman said*, art *thou Joab?* she was willing to be satisfied that he was really the general, before she would impart her mind to him: *and he answered, I* am he; the very person you ask after: *and she said unto him, hear the words of thine handmaid*; though a woman, vouchsafe to hear what I have to say: *and he answered, I do hear*; am ready to hear, and shall patiently and attentively hear whatever may be spoken; which was giving her leave and encouragement to proceed.

Ver. 18. *Then she spake, saying, they were wont to speak in old time*, &c.] It was a common saying, a proverbial expression among the ancient sages: *saying, they shall surely ask* counsel *at Abel, and so they ended* the matter. Abel, it seems, had been a city so famous for wise and prudent men, that it was common for the inhabitants of other cities, in the several parts of the kingdom, when any controversy arose among them, to say to one another, since we can't agree this matter among ourselves, let us go to Abel, and take advice there, and leave it to their arbitration; and so they did, and things were presently brought to an issue, and happily concluded; nay, when the king had a mind to make a decree or law, as R. Isaiah observes, he used to send to Abel to know whether they would submit to it; and if they agreed to it, then he proceeded in it; for other cities followed their example, so famous was this city, and of so great account: now the woman argues from hence, that surely such a renowned city should not hastily be destroyed; but the Targum directs to another sense, and which perhaps is best, and is followed by Jarchi, Kimchi, and others, paraphrasing the words thus, "she spake, saying, I remember now what is written in the book of the law, to ask a city first, saying, (will ye make peace?) so shouldest thou have asked of Abel, will ye make peace, or receive terms of peace?" referring to the law in Deut. xx. 10—15. signifying, if that had been attended to as it ought, (for if such methods were to be taken with Heathen cities, much more with a city of Israel, as Abel was,) things would soon have been agreed and issued; had Joab upon approaching the city proposed his terms of peace, they would have immediately yielded to them, and so the matter would have ended at once; for they were a peaceable people, as it follows: though Dr. Lightfoot[b] gives another sense of these words, that Sheba and his party when they came to the city, "they at first certainly said thus, that they would ask Abel of its peace, (or on whose side it was,) and so they made the matter entire, or made a shew of their own integrity:" by which this woman assured Joab, that the men of Abel had not invited, nor willingly received Sheba and his rebels into the city, but they had deceived them by fawning and false words, pretending only to inquire about the peace and welfare of their city.

Ver. 19. *I* am one of them that are *peaceable* and *faithful in Israel*, &c.] Her meaning is, that she was of a city which consisted of peaceable and faithful men, that were peaceable among themselves, and faithful to their king, who never were concerned in any insurrection or rebellion, not in the late one under Absalom: *thou seekest to destroy a city, and a mother in Israel*; a metropolitan city, which had several towns and villages under its jurisdiction, which were as daughters to it. Some think she means herself, because very old, supposed[c] to be Serah, the daughter of Asher, a son of Jacob, which is improbable: *wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?* a city which is a part of the land, that is the Lord's inheritance.

Ver. 20. *And Joab answered and said, far be it from me, far be it from me*, &c.] He repeats these words, to shew how detestable it was to him to do what she suggested: *that I should swallow up or destroy*; any in a violent and unrighteous manner, and especially a city of which she had given such a character for its greatness and worth, and for the peaceableness and fidelity of its inhabitants.

Ver. 21. *The matter is not so*, &c.] I am not come with the army against this city with any ill will to it, and with an intention to destroy it: the case is this, *but a man of Mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name*; for though he was by birth a Benjaminite, his dwelling was in Mount Ephraim in that tribe; unless there was a place of this name in the tribe of Benjamin, so called from any memorable event there, as

[a] Cæsar. Comment. l. 7. c. 24.
[a] Opera & Dies, l. 1. ver. 236.
[b] Works, vol. 2. p. 367.
[c] Jarchi & Kimchi in loc. Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 79. L.

the wood of Ephraim, ch. xviii. 6. This same man, says Joab, *hath lifted up his hand against the king*, even *against David*: is in rebellion against the king, even so great and good a king as David; he has lifted up his hand, and blown a trumpet to draw off men from David, and after himself; he has committed acts of hostility and treason; he has drawn his sword, and raised an insurrection and rebellion in the nation: *deliver him only, and I will depart from the city*: he did not desire any of his followers to be delivered up, only himself, knowing the rebellion would cease upon the delivery of him; and being unwilling that the blood of any Israelite should be shed, whom he had unawares drawn into this rebellion, and who he knew would return to their own cities upon this: *and the woman said unto Joab, behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall*; she knew the fright the inhabitants of the city were in, and how disposed they were to do any thing to save their city; she knew what influence she had among them, and how weak Sheba's party was, and therefore could assure Joab that this should be done.

Ver. 22. *Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom*, &c.] Went from the wall of the city into it, and convened the principal inhabitants together, and made so wise a speech to them, and represented things in such a light, and so prudently conducted, that they unanimously agreed to her motion: *and they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab*: whose face Joab knew full well, and was satisfied it was his head that was thrown over: *and he blew a trumpet*: as a sign of retreat: *and they retired from the city, every man to his tent*: the army under Joab broke up the siege, and departed, every man to his own city, as the Targum: *and Joab returned unto Jerusalem unto the king*: to give him an account of his success, and how the rebellion was crushed; and this gave him courage and boldness to appear before the king, which one would wonder else he should have, when he had killed his general in cold blood, the king had sent out, and without his leave had reassumed his post as general of the army; but he was a bold daring man, a man of blood, and hardened in sin, and had power in the army, and over David himself, that he could not do what he would with him, but was obliged to be silent, and overlook things, and even to re-establish him in his office, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 23. *Now Joab was over all the host of Israel*, &c.] Established in the post in which he formerly was; either having been never displaced, which though David thought to do, he was not able to effect it, because of his power and influence with the people; or if he had displaced him, which by some things in this chapter seemed to be the case, yet Amasa being dead, and the rebellion crushed by Joab, which still made him more haughty, and increased his popularity, David saw it most advisable to replace him; and because mention is made of him, as established in his office as general over the whole army, an account is given of the rest of David's officers; and the rather, as it was a sort of beginning his reign anew, after quelling the above rebellions: *and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites, and over the Pelethites*; was continued in his post, see ch. viii. 18.

Ver. 24. *And Adoram was over the tribute*, &c.] Or over those that collected and brought it, as the Targum; this was a new office, and which respected both the revenue he received from his own people, and the tribute brought him from the nations conquered by him: *and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder*; who was in this office before, and now continued and established in it, ch. viii. 16.

Ver. 25. *And Sheva was scribe*, &c.] Either the same with Benaiah, or he was dead or removed, and Sheva was put in his place, see ch. viii. 17. *and Zadok and Abiathar* were *the priests*; as before; see the same.

Ver. 26. *And Ira also the Jairite*, &c.] Which some take to be the same with Ira the Ithrite, ch. xxiii. 38. a son of Jether or Ithra the Israelite, ch. xvii. 25. though others suppose he was Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite, ch. xxiii. 26. and so the Targum here calls him Ira the Jairite, which was of Tekoah; and Tekoah being the chief place in Israel for oil-olive[a], with which the lamps were lighted, Jarchi thinks he had the name of Jairite from Jair, which signifies to enlighten; but rather he was a descendant from Jair the Gileadite, and perhaps was a great friend to David when in Gilead, and from whence he brought him and promoted him: for he *was a chief ruler about David*; a prime minister, an intimate friend, the chief of his privy-council; perhaps he succeeded Ahithophel; it is much we hear nothing of Hushai.

CHAP. XXI.

A FAMINE being in the land three years, the Lord was inquired of, to know the reason of it; and it being answered, that it was on account of Saul's slaughter of the Gibeonites, they were summoned by David to know what satisfaction they required for the cruel usage of them, ver. 1—3. to which they replied, that they only desired seven of Saul's sons to be delivered up to them, to be hanged by them, which was granted, ver. 4—9. whose bones, with those of Saul and Jonathan, David buried in the sepulchre of their fathers, ver. 10—14. and the chapter is closed with an account of several battles fought with the Philistines, in which four of their generals were slain, ver. 15—22.

Ver. 1. *Then there was a famine in the days of David three years, year after year*, &c.] That is, three years running, one after another; some think this, though here related, was before the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba, and not after, and there are several things which may incline to it, as that the sin of Saul should otherwise be so long unpunished, and that the bones of Saul and Jonathan were not sooner removed, here

[a] Misn. Menachot, c. 8. sect. 3.

related; and that there should be so many battles with the Philistines after they were subdued, as recorded in this chapter; and in one of the Jewish[e] writings it is said, that this was the year after Saul was slain; though, in other copies of the same book, it is said to be thirty years after; and so in that Abarbinel used, and who is of the mind that what is here related stands in the order in which it was, and of the same opinion are some of our best chronologers[f]: *and David inquired of the Lord*: before the high-priest by Urim and Thummim, what should be the cause of the famine, perhaps suspecting it was some sins of his; the first year he might take no notice of it, hoping for a more fruitful season the next year, it arising, as he might suppose, from some natural cause; the second year he might begin to think it was for some national sins, but might be remiss in his inquiry into them; but the third year he was alarmed, and concluded there was something extraordinary and special, and feared it was on his account, and this put him on making inquiry: *and the Lord answered*, it is *for Saul, and for his bloody house*; on account of the blood shed by him and his family; which answer must in a good measure relieve the mind of David, if he was fearful it was for his sins: *because he slew the Gibeonites*: which was contrary to the oath that Joshua and all Israel had given them not to slay them, but save them alive, Josh. ix. 15. When this was done is not certain; the Jews commonly say[g] that he slew them when he slew the priests at Nob, they being hewers of wood and drawers of water to them, and were slain with them; or because their maintenance depended on the priests, they being slain, it was in effect slaying them; but rather this refers to another time, and to other action or actions of Saul, who sought by divers means to destroy these people, and root them out of the land. The Heathens had a notion that barrenness, unfruitfulness, and famine, were inflicted by God for murder. Philostratus[h] reports of the Ethiopian Indians, that for the murder of their king, Ganges, their ground was unfruitful, their cattle starved, their wives abortive, and their cities and houses fell to ruin, until the murderers were destroyed.

Ver. 2. *And the king called the Gibeonites*, &c.] Sent messengers unto them, and summoned them to come to him, and said unto them what is expressed in the next verse; for what follows is in a parenthesis: (*now the Gibeonites were not of the children of Israel*; originally, though they were proselyted to the Jewish religion, and were employed in the menial services of the sanctuary: *but of the remnant of the Amorites*: they were the remains of the old Canaanites, who sometimes in general were called Amorites, otherwise the Gibeonites were called Hivites; see Josh. ix. 7. and xi. 19. *and the children of Israel had sworn unto them*: by their princes, as Joshua; *and yet Saul*, contrary to this oath, *sought to slay them in his zeal to the children of Israel and Judah*;) pretending a great concern for them, for their honour and profit; that these men ought not to live in their cities, and take the bread out of their mouths, and be employed in the service of the sanctuary; but that they ought to be expelled, and even cut off, being the old inhabitants of the land, the Lord ordered to be destroyed; and that though the Israelites had given an oath to the contrary, they were drawn into it by guile and deceit, and therefore not binding upon them; hence he sought by all means to harass and oppress them, and slew many of them, and destroyed them out of their cities, that they might be possessed by Judah and Benjamin; see ch. iv. 2. compared with Josh. ix. 17.

Ver. 3. *Wherefore David said unto the Gibeonites, what shall I do for you*, &c.] By way of satisfaction for the injuries done them: *and wherewith shall I make the atonement*: for the offences committed, that so the wrath that was gone forth against the land in a famine might be appeased: *that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?* pray for a blessing upon the land which the Lord had chosen for his inheritance, and given as such to the people of Israel, that rain might descend upon it, and make it fruitful.

Ver. 4. *And the Gibeonites said unto him*, &c.] In reply to his motion: *we will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house*; this shall not be the ransom or atonement; it was not silver and gold Saul took from them, but the lives of their brethren, and therefore they insist upon life for life: *neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel*; who were not of the house of Saul; they did not desire any man should die, but who were of that family by whom they had suffered: *and he said, what you shall say, that will I do for you*; whether by inflicting pecuniary mulcts, or punishing with death, which latter seems to be what they suggested, and afterwards insisted on; whatever, according to law and justice, was required, he was ready to do it for them.

Ver. 5. *And they answered the king*, &c.] Declaring expressly what they would have done: *the man that consumed us*; meaning Saul, who lessened their number by cruel oppressions of some, and by taking away the lives of others: *and that devised against us*, that we *should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel*; who had formed schemes, and published edicts, for banishing them out of the land; perhaps at the same time that he put away wizards and those that had familiar spirits out of the land, under the same pretence for zeal for the glory of God, and the good of the people of the land, 1 Sam. xxviii. 3—9.

Ver. 6. *Let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us*, &c.] They pitched upon this number, either because they were seven, and no more of the Gibeonites, whom Saul slew, as the Jew say[i]; two hewers of wood, two drawers of water, a keeper (of a synagogue), a scribe, and a servant; but perhaps the true reason was, they knew there were no more besides Mephibosheth, for whom David had a great respect, and therefore required no more: *and we will hang them up unto the Lord*: not to gratify a revengeful spirit of theirs, but in honour to the justice of God, and to appease his wrath: *in Gibeah of Saul*, whom *the Lord did choose*; which was Saul's native place, and where he always

[e] Pirke Eliezer, c. 17.
[f] Usser. Annal. Vet. Test. p. 53. Bedford's Scripture Chronology, p. 549.
[g] T. Bab. Bava Kama, fol. 119. 1.
[h] Vita Apollon. Tyanei, l. 3. c. 6.
[i] T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 65. 2.

lived; so that to hang them there was to the greater disgrace of him and his family; and he being chosen of the Lord to be a king of Israel, was an aggravation of his crime in violating the oath made to the Gibeonites: *and the king said, I will give* them; for though he had sworn to Saul that he would not cut off his seed, yet as he had a divine direction in this case, as appears by the Lord's being pleased with it, and was entreated for the land by it, this oath of his was dispensed with; nor did he cut them off himself, but delivered them to others, according to the will of God.

Ver. 7. *But the king spared Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul,* &c.] As they did not name particular persons, only required seven sons, it was at the option of the king what sons to deliver to them, and therefore kept back Mephibosheth, who is thus described, to distinguish him from a son of Saul's of the same name, after mentioned: *because of the Lord's oath that was between them, between David and Jonathan the son of Saul*; not merely or only out of affection to Mephibosheth, but because of the oath, that he might not be guilty of the same crime Saul was in slaying the Gibeonites.

Ver. 8. *But the king took the two sons of Rizpah the daughter of Aiah,* &c.] Saul's concubine, ch. iii. 2. *whom she bare unto Saul, Armoni and Mephibosheth*; of whom we read nowhere else; after the name of the latter, it is probable, Jonathan's son was called, before mentioned: *and the five sons of Michal the daughter of Saul, whom she brought up for Adriel the son of Barzillai the Meholathite*: Michal had no children to the day of her death, nor was she the wife of Adriel, but Merab her sister; wherefore these sons were not whom she *bare*, as the word used signifies, but, as we rightly render it, whom she *brought up* or educated, so the Targum, her sister being dead; and so the Jews say [k], Merab brought them forth, and Michal brought them up, therefore they were called by her name; or the words may be supplied thus, *and the five sons* of the sister of Michal, and, as in ver. 19. is supplied, the brother of Goliath. Barzillai is here called the Meholathite, to distinguish him from Barzillai the Gileadite, spoken of in a former chapter, see 1 Sam. xviii. 19.

Ver. 9. *And he delivered them into the hands of the Gibeonites,* &c.] The two sons of Rizpah and the five sons of Merab, two sons of Saul and five grandsons: *and they hanged them in the hill before the Lord*: in the hill at Gibeah, that they might be seen by all that passed by, and serve to deter from such evils, which brought on them that punishment; gibbetings or crucifixions were commonly made on hills and mountains [l]: the phrase, *before the Lord*, is either the same as *unto the Lord*, ver. 6. to make atonement to the Lord, and in his sight; or it denotes that it was done publicly before the sun, and in the sight of it; for it cannot mean before the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence, for that was not there: *and they fell all seven together*: they were hanged together, and died at one and the same time: *and were put to death in the days of harvest, in the first days, in the beginning of barley-harvest*: which began at the passover, the morrow after the first day of the feast, Lev. xxiii. 10, 11. which was the 16th of Nisan, on which day, the Jews say [m], these men were hanged, and which must be about the beginning of our April.

Ver. 10. *And Rizpah the daughter of Aiah took sackcloth,* &c.] Both as a token of mourning for her sons, and as fittest to defend from the weather, the heat by day or cold by night: *and spread it for her upon the rock*; the hill on which her sons were hanged; this she spread as a canopy or tent to sit under, and be covered with it; not to cover the bodies with it, but herself, and where she sat to mourn the loss of her sons, and to watch their bodies, that they might not be devoured by birds and breasts of prey, as after observed: and here she sat *from the beginning of harvest until water dropped on them out of heaven*; that is, as the Jews say [n], from the 16th of Nisan, when barley-harvest began, to the 17th of Marchesvan, when the former rain fell; that is, from the beginning of April to the beginning of October: but it is not likely that she continued so long watching the bodies, nor would there be any need of it to keep the birds and beasts from them; for after they had hung so many months, there would be nothing left for them; but rather the meaning is, that she continued there until it pleased God to send rain from heaven, which had been restrained, and a famine came upon it, because of the ill usage of the Gibeonites: and very probably the order from the king was, that the bodies should hang till rain came, that it might be observed what was the reason of their suffering; and no doubt Rizpah sat there praying that rain might come, and which, as Abarbinel thinks, came in a few days after, though not usual in summer-time; but this was an extraordinary case, as in 1 Sam. xii. 17, 18. and was done to shew the Lord was entreated for the land; and so Josephus says [o], that upon the hanging up of these men, God caused it to rain immediately, and restored the earth to its former fruitfulness. According to the law in Deut. xxi. 22, 23, the bodies should have been taken down and buried the same day: but these men suffered not for their own personal sins, but for the sins of others, and to avert a public calamity, and therefore must hang till that was removed; nor were they executed by men bound by that law; and besides their continuing on the tree was according to the will of God, till he was entreated, who could dispense with this law; to which may be added, the ceremonial and judicial laws, of which this was one, gave place to those of a moral nature [p], as this did to that of sanctifying the name of God in a public manner; hence the saying of one of the Rabbins upon this [q], which is by many wrongly expressed, "it is better that one "letter should be rooted out of the law, than that "the name of God should not be sanctified openly;" that is, a lesser precept give way to a greater, or a ceremonial precept to a moral one, such as the sanctification of the name of God is: *and suffered neither the birds of the air to rest on them by day*: as it is usual for crows [r] and ravens, and such sort of birds, to light on

[k] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 19. 2.
[l] Vid. Lipsium de Cruce, l. 3. c. 13.
[m] Bemidbar Rabba, fol. 190. 1.
[n] Bemidbar Rabba, ib.

[o] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 1.
[p] See Stillingfleet's Origines Sacr. p. 140.
[q] T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 79. 1.
[r] —— non pasces in cruce corvos, Horat. Epist. l. 1. Epist. 16. ver. 48.

bodies thus hung up, and pick their flesh: *nor the beasts of the field by night;* for it seems it was usual to make the gibbets, and so in some other nations the crosses, so low, that wild beasts could easily come at the bodies and devour them; so Blandina was hung upon a tree so low, that she might be exposed to the wild beasts to feed upon her, but not one of them would touch her body[s]; now Rizpah, by her servants, had ways and means to fright away the birds and beasts from doing any injury to the carcasses.

Ver. 11. *And it was told David what Rizpah the daughter of Aiah, the concubine of Saul, had done,* &c.] Whether this was told out of good will or ill will is not certain; however, it was not disagreeable to David, but served to move pity and compassion in him to the woman, and to stir him up to give an honourable interment to Saul and his sons; and which would shew that this fact was not done out of personal pique and revenge to his family, but in obedience to the will of God, and the honour of his name.

Ver. 12. *And David went and took the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son, from the men of Jabesh-gilead,* &c.] Which, according to Bunting[t], was 52 miles from Jerusalem; though perhaps David did not go thither in person to fetch them, but by his messengers, see ver. 14. *which had stolen them from the street of Beth-shan, where the Philistines had hanged them, when the Philistines had slain Saul in Gilboa;* the history of all which see in 1 Sam. xxxi. 8—13.

Ver. 13. *And he brought up from thence the bones of Saul, and the bones of Jonathan his son,* &c.] Which had been buried there under an oak, 1 Chron. xii. 12. *and they gathered the bones of them that were hanged;* the seven sons of Saul, who had been lately hanged; who either had hung so long that their flesh was consumed, and the bones dropped upon the ground, from whence they gathered them; or they took them down and burnt the flesh off of them, and took the bones to bury them, which was not usually done[u].

Ver. 14. *And the bones of Saul and Jonathan his son,* &c.] Together with those who had been hanged: *buried they in the country of Benjamin in Zelah;* a city in the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 28. *in the sepulchre of Kish his father;* the father of Saul, 1 Sam. ix. 1, 2. and which, according to Fuller[w], and the position of it in his map, was not far from the hill on which the seven sons of Saul were hanged: *and they performed all that the king commanded;* that is, David's messengers and servants did; they fetched the bones of Saul and Jonathan from Jabesh-gilead, and buried them with those of his seven sons hanged, in the burying-place of his father Kish, and made a general mourning for them; for the Jews say[x], that by David's order Saul's coffin was carried through every tribe, and men, women, and children, came out and expressed concern: *and after that God was entreated for the land;* not after the burial of the said persons, but after the seven men were hanged up; by this the wrath of God was appeased, which was seen by his sending rain and fruitful seasons, so that the famine ceased.

Ver. 15. *Moreover the Philistines had yet war again with Israel,* &c.] Besides what is before recorded in this and the preceding book; being animated to it partly by the number of giants among them, and partly by the decline of David's life, and it may be chiefly by the insurrections and rebellions in Israel; though some think that these battles were not after the rebellions of Absalom and Sheba, and the affair of the Gibeonites, though here recorded; but before, and quickly after the war with the Ammonites, next to which they are placed in 1 Chron. xx. but they seem to be placed here in their proper order: *and David went down, and his servants with him;* to the borders of the Philistines, perceiving they were preparing to make war against him: *and fought against the Philistines;* engaged in a battle with them: *and David* waxed faint; in the battle, not able to bear the fatigues of war, and wield his armour as he had used, being in the decline of life; after he had been engaged a while, his spirits began to fail, not through fear, but through feebleness; but, according to Josephus, it was through weariness in pursuing the enemy put to flight, which the following person perceived, and turned upon him[y].

Ver. 16. *And Ishbi-benob, which was of the sons of the giant,* &c.] Of Goliath, or of a giant, of the race of them: *the weight of whose spear* weighed *three hundred shekels of brass in weight;* which must be understood either of the wood of it, or of the head of it, the flaming point of it, as many interpret it; and if so, it was but half the weight of Goliath's spear, unless there was any difference of the weight of iron and of brass, see 1 Sam. xvii. 7. *he being girded with a new* sword; or rather with a new girdle, as the Targum; and so Jarchi, which might be given him as a mark of honour, or as a token of his having a commission in the army: *thought to have slain David;* his aim was at him, and perceiving him faint and feeble, thought to take the advantage of it, and dispatch him.

Ver. 17. *But Abishai the son of Zeruiah succoured him,* &c.] Observing him in danger, made haste to his relief: *and smote the Philistine, and killed him;* it seems as if Abishai engaged with the Philistine, and killed him; but inasmuch as it will bear to be interpreted of David, and since the four giants here and hereafter mentioned are said to fall by the hand of David and his servants, ver. 12, it may be thought that this man fell by his hand; seeing it is clear that all the rest fell by the hands of his servants: *then the men of David sware unto him;* after they had observed the danger he was exposed unto, and how narrowly he escaped with his life: *saying, thou shalt go no more with us to battle;* they had persuaded him not to go to the battle with Absalom; they had suffered him to go with them now, he being, no doubt, forward and pressing to it; but now they were resolute, and determined he should never go more: *that thou quench not the light of Israel;* signifying that their glory and prosperity depended on his life, and that, should he be taken away, they should be in affliction and adversity, their honour and their

[s] Euseb. Eccl. Hist. l. 5. c. 1. Vid. Lipsium de Cruce, l. 3. c. 11. & l. 2. c. 13.
[t] Travels, &c. p. 122, 143.
[u] Lipsius de Cruce, l. 2. c. 16.
[w] Pisgah-Sight, B. 2. c. 12. p. 256.
[x] Bemidbar Rabba, ut supra.
[y] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 1.

happiness would be at an end; the Targum is, "thou "mayest not extinguish the kingdom of Israel," the light and glory of it.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass after this, &c.*] After the former battle: *that there was again a battle with the Philistines at Gob:* in 1 Chron. xx. 4. it is called Gezer; either the place had two names, or these two places were near each other; so that the battle may be said to be fought both at the one and at the other, being fought equally near to both: *then Sibbechai the Hushathite slew Saph, which was of the sons of the giant:* who is called Sippai, 1 Chron. xx. 4. he had his name from the lintel of a door, being as high as one, so tall that he could scarce go under one. Sibbechai was one of David's worthies, 1 Chron. xi. 29. perhaps a descendant of Hushah, who sprung from Judah, 1 Chron. iv. 4.

Ver. 19. *And there was again a battle in Gob with the Philistines, &c.*] Another battle with them in the same place: *where Elhanan the son of Jaare-oregim, a Beth-lehemite, slew* the brother of *Goliath the Gittite;* the word *brother* is rightly supplied from 1 Chron. xx. 5. where his name is said to be Lahmi, for not Goliath himself was slain, though some so interpret it, and take Elhanan to be David; so Jarchi, and with which agrees the Targum; but he was slain not at Gob, but in the valley of Elah, nor had David any such name as Elhanan; he was one of David's worthies, ch. xxiii. 24. where he is called the son of Dodo, and in 1 Chron. xx. 5. the son of Jair; and Lahmi there may not be the name of Goliath's brother, but, as here, the country-name of Elhanan; for the words[z] there may be rendered, "and Elhanan the son of Jair, "the Lehemite (*i. e.* the Beth-lehemite), slew the "brother of Goliath the Gittite," and so perfectly agrees with this: *the staff of whose spear was like a weaver's beam;* not of Goliath's brother, but of Goliath himself, 1 Sam. xvii. 7.

Ver. 20. *And there was yet a battle in Gath, &c.*] Besides the battles in the above place or places; for this does not necessarily suppose that one of the said battles had been there, only that this, which was another battle, had been there: *where was a man of great stature;* for so the sense of the word appears to be from 1 Chron. xx. 6. though here it signifies a man of strife and contention, a man of war, and both were true of him: *that had on every hand six fingers, and on every foot six toes, four-and-twenty in number:* twelve fingers on his two hands, and twelve toes on his two feet. Pliny[a] speaks of one M. Curiatius, a patrician, who had two daughters that had six fingers on an hand, and were called *Sedigitæ*, six-fingered; and of Volcatius, a famous poet, called *Sedigitus*, or six-fingered, for the same reason; and elsewhere, from other writers[b], he makes mention of a people that had eight toes on each foot; so Ctesias[c] speaks of a people in the mountains of India, which have eight fingers on each hand, and eight toes on each foot, both men and women: *and he also was born to the giant;* a son of a giant.

Ver. 21. *And when he defied Israel, &c.*] The armies of Israel, as Goliath had done some years ago, 1 Sam. xvii. 10. *Jonathan the son of Shimeah the brother of David slew him;* this brother of David is called Shammah, 1 Sam. xvi. 9. and Shimma, 1 Chron. ii. 13. this son of his is another man from Jonadab his son, who was famous for his subtlety as this was for his valour, ch. xiii. 3. The Jews say[d] this was Nathan the prophet, a son of Shammah.

Ver. 22. *These four were born to the giant in Gath, &c.*] Not to Goliath, for one of them was his brother, but to some giant or another of that place, for which it was famous; they were all of them of the race of the giants; and so the Septuagint version, they were "the offspring of the giants in Gath, whose family "was Repha;" and this Repha, or Arepha, as the Vulgate Latin version, according to Abarbinel, was a woman of the daughters of the giants; the Talmudists[e] make her to be the same with Orpah, Ruth i. 4. These giants, it is highly probable, were the descendants of the Anakim which remained in Gath after they were cut off by Joshua in other places, Josh. xi. 22. *and fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants;* the first, Ishbi-benob, fell by the hand of David assisted by Abishai, and the other three by the persons mentioned.

CHAP. XXII.

THIS chapter contains a song or psalm, the same with the 18th psalm, and which, according to Jarchi, was composed by David in his old age, and, as Kimchi says, at the end or close of his days; but Abarbinel is of opinion that it was written in his youthful time, in the midst of his troubles, and was sung by him as often as he had a deliverance from any; and which may account for the several variations in it from Psal. xviii. which, the same writer observes, are 74; and are not to be ascribed to the difference of copies, or neglect of copiers: and very probably, towards the close of his days, he revised it, and made it fit for general use, and sent it with the rest of his psalms to the chief musician; but the particular consideration of it, and of the differences in it from Psal. xviii. is referred to the exposition of that book in its course.

[z] Vid. Buxtorf. Anticritic. par. 2. c. 2. p. 421.
[a] Nat. Hist. l. 11. c. 43.
[b] Megasthenes apud ib. l. 7. c. 2.
[c] In Indicis, c. 31.
[d] Hieron. Trad. Heb. fol. 76. D.
[e] T. Bab. Sotah. fol. 42. 2.

CHAP. XXIII.

In this chapter are recorded the last words of David under a divine inspiration, ver. 1—7. and an account is given of his great men, famous for warlike exploits, particularly of three mighty men who did very marvellous things, ver. 8—17. and of two others next unto them, which belonged to another class of three, ver. 18—23. and then of thirty-one more, ver. 24—39. who are all mentioned by name.

Ver. 1. *Now these be the last words of David,* &c.] Which refer not to the psalm in the preceding chapter, but to what follows; not the last words he spoke, for he said many things afterwards; for the advice he gave to Solomon, and the instructions to him about building the temple, were delivered after this time; but these were the last after he had finished the book of Psalms; or the last that he spoke under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or that he delivered out by way of prophecy; though the Jews[f] will not allow him to speak by the spirit of prophecy; they own he spoke by the Holy Spirit, which they distinguish from prophecy; but the Targum calls these words a prophecy, and takes them to be a prophecy of the Messiah, and of things to come, as undoubtedly they are, paraphrasing them thus; "these are the words "of the prophecy of David, which he prophesied "concerning the end of the world, concerning the "days of consolation that should come;" this is observed to excite attention, the last words of dying men being usually regarded and remembered: *David the son of Jesse said;* he began with his descent, which was comparatively mean, in order to illustrate the distinguishing goodness of God to him in his exaltation: *and the man who was raised up on high;* from a low estate to an high one, from the sheepfold to the throne, to be king over all the tribes of Israel, and a conqueror, and head of the nations round about him: *the anointed of the God of Jacob;* who was anointed king by Samuel by the order of the God of Jacob; and which was an instance of his being the God of Jacob or Israel, and of his care of them, and regard unto them, that he anointed such a man to be king over them, as well as it was an honour to David: *and the sweet psalmist of Israel;* who composed most of the psalms and hymns of praise for the people of Israel; invented and set the tunes to them to which they were to be sung, and the instruments of music on which they were sung; and appointed singers to preside, and lead them in that part of divine worship, singing psalms and hymns; and very sweet were the psalms he composed as to the matter of them, and very sweet and delightful to the ear was the music in the manner of singing them: it may be rendered, who was *sweet* or *pleasant* in the *songs of Israel*[g], his warlike exploits and victories being the subject of them, 1 Sam. xviii. 6, 7. *said;* as follows; for all that goes before are the words of the penman of this book, drawing the character of David; in which he was a type of Christ, a branch out of the root of Jesse, highly exalted, and chosen from among the people, anointed to be prophet, priest, and King; and who sweetly expounded the psalms concerning himself, and ordered them to be sung in the churches, and of which he is the subject, and may be said to be sweetly held forth in them, see Luke xxiv. 44.

Ver. 2. *The spirit of the Lord spake by me,* &c.] The psalms and songs he composed were not the fruits of his own genius, but were written by him under the inspiration of the spirit of God; by whom holy men of God, the penmen of the Scriptures, spoke, even as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, of whom David was one, being a prophet; see Acts i. 16. and ii. 30. so the Targum here, "David spoke by the spirit of "prophecy of the Lord:" or spake *in me*[h]; what he spoke was first internally impressed upon his mind by the spirit of God, and then he expressed it with his tongue, as follows: *and his word was in my tongue;* not only the matter of his psalms was indited by the spirit of God, and suggested to his mind; but the very words in which they are delivered were given to him, and he was directed to make use of them, and did.

Ver. 3. *The God of Israel said,* &c.] To David, or by him; he who was the covenant-God of Israel literally considered, and is the covenant-God and Father of the whole spiritual Israel, and who is owned, believed in, and worshipped by them: *the Rock of Israel spake to me;* the same with the God of Israel in other words, who is the strength and security of Israel; or the second divine Person, the Son and Word of God, is meant, who is often called a rock in Scripture; and is the rock on which the Israel or church of God is built, and in whom it remains safe and firm, the gates of hell not being able to prevail against it; and so here is an instance and proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; the God of Israel, Jehovah the Father; the Rock of Israel, Jehovah the Son; and the Spirit of Jehovah, as in the preceding verse, who is Jehovah the Spirit: now what was said by these three divine Persons to David, and by him, and concerning himself as a type of the Messiah, follows: *he that ruleth over men* must be *just, ruling in the fear of God;* which is a character every king among men ought to have, administering justice to their subjects; ruling not only according to the laws of the land, but according to the law of God; having his fear before their eyes, and acting with a view to his honour and glory, whose vicegerents they are, and to whom they are accountable; they should rule with gentleness and humanity, considering they are men, and not brutes, they rule over. Agamemnon in Homer is often called *king of men.* This character, in all respects, was found in David, ch. viii. 15. and may be

[f] Maimon. Moreh Nevochim, par. 2. c. 45.

[g] נעים זמרות jucundus psalmis, Montanus; suavis in canticis, Vatablus; amœnus psalmis, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[h] בי in me, Montanus, Junius & Tremellius.

here given as an instruction to his son and successor, Solomon; and is in all respects applicable to the Messiah, who is a *ruler* or King by the designation of his father; a ruler *over men*, even over all men, yea, over the greatest of men, King of kings, and Lord of lords, and especially, and in an eminent sense, King of saints; and he is *just*, a King that reigns in righteousness, righteous in all his ways and works, and particularly just as a King, as well as in all his other characters, see Jer. xxiii. 5, 6. Zech. ix. 9. and upon whom, as man and Mediator, the spirit of *the fear of the Lord* rests, and under the influence of which, as such, he has acted, Isa. xi. 1, 2. so the Targum applies these words to the Messiah thus, " the true Judge said, he would " appoint to me a King, who is the Messiah, who shall " arise and rule in the fear of the Lord:" and they may be rendered, there shall be *a ruler over men, just, ruling in the fear of God*; or ruling, appointing, ordering, and directing the worship of God, and the ordinances of it under the Gospel dispensation, as Christ did, see Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

Ver. 4. *And* he shall be *as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds*, &c.] That is, such a ruler that rules in righteousness, and in the fear of God; he is the light and glory of his people, who guides and directs them, makes them cheerful and comfortable; his administrations are pleasant and delightful, and promise a growing and increasing happiness to them, like the morning light and rising sun; and there are no clouds, nor forebodings of dark times, affliction and distress, coming upon them, but all the reverse: and with Christ these metaphors well suit, who is the true light that shines, the morning star, the day-spring from on high, the sun of righteousness, and light of the world; his going forth or appearance in human nature, at his incarnation, was as the morning, Hos. vi. 3. the first discovery of him to Adam, after sin had brought a night of darkness on the world, was as the dawn of the morning; and this light like that of the morning increased, fresh and clearer discoveries of him being made to the patriarchs afterwards; and though as yet the sun was not up, and it was not a morning without clouds, yet the discoveries then made brought joy with them, as to Abraham and others, and were a sure sign of the sun rising. When Christ appeared in the flesh, the sun of righteousness then arose, and scattered the darkness of the night, both in the Jewish and Gentile world; introduced the light of the Gospel to a greater degree than it was under the legal dispensation, and made the Gospel day; which was not only like the morning light, growing and increasing, but was as a morning without clouds, without the darkness of the ceremonial law, the shadows of which now disappeared; and without the storms and tempests of the moral law, its curses being bore and removed by Christ; and without the frowns of divine wrath, reconciliation and satisfaction being made by him: and this is all applicable particularly to the government of Christ, which is delightful and grateful to his people, serviceable and beneficial to them, under which they enjoy great peace and prosperity; and which will more and more increase, and still be more glorious and illustrious, see Psal. lxxii. 7, 8. Isa. xxx. 26. A learned writer[j] has observed, that in an ancient MS. the word *Jehovah* is inserted and read thus, " and as the " light of the morning shall arise Jehovah the sun," which clearly points to Christ the sun of righteousness; and be it an interpolation, it gives the true sense of the words: a glorious, beautiful, and illustrious person is described in Ovid[k] by the same figure as here: as *the tender grass* springing *out of the earth by clear shining after rain*; which springs up the faster, and is more flourishing after a shower of rain, and when upon that the sun breaks out and shines clearly: or *from clear-shining from rain*[l]; that is, the springing of the tender grass out of the earth is owing partly to the rain which falls in the night, and partly to the sun rising in the morning, and the clear shine of it: this may denote the fruitful and flourishing estate which a good and righteous ruler over men is the happy instrument of bringing his people into; and may be applied both to the incarnation of Christ, when he grew up as a tender plant, or as the tender grass, mean in his original and descent, weak in himself as man; and yet this fruit of the earth was excellent and comely, beautiful and glorious, and the springing of it owing to the favour and good will of God, and his coming was as the latter and former rain to the earth, Hos. vi. 3. and to the government of Christ, and the benefits of it to his church and people; who flourish under it through the light of his grace and favour, and through the rains of Gospel doctrines they are blessed with: or *than clear shining, than rain*; Christ is more beneficial to his people, who are comparable to grass for their meanness, and weakness, and number, than the sun and rain are to the grass in the field.

Ver. 5. *Although my house* be *not so with God*, &c.] So bright, and flourishing, and prosperous as the government of the just ruler before described; or is not *right*[m] with God, meaning his family, in which great sins were committed, and great disorders and confusions brought into it, as the cases of Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah shewed; or *not firm* or *stable*[n], through the rebellion of one, the insurrection of another, and the usurpation of a third; yet he believed it would be firm and stable in the Messiah that should spring from him, promised in the everlasting covenant; though the Jewish writers understand this of the firmness and stability of his kingdom and government: *but my house is not so*, &c. like the morning light, which increases by little and little, and like the morning, which sometimes is not cloudy, and sometimes is; sometimes the sun shines clearly, and sometimes not: or like the tender grass, which is sometimes flourishing, and after withers; but so is not my kingdom, it is a perpetual one, given and secured by an everlasting covenant; and such certainly is or will be the kingdom of the Messiah: *yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all* things, *and*

[j] Dr. Kennicott's State of the Hebrew Text, Dissert. 1. p. 468.
[k] Talisque apparuit illi, &c. Metamorph. l. 14. Fab. 16. ver. 767.
[l] מנגה ממטר a splendore, a pluvia germen de terra, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

[m] לא כן non recta, Cocceius.
[n] Non est res firma. Vitringa in Jesaiam, c. xi. 1.

sure: or, *for*[o] *he hath made*, &c. the covenant by which the kingdom was settled on David and his seed was a covenant that would continue for ever, and would be kept, *observed*, and *preserved*[p] in all the articles of it, and so be sure to his seed, particularly to the Messiah that should spring from him, in whom it was fulfilled, Luke i. 32, 33. and the covenant of grace made with David's antitype, with Christ the head of the church, and the representative of it, and so with all his people in him, is an everlasting one: it was made with Christ from everlasting, as appears from the everlasting love of God, the source and spring of it; the earliness of the divine counsels on which it is formed, and blessings and promises of it, with which it is filled, which were before the world was; and from Christ being set up as the Mediator of it from everlasting: and it will continue to everlasting; it is a covenant that cannot be broken, will never be removed, nor give way to or be succeeded by another: it is *ordered in all things*: to promote and advance the glory of all the three Persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; to secure the persons of the saints, and to provide every thing needful for them for time and eternity: and it is *sure*; it stands upon a sure basis, the unchangeable will and favour of God, and is in the hands of Christ, the same to-day, yesterday, and for ever; its mercies are the sure mercies of David, and its promises are yea and amen in Christ, and are sure to all the seed. Though things may not be with them Godward, as they desire, and could be wished for; though they may be attended with many sins and infirmities, the temptations of Satan, divine desertions, and various afflictions, and be guilty of many backslidings, yet covenant-interest always continues; and so, though in the kingdom and interest of Christ in the world, there are, and may be, many things disagreeable; it may be attended with persecutions, heresies, scandals, &c. yet it shall continue and increase, and spread, and be an everlasting kingdom: *for this is all my salvation*: all depends upon this covenant; the safety of David's family, and the security of the kingdom in it, and to his seed, till the Messiah came, depended on the covenant made with him respecting that; and the spiritual and eternal salvation of the Lord's people depends upon the covenant of grace; which was contrived, formed, and settled in it, in which the Saviour is provided, and the persons to share in his salvation are taken into it and secured, with all blessings both of grace and glory: *and all my desire*: to see it fulfilled; as it is the desire of good men to be led more and more into it, to see their interest in it, to have the blessings and promises of it applied unto them, and to be saved by it, and not by the covenant of works; and there is all that in it that a believer can desire to make him comfortable here, or happy hereafter; and it is what gives him delight and pleasure in all his troubles: it may be supplied *he is*, as well as *this is*, and be applied to Christ, the ruler over men, described ver. 3, 4. with whom the covenant of grace is made, in whom is the salvation of men; he is the author and the only author of it; in whom it is complete and perfect; *all* salvation is in him, and which they can claim as theirs; to whom is *all* their *desire*; and in whom is *all* their *delight*, as it may be rendered; on account of the glory of his person, the fulness of his grace, and his suitableness as a Saviour; whom they desire to know more of, and have more communion with: *although he made it not to grow*; though there may not be at present any growth of outward prosperity, or of inward grace, or even of the produce of the earth, Hab. iii. 17, 18. though the horn of David is not yet made to bud, or his family in growing and flourishing circumstances, or the Messiah, the man, the branch, does not yet shoot forth, though he certainly would; or, *for shall he not bud forth?* he shall, Jer. xxiii. 5. Zech. iii. 8. and vi. 12.

Ver. 6. *But the* sons *of Belial* shall be *all of them as thorns thrust away*, &c.] Not like the tender grass that springs up, and flourishes after rain, and the sunshine upon that; but like thorns, useless, hurtful, and pernicious, and fit only for burning: this is true of wicked men in general, that cast off the yoke of the Lord, and become unprofitable, as Belial signifies; and of wicked governors in particular, who, instead of being helpful, are hurtful to a commonwealth; and instead of being the joy and comfort of their subjects, and of giving pleasure to them, and making them cheerful and prosperous, give pain and trouble, and cause grief and sorrow; and are, if possible, to be thrust away, and deposed from government: *because they cannot be taken with hands*: thorns cannot be handled and gently dealt with, but some instrument must be used to put them away with force; so wicked men, and especially wicked rulers, are untractable, and not to be managed in a gentle way, and therefore violent ones must be taken.

Ver. 7. *But the man* that *shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear*, &c.] To remove these thorns, or sons of Belial, out of the way, or to defend himself against them; or weapons of war must be made use of to conquer and destroy them, according to the sense of Ben Gersom, and which De Dieu follows; a man that meddles with them must expect to be as much hurt and wounded by them, all over the body, as if not only the point or iron head of a spear, but the wood or handle of the spear, were thrust up in him; but the former sense seems best: *and they shall be utterly burnt with fire in the* same *place*: where the thorns grew, or whither they are removed, or are *sitting*; where persons are sitting to warm themselves by them: and this may be understood of the destruction of wicked rulers, when their kingdom is taken from them, and they are consumed root and branch; and was true not only of Saul, and his posterity, as some apply it, and of Jeroboam, and those like to him, as the above Jewish writer; but of the wicked Jews, and their rulers, those sons of Belial, who rejected the yoke of Christ, and would not have him to rule over them; to whom the Lord sent the Roman armies fenced with swords and spears, and burnt their city, and destroyed them in the same place; and may take in antichrist, and antichristian states, those sons

[o] כי quia, Pagninus, Montanus, Piscator.

[p] שמרה servatum, Tigurine version, Vatablus; conservatum, Junius & Tremellius.

of Belial, of the wicked ανομος, and lawless one, the son of perdition, whose city, Rome, shall be burnt with fire; and even all wicked men, at the great day of judgment, to which the Targum refers these words: when they, whose end, like thorns, is to be burnt, will be cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone.

Ver. 8. *These be the names of the mighty men whom David had*, &c.] Besides Joab his general, who is not mentioned; for these were all military men under him, which are distinguished into three classes; the first and highest consisted of three only, who were general officers; and the second also of three, who perhaps were colonels of regiments; and the third of thirty, who were captains of thousands and hundreds: *the Tachmonite that sat in the seat, the chief among the captains*: not in the chief seat in the sanhedrim, and was the head of that, and so had the name of Tachmonite, from his wisdom, as the Jewish writers say; but in the council of war, where he presided under the general, or in his absence, and was, perhaps, lieutenant-general, and so over all the captains; and therefore was neither David nor Joab, to whom some of the Rabbins apply these words, as observed by Kimchi; or rather he was the chief of the three to whom he belonged; his name, in 1 Chron. xi. 11, is Jashobeam, an Hachmonite, or the son of an Hachmonite, the same as in 1 Chron. xxvii. 2. and here it may be as well read Josheb-bashebeth the Tachmonite, the same name, with a little variation; which seem to be names given him, taken from his character and office; for his proper name was as follows: *the same* was *Adino the Eznite*; so called either from the family he was of, or from the place of his birth; though a learned man thinks it should be read as in the following supplement, he lifted up his spear [q] *against* 800, *whom he slew at one time*: which, though a very extraordinary exploit, yet not more strange, or so strange as that of Shamgar's slaying 600 men with an ox-goad, or as that of Samson's killing 1,000 men with the jaw-bone of an ass: in 1 Chron. xi. 11, the number is only 300, which some attempt to reconcile by observing, that not the same person is meant in both places; here he is called Josheb-bashebeth, there Jashobeam: here the Tachmonite, there the son of an Hachmonite; nor is he there called Adino the Eznite; but yet it seems plain that in both places the chief of the three worthies of David is meant, and so the same man: others observe, that he engaged with 800, and slew 300 of them, when the rest fled, and were pursued and killed by his men; and he routing them, and being the occasion of their being slain, the slaying of them all is ascribed to him; or he first slew 300, and 500 more coming upon him, he slew them also: but what Kimchi offers seems to be best, that there were two battles, in which this officer was engaged; at one of them he slew 800, and at the other 300; for so what is omitted in the books of Samuel, and of the Kings, is frequently supplied in the books of Chronicles, as what one evangelist in the New Testament omits, another records. The above learned writer [r] conjectures, that ש being the first letter of the words for three and eight, and the numeral letter being here reduced to its word at length, through a mistake in the copier, was written שמנה, *eight*, instead of שלש, *three*: the Septuagint version is, "he "drew out his spear against 800 soldiers at once," and says nothing of slaying them; and seems to be the true sense of the word, as the same learned writer [s] has abundantly shewn.

Ver. 9. *And after him was Eleazar the son of Dodo the Ahohite*, &c.] Or the son of Ahohi, perhaps the same with Ahoah, a descendant of Benjamin, 1 Chron. viii. 4. this Eleazar was the next to the Tachmonite, the second worthy of the first class: one *of the three mighty men with David*; the second of the three valiant men that were with David in his wars, and fought with him, and for him: *when they defied the Philistines*; clapped their hands at them, gloried over them, daring them to come and fight them; so did David and his mighty men, as Goliath had defied them before: that *were there gathered together to battle*; at Pas-dammim, as appears from 1 Chron. xi. 13. *and the men of Israel were gone away*: fled when they saw the Philistines gather together to fight them, notwithstanding they had defied them; and so David, and his three mighty men, were left alone to combat with the Philistines.

Ver. 10. *He arose, and smote the Philistines until his hand was weary*, &c.] He rose up when the Israelites fled, and stood his ground alone, and fought with the Philistines, and smote them with his sword, until his hand was weary with smiting: *and his hand clave unto the sword*; which was contracted by holding it so long, and grasping it so hard, that it could not easily be got out of it; or through the quantity of blood which ran upon his hand, as it was shed, so Josephus [t]; and which being congealed, and dried, caused his hand to stick to the hilt of his sword, so that they were, as it were, glued together by it; or the sense may be only, that though weary, he did not drop his sword, but held it fast till he had destroyed the enemy: *and the Lord wrought a great victory that day*; for to him it must be ascribed, and not to the strength and valour of the man: *and the people returned after him only to spoil*; they that fled, when they saw what a victory was obtained by him, returned and came after him; not to help him in smiting, but to spoil those that were slain, and strip them of what they had.

Ver. 11. *And after him was Shammah the son of Agee the Hararite*, &c.] One who was of the mountainous country, as the Targum, the hill-country of Judea, of Hebron, or the parts adjacent; this was the third of the first three; there was one of this name among the thirty, ver. 33. *and the Philistines were gathered together into a troop*; but so they were no doubt at first; R. Isaiah takes it to be the name of a place called Chiyah; as the Targum, Chayatha; and which Kimchi says was a village, an unwalled town; and Ben Melech observes, that it is said in the Arabic language, a collection of houses is called Al-chai: it may be the same with Lehi, where Samson slew 1,000 with the jaw-

[q] Kennicott's Dissert. 1. So Hillerus in Onomastic. Sacr. p. 230, 231, renders it, the glory of the spear or spearmen stood against 800, &c. and Weemse, "his delight was to lift up his spear." Exercitat. 16. p. 137.

[r] P. 96.
[s] P. 102.
[t] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4.

bone of an ass, whence it had its name; and Josephus[u] says, the place where the Philistines were gathered together was called *the Jaw-bone*: but perhaps the sense of Ben Gersom may be best of all, that they gathered together in this place for provision, for food and forage, to support the life of them and their cattle: since it follows, *where was a piece of ground full of lentiles*; a sort of pulse, which was eaten in those countries, and the pottage of which was delicious food, see Gen. xxv. 30, 34. *and the people fled from the Philistines*; as they did before under Eleazar, ver. 9.

Ver. 12. *But he stood in the midst of the ground*, &c.] The field of lentiles: *and defended it*; the field, so that the Philistines could not ravage it, and get food and forage from it: *and slew the Philistines*; made a great slaughter among them, entirely routed them, so that they that escaped his sword were obliged to flee: *and the Lord wrought a great victory*; to whom the glory of it belonged; a similar fact is ascribed to Eleazar before mentioned in 1 Chron. xi. 13, 14. and, indeed, it seems to be the same, and in which they were both concerned; for it is plain from the account that there were more than one engaged in this action, since it is there said, *and they set themselves in the midst of that parcel*: and though that parcel of ground is said there to be full of barley, it may easily be reconciled by observing, that one part of it might be sowed with barley, and the other part with lentiles; so the Targum in 1 Chron. xi. 13. for it was half lentiles and half barley; and Eleazar might be placed to defend the one, and Shammah the other; from whence it appears it was about March when this action was, at the latter end of which barley-harvest began.

Ver. 13. *And three of the thirty chiefs went down*, &c.] Or three that were chief of the thirty, superior to them; which some understand of the three before mentioned, so Josephus[w]; and that having related some particular exploits of theirs, here observes one, in which they were all concerned; and others think the three next are meant, of whom Abishai was the chief, Benaiah the next, and the third Asahel; but the first sense is best: *and came to David in the harvest-time, unto the cave of Adullam*: not when he was there, upon his flight from Saul, 1 Sam. xxii. 1. but after he was king, when engaged in war with the Philistines; perhaps wheat-harvest is here meant: *and the troop of the Philistines pitched in the valley of Rephaim*: the army of the Philistines, as the Targum; of the valley of Rephaim, see Josh. xv. 8.

Ver. 14. *And David was then in an hold*, &c.] In a strong hold; the strong hold of Zion, as Josephus[x], or one on a rock near the cave of Adullam, see 1 Chron. xi. 15. *and the garrison of the Philistines* was *then in Beth-lehem*: which was about six miles from Jerusalem; the valley of Rephaim lay between that and Beth-lehem; so far had they got into the land of Judea, and such footing in it, as to have a garrison so near its metropolis.

Ver. 15. *And David longed, and said*, &c.] It being harvest-time, the summer season, and hot weather, and he thirsty: *oh, that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Beth-lehem, which is by the gate!* which he was well acquainted with, being his native place; and which might make it the more desirable, as well as its waters might be peculiarly cool and refreshing, and very excellent, as Kimchi suggests. This well was about a mile from Beth-lehem, now called David's well, as some travellers say[y]. It is said to be a very large well, with three mouths, and lies a little out of the road[z]; and that there is now near Rachel's grave a good rich cistern, which is deep and wide; wherefore the people that go to dip water are provided with small leathern buckets, and a line, as usual in those countries[a]; but Mr. Maundrell[b] says it is a well, or rather a cistern, supplied only with rain, without any excellency in its waters to make them desirable; but it seems, he adds, David's spirit had a further aim. Some think he meant by this to get Beth-lehem out of the hands of the Philistines, and obtain the possession of it; others, as Jarchi, that he intended to ask some question of the sanhedrim that sat there; and others, that his desire was after the law of God, called waters, as in Isa. lv. 1. and some Christian writers, both ancient and modern[c], are of opinion, that not literal but spiritual water was desired by him, and that he thirsted after the coming of the Messiah, to be born at Beth-lehem, and the living water which he only can give, John iv. 10.

Ver. 16. *And the three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines*, &c.] Which lay in the valley of Rephaim, between the hold in which David was and the well of Beth-lehem; these three men hearing David express himself in the above manner, though without any view that any should risk their lives to obtain it, only in a general way said, oh for a draught of the water of the well of Beth-lehem! immediately set out, and made their way through the army of the Philistines to the well: *and drew water out of the well of Beth-lehem*, that was *by the gate*, *and took* it, *and brought* it *to David*; in a vessel which they probably carried with them for that purpose: *nevertheless he would not drink thereof*; because, say they who take these words in a spiritual sense, it was not this water, but spiritual water, he desired: but the reason is given in the following verse: *but poured it out unto the Lord*; as a libation to him, it being rather blood than water, being fetched at the hazard of men's lives, and therefore more fit to be offered as a sacrifice to God than to be drank by him; and this he might do in thankfulness to God for preserving the lives of the men. Gersom thinks it was now the feast of tabernacles, which was the feast of in-gathering the fruits of the earth, when great quantities of water were drawn and poured out at the altar, which was done to obtain the blessing of the former rain; see the note on John vii. 37, 38.

Ver. 17. *And he said, be it far from me, O Lord*,

[u] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4.
[w] Ibid.
[x] Ibid.
[y] Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 363.
[z] Le Bruyn's Voyage to the Levant, ch. 52. p. 204.
[a] Rauwolff's Travels, part 2. p. 317, 318.
[b] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 90.
[c] Ambros. Apolog. David. l. 1. c. 7. Glass. ordinar. & Schmidt in loc. Pfeiffer. Difficil. Loc. Script. cent. 2. loc. 91. Horn. Dissert. de desiderio David. sect. 10.

that I should do this, &c.] Drink of the water these men had brought him: is not this *the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?* who risked the shedding of their blood, and went in danger of their lives to get it: *therefore he would not drink it:* some compare with this the story of Alexander[d], to whom a vessel of water was offered when in extreme thirst, which he refused, because he could not bear to drink it alone, and so small a quantity could not be divided among all about him; but the reasons are not the same: *these things did these three mighty men;* which made them very famous.

Ver. 18. *And Abishai, the brother of Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was chief among the three,* &c.] Another triumvirate, of which he was the head: *and he lifted up his spear against* 300, and *slew* them; Josephus[e] says 600; this seems to confirm the reading of ver. 8, that the number 800 is right, for if it was only 300, Abishai would have been equal to one, even the first, of the former three; which yet is denied him in the following verse: *and had the name among three;* of which he was one; and he had the chief name among them, or was the most famous of them.

Ver. 19. *Was he not most honourable of three?* &c.] He was; who, besides the exploit here mentioned, did many other things; he went down with David into Saul's camp, and took away his spear and cruse, which were at his bolster; he relieved David when in danger from Ishbi-benob the giant; he beat the Edomites, and slew 18,000 of them in the valley of salt: *therefore he was their captain;* of the other two, or was head over them, took rank before them: *howbeit he attained not unto the* first *three;* for fortitude, courage, and warlike exploits, namely, to the Tachmonite, Eleazar, and Shammah.

Ver. 20. *And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabzeel,* &c.] A city in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 21. the father of this man was a man of great vivacity, valour, and strength, so that it was like father like son. Procopius Gazæus says Benaiah was David's brother's son, and a grandson of Jesse: *who had done many acts;* which may refer either to the father of Benaiah or to Benaiah himself; and indeed the Syriac and Arabic versions refer the preceding character, *a valiant man,* not to the father, but the son: *he slew two lion-like men of Moab;* two princes of Moab, as the Targum, or two giants of Moab, as the Syriac and Arabic versions; men who were comparable to lions for their strength and courage; for this is not to be understood of two strong towers of Moab, as Ben Gersom, which were defended by valiant men like lions, or which had the form of lions engraved on them; nor of Moabitish altars, as Gussetius[f], the altar of the Lord, being called by this name of Ariel, the word used; but of men of uncommon valour and fortitude; *he went down also, and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in time of snow;* not Joab, 1 Kings ii. 34. as is the tradition[g], but a real lion, the strongest among the beasts; and that in a pit where he could not keep his distance, and turn himself, and take all advantage, and from whence he could not make his escape; and which indeed might quicken his resolution, when he must fight or die; and on a snowy day, when lions are said to have the greatest strength, as in cold weather, or however are fiercer for want of food; and when Benaiah might be benumbed in his hands and feet with cold. Josephus[h] represents the case thus, that the lion fell into a pit, where was much snow, and was covered with it, and making a hideous roaring, Benaiah went down and slew him; but rather it was what others say, that this lion very much infested the places adjacent, and did much hurt; and therefore, for the good of the country, and to rid them of it, took this opportunity, and slew it; which one would think was not one of the best reasons that might offer; it seems best therefore what Bochart[i] conjectures, that Benaiah went into a cave, for so the word used may signify, to shelter himself a while from the cold, when a lion, being in it for the same reason, attacked him, and he fought with it and slew it; or rather it may be an hollow place, a valley that lay between Acra and Zion, where Benaiah, hearing a lion roar, went down and slew it[k].

Ver. 21. *And he slew an Egyptian, a goodly man,* &c.] A person of good countenance and shape, very large and tall; in 1 Chron. xi. 23. he is said to be a man of great stature, and five cubits high, and so wanted a cubit and a span of the height of Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 4. *and he had a spear in his hand;* as large as Goliath's; for in 1 Chron. xi. 23, it is said to be like a weaver's beam, as Goliath's was, 1 Sam. xvii. 7. see the note there: *and he went down to him with a staff;* with a walking-staff only, having no other weapon: *and plucked the spear out of the Egyptian's hand;* and therefore must be a man very nimble and dexterous, as well as bold and courageous: *and slew him with his own spear;* as David cut off Goliath's head with his own sword. This is supposed[l] to be Shimei, the son of Gera, 1 Kings ii. 46.

Ver. 22. *These things did Benaiah the son of Jehoiada,* &c.] Slew a lion, and two lion-like men of Moab, and an Egyptian of a gigantic stature: *and had the name among three mighty men;* of which he was one, and Abishai another, the third Asahel, one of the 30; or was over them, ver. 24, since 30 are reckoned without him. Abarbinel thinks that the third was Adina, the son of Shiza, the Reubenite, 1 Chron. xi. 42. since 30 were with him, and he at the head of them.

Ver. 23. *He was more honourable than the* 30, &c.] Whose names are after recorded: *but he attained not to the* first *three;* the first triumvirate, Jashobeam, Eleazar, and Shammah; he was not equal to them for fortitude, courage, and military exploits: *and David set him over his guard;* his body-guard, the Cherethites and Pelethites, ch. viii. 18. and xx. 23. who are called in the Hebrew text *his hearing*[m], because they hearkened to his orders and commands, and obeyed them.

Ver. 24. *Asahel the brother of Joab* was *one of the*

[d] Curt. Hist. l. 7. c. 5.
[e] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 12. sect. 4.
[f] Ebr. Comment. p. 95.
[g] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 80. C.
[h] Ut supra.

[i] Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 3. c. 4. col. 758.
[k] See the Universal History, vol. 4. p. 207.
[l] Hieron. Trad. Heb. ut supra.
[m] אל משמעתו ad auditum suum, Pagninus, Montanus.

30, &c.] Or rather over the 30 [n], who are next mentioned; since there are 30 reckoned besides him, and the Arabic version calls him the prince of the 30: Joab is not named at all, because he was general of the whole army, and so not to be reckoned in any of the three classes: *Elhanan the son of Dodo of Beth-lehem*: a townsman of David.

Ver. 25. *Shammah the Harodite*, &c.] Called Shammah the Harorite in 1 Chron. xi. 27. by a change of the letters R and D, which is frequent: *Elika the Harodite*; or who was of Harod, as the Targum; these both were from one place: mention is made of the well of Harod, Judg. vii. 1.

Ver. 26. *Helez the Paltite*, &c.] Who was of a place called Palet, as the Targum; in 1 Chron. xi. 27, he is called the Pelonite: *Ira the son of Ikkesh the Tekoite*; who was of the city of Tekoah; the native place of Amos the prophet, famous for oil, about 12 miles from Jerusalem; see the note on Amos i. 1.

Ver. 27. *Abiezer the Anethothite*, &c.] He was of Anethoth, in the tribe of Benjamin, the birth-place of Jeremiah the prophet: *Mebunnai the Hushathite*; the same with Sibbecai, 1 Chron. xi. 29. and xxvii. 11. 2 Sam. xxi. 18. this man had two names, and was a descendant of Hushah, who came of Judah, 1 Chron. iv. 4.

Ver. 28. *Zalmon the Ahohite*, &c.] The same with Ilai, 1 Chron. xi. 29. a descendant of Ahoah, a grandson of Benjamin, ch. viii. 4. *Maharai the Netophathite*, who was of Netophah, a city of the tribe of Judah, mentioned along with Beth-lehem, Neh. vii. 26. a place of this name is spoken of in the Misnah [o], famous for artichokes and olives.

Ver. 29. *Heleb the son of Baanah, a Netophathite*, &c.] Called Heled, 1 Chron. xi. 30. and xxvii. 15. *Ittai the son of Ribai out of Gibeah of the children of Benjamin*: sometimes called Gibeah of Benjamin and Gibeah of Saul, being a city in the tribe of Benjamin, and the birth-place of Saul king of Israel; and this man is distinguished hereby from Ittai the Gittite, 2 Sam. xv. 19.

Ver. 30. *Benaiah the Pirathonite*, &c.] Who was of Pirathon, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, Judg. xii. 15. *Hiddai of the brooks of Gaash*; which perhaps ran by the hill Gaash, and was also in the tribe of Ephraim, Josh. xxiv. 30. This man is called Hurai, 1 Chron. xi. 32.

Ver. 31. *Abi-albon the Arbathite*, &c.] A native of Beth-arabah, either in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 6, 7. or in the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 18, 22. he is called Abiel in 1 Chron. xi. 32. *Azmaveth the Barhumite*; or Bachurimite, the letters transposed, an inhabitant of Bachurim or Bahurim, a city in the tribe of Benjamin, ch. xvi. 5. and xix. 16.

Ver. 32. *Elihaba the Shaalbonite*, &c.] Of Shaalbon or Shaalabin, a city in the tribe of Dan, Josh. xix. 42. perhaps the Salbonitis of Josephus [p]: *of the sons of Jashen, Jonathan*; in 1 Chron. xi. 34, it is, the sons of Hashem the Gizonite: sons are spoken of, though but one, as in Gen. xlvi. 23.

Ver. 33. *Shammah the Hararite*, &c.] From the mountainous country, as the Targum; the Arabic and Syriac versions say, from the mount of Olives: *Ahiam the son of Sharar the Hararite*: from the high mountain, as the Targum; in 1 Chron. xi. 35, he is called the son of Sacar.

Ver. 34. *Eliphelet the son of Ahasbai, the son of the Maachathite*, &c.] In 1 Chron. xi. 35. he is called Eliphal the son of Ur: *Eliam the son of Ahithophel the Gilonite*; David's counsellor, that went off to Absalom, ch. xv. 12. Eliam his son is supposed, by the Jews, to be the father of Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, ch. xi. 3. according to Hillerus [q], he is the same with Ahijah the Pelonite, 1 Chron. xi. 36.

Ver. 35. *Hezrai the Carmelite*, &c.] Of Mount Carmel; or from Carmela, as the Targum, see 1 Sam. xxv. 2. he is called Hezro, 1 Chron. xi. 37. *Paarai the Arbite*; or from Arab, as the Targum, a city in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 52. according to Hillerus [r], the same with *Naarai the son of Ezbai*, in 1 Chron. xi. 37.

Ver. 36. *Igal the son of Nathan of Zobah*, &c.] A kingdom in Syria, ch. viii. 3. according to Hillerus [s], the same with Joel, 1 Chron. xi. 38. *Bani the Gadite*; who was of the tribe of Gad, as the Targum; in the room of this stands *Mibhar, the son of Haggeri*, in 1 Chron. xi. 38.

Ver. 37. *Zelek the Ammonite*, &c.] Who was so either by birth, and became a proselyte; so the Targum says, he was of the children of Ammon; or is so called, because he had sojourned some time in their land, or had done some exploits against them; unless he was of Chephar-haammonai, a city of the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 24. *Naharai the Beerothite*; a native of Beeroth, a city in the same tribe, Josh. xviii. 25. *armour-bearer to Joab the son of Zeruiah*: Joab had ten of them, this perhaps was the chief of them, ch. xviii. 15. who was advanced to be a captain, and therefore has a name and place among the 30, very likely for some military exploits performed by him; he is in the list of David's worthies, though not Joab his master, as before observed; the reason of Joab being left out is either because he was over them all, as before noted; according to Josephus [t], Uriah the Hittite, after mentioned, was an armour-bearer to Joab.

Ver. 38. *Ira an Ithrite, Gareb an Ithrite*.] These were of Jether, as the Targum, a descendant of Caleb, of the tribe of Judah, 1 Chron. ii. 50, 53. and iv. 15, 17.

Ver. 39. *Uriah the Hittite*, &c.] The husband of Bathsheba; of whom see ch. xi. 3. *thirty and seven in all*; reckoning the three mighty men of the first class, the three of the second, and the third class consisting of 30 men, whose names are as above, and Joab the general and head of them all. In 1 Chron. xi. 41, Zabad the son of Ahlai follows Uriah as one of this catalogue; he succeeding in honour one that soon died, particularly Elika, ver. 25, who is omitted in Chronicles, where a list of fifteen more is given; at the head of which stands Adina a Reubenite, *and thirty*

[n] על השלשים supra triginta istos, Junius & Tremellius.
[o] Misn. Peah, c. 7. sect. 1. Sheviith, c. 9. sect. 5.
[p] De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 3. sect. 3.
[q] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 906.

[r] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 499.
[s] Ib. p. 856.
[t] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 7. sect. 1.

are said to be *with him*, according to our version: but should be rendered, as by Junius and Tremellius, *but the thirty were superior to him*, that is, the above 30; for these 15, though brave men, were of lesser note.

CHAP. XXIV.

IN this chapter an account is given of David's numbering of the people, ver. 1—9. of the sense he had of his sin, and of his acknowledgment of it; and of the Lord's displeasure at it, who sent the prophet Gad to him, to propose three things to him, one of which he was to choose as a punishment for it, ver. 10—13. when he chose the pestilence, which carried off a great number of the people, ver. 14—17. and David was directed to build an altar to the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, with whom he agreed for it, and built one on it, and offered upon it, and so the plague was stayed, ver. 18—25.

Ver. 1. *And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel*, &c.] It had been kindled, and appeared before in sending a three-years' famine among them for Saul's ill usage of the Gibeonites; and now it broke forth again, either for some secret sins committed, as Kimchi suggests, or for the rebellion of Absalom, and the insurrection of Sheba, in which multitudes of them joined; so Abarbinel; no doubt there was cause for it, though it is not expressed: *and he moved David against them*: not the Lord, but Satan, as may be supplied from 1 Chron. xxi. 1. or *it moved him*; the anger of the Lord, as the last-mentioned writer interprets it; or the heart of David, as Ben Gersom; that is, the evil imagination of his heart, as Kimchi; the Lord left him to the corruption of his nature, sometimes called Satan, 2 Cor. xii. 7. which wrought powerfully in him, and stirred him up to take a step contrary to the interest of Israel, and what was prejudicial to them, as the event shewed: it moved him *to say*: to Joab and his captains: *go, number Israel and Judah*: not all the individuals, but such as were fit for war, able to bear arms, see ver. 9.

Ver. 2. *For the king said to Joab the captain of the host, which was with him*, &c.] Or who was with him, even Joab, who was now at court, and was a counsellor of David, as well as his general; or which army was with Joab, a standing army he had the command of: *go now through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beer-sheba*; from the northern part of the land of Israel to the southern part of it, and this course was accordingly steered, ver. 6, 7. *and number the people, that I may know the number of the people*; so that this appears to be done not through any urgent necessity, but merely out of curiosity, and to gratify the pride of his heart, and please himself with the thought of ruling such a numerous people, and brag of their numbers to other nations, and place his confidence therein; and no wonder it was displeasing to the Lord.

Ver. 3. *And Joab said unto the king*, &c.] Not so rudely and insolently as he did on account of his mourning for Absalom, but in a more modest, decent, and polite manner: *now the Lord thy God add unto the people (how many soever they be) an hundred-fold*: he wished his subjects were an hundred times more numerous than they were: *and that the eyes of my lord the king may see it*; that he might live to see with his own eyes so great an increase: *but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?* he being now old, and therefore it might seem strange to indulge such curiosity, pride, and vanity, and besides quite needless and useless: the numbering of them would not make them more or less; and they were all the king's servants, who were ready to obey him whenever he needed them, whether numbered or not; and it might be prejudicial to them, and bring down the wrath of God upon them, as well as be a troublesome and expensive business; all which, though not expressed here, is hinted at in 1 Chron. xxi. 3.

Ver. 4. *Notwithstanding the king's word prevailed against Joab, and against the captains of the host*, &c.] Who it seems were of the same mind with Joab, and were against numbering the people, yet their arguments and remonstrances were of no avail with the king; he was determined it should be done, and laid his commands upon them to do it, which they were obliged to comply with: *and Joab and the captains of the host went out from the presence of the king, to number the people of Israel*: seeing him resolute and determined, they submitted, took his orders, and set out to execute them.

Ver. 5. *And they passed over Jordan*, &c.] To take the number of the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh first: *and pitched in Aroer*; for it seems that Joab and the captains had the army with them, and the several captains under their command, partly to assist in numbering the people, and partly to keep them in awe, lest they should oppose them, not knowing what was the design of all this. Aroer was a city given to the tribe of Gad, and rebuilt by them, Numb. xxxii. 34. *on the right side of the city*; i. e. of Aroer, the south side of it, as the Targum, did Joab and his army pitch: *that lieth in the midst of the river of Gad*; which was the river Arnon, so called now from the tribe of Gad, which possessed it, and so the Targum, in the midst of the river of the tribe of Gad; for in the midst of the river Arnon Aroer lay, see Josh. xiii. 9. *and toward Jazer*; another city given to the Gadites, Numb. xxxii. 3, 35. and, according to Bunting*, was 16 miles from Aroer.

Ver. 6. *Then they came to Gilead*, &c.] The land of Gilead, half of which was given to the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the other half to the half-tribe of Manasseh, Deut. iii. 12, 13. which tribes were numbered, and the first of all: *and to the land of Tahtim-hodshi*; or the low lands of a new place; it seems to be a country newly possessed and inhabited; the Targum calls it the southern land of Hodshi; Bunting* calls it the lower country of Hodshi, near to the city

* Travels, &c. p. 147.

* Travels, &c. p. 147.

Corazin, in the half-tribe of Manasseh, 52 miles from Jerusalem, and towards the north-east, and signifies a new land: *and they came to Dan-jaan*; the same that is simply called Dan, and formerly Leshem, Josh. xix. 47. why Jaan is added to it is not easy to say; it lay at the northern border of the land of Israel, and was four miles from Paneas as you go to Tyre[x]: *and about to Zidon*; from Dan they went round about to Zidon, to the parts adjacent to it; for with Zidon itself they had nothing to do, of which see the note on Josh. xi. 8.

Ver. 7. *And came to the strong hold of Tyre*, &c.] That is, old Tyre, which stood 30 furlongs from new Tyre, the island[y]; of which see the note on Isa. xxiii. 1. this must be understood of the parts near unto it; for that itself was not within the land of Israel, and so its inhabitants not to be numbered; *and to all the cities of the Hivites, and of the Canaanites*; which were possessed by them, and from whence they were not driven out by the Israelites; to all places contiguous to them, Joab and his captains came to take the number of them: *and they went out to the south of Judah*; even to Beer-sheba; passing through the western part of the land, they came to the southern part of it, even as far as Beer-sheba, which was the extreme part of the land to the south.

Ver. 8. *So when they had gone through all the land*, &c.] Beginning at the east, and from thence to the north, and then going about to the west, came to the south, which finished their circuit: *they came to Jerusalem, at the end of 9 months and 20 days*: they were ten months wanting ten days in numbering the people; in which they seem to have been very expeditious.

Ver. 9. *And Joab gave up the sum of the number of the people unto the king*, &c.] Having collected from the several captains employed in this work their several particular numbers, he put them together, and gave in the sum-total to David: *and there were in Israel 800,000 valiant men that drew the sword*; though many of them might be under the age of 20, yet being robust and tall, and fit to bear arms, though but 16, 17, 18, or 19 years of age, were mustered, contrary to the law; which, according to Cornelius Bertram[z], was David's sin, see 1 Chron. xxvii. 23, 24. In 1 Chron. xxi. 5. they are said to be 1,000,000 and 100,000, which is 300,000 more than the sum here given; several methods are taken to reconcile this; but what seems to be the best solution of the difficulty is what is observed by a Jew[a], that here the number of the people in the several parts of the land of Israel was given, which were 800,000, there along with them, the numbers of the standing army which waited on the king in their courses, which were 24,000 every month, and amounted in the 12 months to 288,000, and reckoning 12,000 officers to them, they make the sum of 300,000 wanted, see 1 Chron. xxvii. 1, 2, &c. *and the men of Judah were 500,000 men*. In 1 Chron. xxi. 5. they are said to be only 470,000, 30,000 less than here; which may be accounted for by making use of a round number, though something wanting, as is often done; or else the 30 companies, consisting of 1,000 each, under the 30 captains mentioned in the preceding chapter, are taken into the account here, but left out in the book of Chronicles; or there were so many in the sum-total of the men of Judah before the plague, but 30,000 being consumed thereby, are left out in the latter accounts, so Kimchi; but the other solutions seem best: Levi and Benjamin were not counted; it being abominable to Joab, he did not finish it, and especially being displeasing to God, who smote Israel for it, 1 Chron. xxi. 6, 7.

Ver. 10. *And David's heart smote him, after that he had numbered the people*, &c.] For nine or ten months his conscience lay asleep, but now the thing was done, it is awakened, and accuses him for it, and he repents of it; now he began to see the pride and naughtiness of his heart; his vanity and confidence in the creature, which led him to it; aggravated by doing it without seeking to know the mind of God, and without giving him his due, the half-shekel, according to the law, Exod. xxx. 12, 13. intent only upon increasing his own revenue, as some think, intending to impose a poll-tax upon the people when he had numbered them; and attempting to number a people who were not to be numbered; and numbering those who were under the age of 20, and therefore the plague began before it was finished, 1 Chron. xxvii. 23, 24. *and David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done*; he saw and owned his sin to be exceeding sinful, attended with very aggravating circumstances: *and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant*; the guilt of it from his conscience, which lay heavy there, and suffer not the punishment it deserves to take place on him, but grant an application of pardon to him: *for I have done very foolishly*; all sin is folly, and some sins are exceeding foolish, and so this appeared to David; or, *though I have done very foolishly*[b], yet forgive my sin, see Psal. xxxviii. 5.

Ver. 11. *For when David was up in the morning*, &c.] Which it is probable was very early, he not being able to sleep through the distress of mind he was in; for the words should be rendered, *and David arose in the morning*[c], for, as we render them, they seem to imply as if he had no sense of his sin before the prophet came to him next mentioned; whereas it was in the night he had been under the conviction of it, and had acknowledged it, and prayed for the pardon of it; upon which the prophet was sent to acquaint him what was the will of God concerning him: *the word of the Lord came unto the prophet Gad, David's seer*; with whom he had used to advise about the will of God on various occasions, though in this he had neglected to consult him; the Targum calls it the word of prophecy from the Lord: *saying*: as follows.

Ver. 12. *Go, and say unto David*, &c.] Not my servant David, as Nathan was bid to say to him when it was in his heart to build an house for him; but now he had sinned and displeased the Lord, and therefore it is only plain David: *thus saith the Lord, I offer thee three things*; or lay them before thee to consider of which thou wouldest have done; the Targum is, "one

[x] Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 90. H.
[y] Strabo. Geograph. l. 16. p. 521.
[z] Lucubrat. Franktall, c. 9.
[a] R. Eliezer in Halicot Olam, tract. 4. c. 3. p. 181.
[b] כי quamvis, so Glassius notes it may be rendered; so Pool.
[c] ויקם & surrexit, Paguinus, Montanus, &c.

"of three things I cast upon thee," as a burden to bear; one of the three I will certainly inflict upon thee by way of chastisement: *choose thee one of them, that I may* do it *unto thee:* here is mercy mixed with judgment; the Lord is angry, yet shews great condescension and goodness; a sovereign Being, who could have imposed what punishment he pleased, and even all the three after mentioned, yet resolves but on one, and leaves that to the option of David.

Ver. 13. *So Gad came to David, and told him,* &c.] Said nothing to him about his sin, but correction for it; which confirms it that David was made sensible of his sin before he came to him: *and said unto him, shall seven years of famine come unto thee in thy land?* in 1 Chron. xxi. 12. only *three years* are mentioned, and so the Septuagint version here; but Josephus[d], the Targum, the Syriac and Arabic versions, have the number *seven;* three seems to be more agreeable to the numbers after mentioned, and no more as to come were designed, though seven are here expressed; for the reconciling of which let it be observed, that there had been three years of famine already on account of the sin of Saul, ch. xxi. and in the current year, through the rains not falling in the proper time, the land was barren and unfruitful; or through the penury of the preceding years the famine would be continued at least until the harvest; and then three years more now proposed made seven years; or, if these three years would have immediately followed the other three, the following in course would be a sabbatical year, in which were no ploughing, sowing, nor reaping, or the current year was such an one: and the sense is, shall there be a continuance of seven years of famine, that is, three more added to what had been? which must be most dreadful to think of; but a learned writer[e] thinks it a mistake of the copier, writing ז, *seven,* for ג, *three: or wilt thou flee three months before thine enemies, while they pursue thee?* be in such a condition as not to be able to face or fight his enemies, or, if he did, would not be able to stand his ground, but be forced to flee before them, and be pursued by them three months running; during which time a prodigious number might well be thought to be slain, sad devastations made in the land, and great shame and disgrace endured, and what a man of David's spirit could not bear the thoughts of: *or that there be three days' pestilence in thy land?* which in 1 Chron. xxi. 12. is called *the sword of the Lord,* in distinction from the sword of man, it coming immediately from him, and the destroying angel, in all the coasts of the land: being inflicted by means of one: *now advise, and see what answer I shall return to him that sent me;* that is, consult with himself, or with his friends, or both, what answer the prophet must return to the Lord that sent him; for him he means.

Ver. 14. *And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait,* &c.] Not knowing well which to choose, each of them being so grievous, and an answer being to be returned immediately; but by his next words, and by the event, it seems he chose the pestilence, though that is not expressly said: *let us fall now into the hand of the Lord;* the Targum in 1 Chron. xxi. 13, is, "into "the hand of the Word of the Lord:" *(for his mercies are great), and let me not fall into the hand of men;* indeed all the three judgments mentioned are by the hand of the Lord whenever they come; but in the pestilence the hand of the Lord is more visible, it coming immediately from his hand, as especially this was to do, and did; it did not arise from second causes, a noxious air, &c. but by means of an angel of God: David chose this, because he and his people would have nothing to do with men, as in famine they must have gone into other countries for food, and in war flee before their enemies, and lie at their mercy, and either of them more disgraceful than this; and which he might the rather choose on his own account, that his people might not be able to say he sought himself and his own interest; for had he chosen famine, as his people had been lately distressed that way already, they might, besides urging that, say, that he could lay up stores for himself and family; or had he chosen war, they might observe he had fortified places to flee to, one after another, and shelter himself; but for the arrows of the pestilence he was as fair a mark as the meanest of his subjects: but what seems to have moved him chiefly to make this choice is, that it would not only be the soonest over, but that it wholly depended on the pleasure of God what use he would make of it in that time; and chiefly because he knew God was gracious and merciful, and it was upon his great mercy he cast himself and his people.

Ver. 15. *So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel,* &c.] Upon the land of Israel, the people of the land, directly employing an angel to go through the coasts of it, and empowering him to inflict a pestilential disease: *from the morning even to the time appointed:* from the morning the prophet Gad came to David with a message from the Lord; that very morning the plague began, and lasted to the time set for it, the three days, or at least unto the beginning of the third, when reaching Jerusalem, the Lord repented of it, and stayed his hand; though many think a much shorter time is intended; some think it lasted no more than half a day, if so much; some say but three hours[f]; the Septuagint version, until dinner-time; and the Syriac and Arabic versions, until the sixth hour of the day, which was noon; and so Kimchi says, some of their Rabbins interpret it of the half or middle of the day; the Targum is, "from the time the daily sacrifice was slain until "it was burnt;" and it is the sense of several learned men that it was only from the morning until the time of the evening sacrifice, or evening prayer, about three o'clock in the afternoon, and so lasted about nine hours: *and there died of the people, from Dan even to Beer-sheba,* 70,000 *men;* so that there was a great diminution of the people in all places where they were numbered; and David's sin may be read in the punishment of it; his heart was lifted up by the numbers of his people, and now it must be humbled by the lessening of them.

Ver. 16. *And when the angel stretched out his hand*

[d] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 13. sect. 2.
[e] Dr. Kennicott's Dissert. 1. p. 474.
[f] Pirke Eliezer, c. 43.

upon Jerusalem to destroy it, &c.] Which, as it was perhaps the last place where the people were numbered, it was the last to which the plague came: this angel appeared in an human form, standing *between the earth and the heaven*; in the midst of the heaven, in the air, right over Jerusalem: *having a drawn sword in his hand stretched over the city*: as is said in 1 Chron. xxi. 16. which was done as a menace, and to inject terror into David and the inhabitants of the city, and to give them notice of what they must expect: *the Lord repented him of the evil*; he was inflicting, and now threatened Jerusalem with; having compassion on the place where the ark, the symbol of his presence, was, where a temple was to be built to the honour of his name, and where he should be worshipped; and therefore stopped proceeding; as men, when they repent of any thing done by them, cease from it, so did the Lord now; otherwise repentance, properly speaking, falls not on him, and so it is next explained: *and said to the angel that destroyed the people*; not the angel of death, the devil, but a good angel, who had a commission from God for this business: *it is enough: stay now thine hand*: there is a sufficient number slain; slay no more: *and the angel of the Lord was by the threshing-place of Araunah the Jebusite*: that is, he was in the air, right over the spot, or near it, where was this man's threshing-floor; and was seen by Araunah and his four sons, who upon it hid themselves, perhaps among the sheaves they were threshing, 1 Chron. xxi. 20. and this threshing-floor was on Mount Moriah, 2 Chron. iii. 1. as threshing-floors commonly were on mountains for the sake of winnowing the corn when threshed; see the note on Ruth iii. 2. who, according to Ben Gersom, though he was by birth a Jebusite, was proselyted to the Jewish religion.

Ver. 17. *And David spake unto the Lord, &c.*] In prayer; he and the elders of Israel being clothed in sackcloth, and fallen on their faces, he prayed, not unto the angel, but to Jehovah that sent him; see 1 Chron. xxi. 16, 17. *when he saw the angel that smote the people*; in the air over Jerusalem, with a drawn sword in his hand, which made him appear terrible: *and said, lo, I have sinned, and I have done wickedly*: in numbering the people: *but these sheep, what have they done?* he looked upon himself as the only transgressor, and his people as innocent, and as harmless as sheep; he thought of no sins but his own; these were uppermost in his mind, and lay heavy on his conscience; and it grieved him extremely that his people should suffer on his account: but they were not so innocent as he thought and suggests; and it was not only for his, but their sins, this evil came; he was suffered to do what he did, to bring upon them deserved punishment for their rebellion against him, and other sins; however, this shews the high opinion he had of them, the great affection he had for them, and his sympathy with them in this time of distress: *let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and against my father's house*: let me and mine die, and not they; a type of Christ, the good Shepherd, willing to lay down his life for the sheep, and suffer in their stead, that they might go free.

Ver. 18. *And Gad came that day to David, &c.*] Ordered and directed by the angel of the Lord, 1 Chron. xxi. 18. *and said unto him, go up, rear an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite*; it was too far to go to Gibeon, where the tabernacle was, at such a time of extremity, when the sword of the angel was stretched out over Jerusalem, 1 Chron. xxi. 29, 30. and this was the most proper place, as it was the very spot over and nearest to which the angel was; and was on Mount Moriah, where the Jews say Abraham offered up Isaac; and where the temple was afterwards built, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom observe; and Eupolemus, an Heathen writer [e], says, that when David desired to build a temple for God, and that he would shew him the place of the altar, an angel appeared to him, standing over the place where the altar at Jerusalem was to be built.

Ver. 19. *And David, according to the saying of God, went up as the Lord commanded.*] From the place where he was in a lower part of the city to Mount Moriah, on which was the threshing-floor, a place fit for winnowing corn when threshed.

Ver. 20. *And Araunah looked, &c.*] Peeped up out of the place in which he had hid himself with his four sons, for fear of the angel, and which they saw, 1 Chron. xxi. 20. *and saw the king and his servants coming towards him*; he perceived, by the course they steered, that they were coming to him: *and Araunah went out*; of the threshing-floor, out of the place where he had hid himself, for he had been threshing wheat, 1 Chron. xxi. 20. nor was it thought below great personages in those times to be employed in such work; so Gideon was threshing, when the angel of the Lord appeared to him, Judg. vi. 11, 12. Boaz winnowed barley in his threshing-floor, Ruth iii. 2. *and bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground*; in reverence of the king.

Ver. 21. *And Araunah said, wherefore is my lord the king come to his servant? &c.*] Which both implies admiration in him, that so great a person should visit him in his threshing-floor; that a king should come to a subject his servant, who should rather have come to him, and would upon the least intimation; it was a piece of condescension he marvelled at; and it expresses a desire to know his pleasure with him, supposing it must be something very urgent and important, that the king should come himself upon it: and to this David made answer, *and David said*, what he was come for: *to buy the threshing-floor of thee, to build an altar to the Lord, that the plague may be stayed from the people*: for though David had acknowledged his sin, and God had repented of the evil he inflicted for it, and given orders for stopping it; yet he would have an altar built, and sacrifices offered, to shew that the only way to have peace, and pardon, and safety from ruin and destruction, deserved by sin, is through the expiatory sacrifice of Christ, of which all sacrifices were typical, and were designed to lead the faith of the Lord's people to that.

Ver. 22. *And Araunah said unto David, let my lord the king take and offer up what seemeth good unto him, &c.*] Build an altar, offer sacrifices of whatsoever he

[e] Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 9. c. 30. p. 447.

found upon the premises fit for the same, and make use of whatever came to hand proper to perform such service with, as follows: here be *oxen for burnt-sacrifices*, which were employed in treading the corn, hence the law in Deut. xxv. 4. *and threshing-instruments*; not such as are used by us, but wooden sledges, drays or carts drawn on wheels, which were filled with stones, and the bottom of them stuck with iron teeth, and were drawn by oxen to and fro over the sheaves of corn, see Isa. xxviii. 27. *and* other *instruments of the oxen for wood*: as their yokes; these Araunah gave leave to take to burn the sacrifice with; and in 1 Chron. xxi. 23. 'tis added, *and the wheat for the meat-offering*, which was upon the threshing-floor; and there always went a meat-offering with a burnt-offering.

Ver. 23. *All these things did Araunah*, as *a king, give unto the king*, &c.] The note of similitude *as* is not in the text; from whence some have thought he was king of the Jebusites before Jerusalem was taken out of their hands, or however was of the royal race, perhaps the son and heir of the then king at that time; or he has this title given him, because of his great liberality, having the spirit of a prince in him, even of a king; so Ulysses addressed Antinous, saying, thou art like a king, and therefore should give more largely than others[h]: *and Araunah said unto the king, the Lord thy God accept thee*; thine offering with a good will; with pleasure and delight, as the Targum; that so the plague might be removed, and which no doubt made him the more ready to part with the above things, and all that he had; so dreadful did the calamity appear to him, and especially after he saw the angel with his drawn sword just over him.

Ver. 24. *And the king said unto Araunah, nay, but I will surely buy it of thee at a price*, &c.] And a full price too, 1 Chron. xxi. 24. that is, give him as much for it as it was worth: *neither will I offer burnt-offerings to the Lord my God of that which doth cost me nothing*; which shews an ingenuous spirit, and contrary to the temper of many, who like to serve the Lord in the cheapest manner, or with little cost to themselves: *so David bought the threshing-floor and the oxen for 50 shekels of silver*; which, reckoning a shekel at two shillings and six-pence, made but just six pounds five shillings of our money; though its value is but about two shillings and four-pence farthing, which reduces the sum; in 1 Chron. xxi. 25, David is said to give 600 shekels of gold by weight; two ways are proposed by the Jews[i] for the reconciling of the difficulty; the one is, that 50 shekels were collected out of every tribe, and 12 times 50 make 600 shekels, and these were of the value or weight of gold; but this seems not likely, that it should be collected out of all the tribes, and since it appears plainly to be the king's purchase, and with his money: the other is, that there were two purchases, the first was of the threshing-floor, oxen, and instruments, which were bought for 50 shekels of silver, as here, and the other was a purchase of the *place*, as it is called in the book of Chronicles; that large space of ground on which afterwards the temple, and all the courts adjoining to it, were built, and which was now Araunah's farm, and on which were his dwelling-house, and other buildings; and for all this David gave him 600 shekels of gold, which made 300 ounces[k]; and reckoning gold as twelve times the value of silver, according to Brerewood[l], it amounted to 450 pounds of our money; and learned men have not been able to give a better solution of this difficulty; and with this Montanus[m] agrees. Bochart and Noldius have taken another way, but not so clear and satisfactory; the Septuagint of 1 Chron. xxi. 25. has 50 shekels, as here.

Ver. 25. *And David built there an altar unto the Lord*, &c.] After he had made the purchase: *and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings*; the one to expiate the sin or sins committed, the other to give thanks for the intimation given, that the plague would be stayed upon this: *so the Lord was entreated for the land*; was pacified and prevailed upon to remove the pestilence from it; which was signified by fire descending upon the altar of burnt-offering, which shewed the sacrifice was accepted, and by the angel being ordered to put his sword into its sheath, 1 Chron. xxi. 26, 27. and the Targum is, "and the Lord received the prayer of the "inhabitants of the land:" *and the plague was stayed from Israel*; no more died of the pestilence, either at Jerusalem, or in any other part of the land of Israel.

[h] Homer. Odyss. 17. ver. 335.
[i] T Bab. Zebachim, fol. 116. 2.
[k] Vid. Gronov. de Pecunia Vet. l. 3. c. 7. p. 269.
[l] De Ponder. & Pretiis, c. 5.
[m] Tubal-Cain, p. 15. So Hieron. Trad. Heb. fol. 80. F.

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE KINGS,

COMMONLY CALLED THE

THIRD BOOK OF THE KINGS.

THIS, and the following book, properly are but one book, divided into two parts, and went with the Jews under the common name of Kings. This, in the Syriac version, is called the Book of Kings; and in the Arabic version, the Book of Solomon, the Son of David the Prophet, because it begins with his reign upon the death of his father; and, in the Vulgate Latin version, the Third Book of Kings, the two preceding books of Samuel being sometimes called the First and Second Books of Kings, they containing the reigns of Saul and David; and in the Septuagint version both this and the following book are called Kingdoms, because they treat of the kingdom of Israel and Judah, after the division in the times of Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and of the several kings of them; as of Solomon before the division, so afterwards of the kings of Judah; Rehoboam, Abijam, Asa, Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, Ahaziah, Jehoash, Amaziah, Uzziah or Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh, Amon, Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin, and Zedekiah; and of the kings of Israel, Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, Ahab, Ahaziah, Jehu, Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam the son of Joash, Zachariah, Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, and Hoshea; so that these books may, with great propriety, be called the books or histories of the kings in the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel: who they were written by, is not easy to say; some think they were written by piecemeal by the prophets that lived in the several reigns successively, as Nathan, Ahijah the Shilonite, Iddo, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and afterwards put together by an inspired writer. The Jews commonly say[a], that Jeremiah wrote the book of the Kings, by which they mean this, and the following book; though very probably they were written by Ezra, since the history in them is carried down to the liberty granted to Jehoiachin in Babylon; but that Ezra was the writer of all the preceding historical books, and even of the Pentateuch, cannot be admitted, which is the conceit of Spinosa[b]; part of whose tract is just now republished by somebody, word for word, under a title as in the margin[c]; but that Ezra was not the writer of the Pentateuch is clear, since he refers to it as written by Moses, and as the rule of religion and worship in his times, Ezra iii. 2, 3, 4, and vi. 18. and it is certain these writings were in being in the times of Josiah, Amaziah, Joash, yea, of David, and even of Joshua, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14. and xxv. 4. and xxiii. 18. 1 Kings ii. 3. Josh. viii. 34. and as for the book of Joshua, that also was written long before Ezra's time; it must be written long before the times of David, before the Jebusites were expelled from Jerusalem, since the writer of it says, that they dwelt there in his days, ch. xv. 63. the book of Judges must be written before the times of Samuel and David, since the former refers to the annals of it, 1 Sam. xii. 9, 10. and the latter alludes to some passages in it, Psal. lxviii. 7, 8. see Judg. v. 4, 5. and a speech of Joab's, 2 Sam. xi. 21, shews it to be an history then extant: to which may be added, that in it Jerusalem is called Jebus, ch. xix. 10, 11. which it never was, after it was taken by David out of the hands of the Jebusites, 2 Sam. v. 6. the book of Ruth very probably was written by Samuel; had it been of a later date, or written by Ezra, the genealogy with which it concludes would doubtless have been carried further than to David: the Book of Samuel, and particularly the song of Hannah in it, were written in all probability before the penning of the 113th psalm, in which some expressions seem to be taken from it; wherefore, though the two books of Kings may be allowed to be written or compiled by Ezra, the ten preceding ones cannot be assigned to him: however, there is no room to doubt of the divine authority of these two books, when the honour our Lord has done them is observed, by quoting or referring to several histories in them; as to the account of the queen of Sheba coming to hear the wisdom of Solomon; of the famine in the times of Elijah; and of that prophet being sent to the widow of Sarepta, and of the cleansing of Naaman the Syrian in the times of Elishah, Matt. xii. 42. Luke iv. 25—28. from 1 Kings xvii. 1—10. and 2 Kings v. 10—14. to which may be added, the quotations and references made by the apostles to passages in them, as by the Apostle Paul in Rom. xi. 2, 3, 4. from 1 Kings xix. 14. 18. where this book is expressly called the Scripture; and by the Apostle James, ch. v. 17. 18. who manifestly refers to 1 Kings xvii. and there are various things in this part

[a] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 15. 1.
[b] Tractat. Theolog. Politic. c. 8 & 9. p. 150, &c.
[c] Tractatus de Primis 12. Vet. Test. Lib. &c. Londini 1763.

of Scripture, which are confirmed by the testimonies of Heathen writers, as will be observed in the exposition of it. The use of these books is to carry on the history of the Jewish nation, to shew the state of the church of God in those times, and his providential care of it amidst all the changes and vicissitudes in the state; and, above all, to transmit to us the true genealogy of the Messiah, which serves to confirm the Evangelist Matthew's account of it.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter gives an account of the infirmities of David in his old age, and the method used to relieve him under them, ver. 1—4. of the preparation his son Adonijah made to usurp the throne, ver. 5—10. of Bathsheba's address to the king upon it, in favour of her son Solomon, on which she was put by Nathan the prophet, and seconded in it by him, ver. 11—27. when the king with an oath confirmed the succession of Solomon in the kingdom, and ordered Nathan the prophet, and Zadok the priest, to anoint him, which was accordingly done with great ceremony, to the satisfaction of the king and his servants, ver. 28—40. the news of which being brought to Adonijah and his friends, struck them with terror, and on which they dispersed, ver. 41—50. and upon the promise of Adonijah, that he would behave well to Solomon, he was pardoned and dismissed, having fled and lain hold on the horns of the altar, ver. 51—53.

Ver. 1. *Now King David was old, and stricken in years,* &c.] Was 70 years of age; for he was 30 years of age when he began to reign, and he reigned 40 years, 2 Sam. v. 4. this was just the age of man, Psal. xc. 10. *and they covered him with clothes;* not wearing-apparel, but bed-clothes; he seems to have been bed-ridden and paralytic: *but he got no heat;* by them; having no natural heat in him, clothes could not communicate any to him, only keep the cold from him, see Hag. i. 6. there are many persons at the age he was, that are lively, healthful, and robust, comparatively speaking at least; but David's strength was impaired, and his natural force abated by his many wars, fatigues by night and day in campaigns, and the many sorrows and afflictions he met with from his family and his friends, as well as enemies; which exhausted his radical moisture, weakened his nerves, and drank up his spirits, and brought upon him the infirmities of a decrepit old age very soon.

Ver. 2. *Wherefore his servants said unto him,* &c.] His physicians; so Joseph's physicians are called his servants, Gen. l. 2. *let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin;* not only a young woman, but a virgin, that has more natural heat than women that have bore children have, which is abated thereby: *and let her stand before the king;* minister to him, serve him with whatsoever he should want to eat or drink; and so by being in his presence, and taking things at her hand, she might be the more ingratiated into his affections: *and let her cherish him;* as the husband the wife, so she her husband, as doubtless David was; and that by giving him cordials to cheer his spirits, and every thing that was convenient for him, and particularly by lying with him. Kimchi interprets the word of her being profitable to him, in which sense the word is used, Job xxii. 2. and xxxv. 3. that is, by warming him; Ben Gersom understands it of her being made mistress of his treasures, according to the sense of the word in Isa. xxii. 15. that she might have the command of his purse, and provide any thing proper for him, without being taken notice of or obstructed; but the Targum is better, "and let her be near him," lie close unto him, and even in his bosom, as in the next clause: *and let her lie in his bosom;* which shews that it was proposed that he should marry her, at least that she should become his concubine-wife, since this phrase is descriptive of a wife, Mic. vii. 5. nor can it be thought his physicians would advise, or he agree to have a young woman admitted to his bed, without marriage; and if this had not been the case, it would not have answered the design of Adonijah in requesting her in marriage after his father's death, which was to make way to ascend the throne when opportunity should offer; nor would his request have been so much resented by Solomon as it was, ch. ii. 17—24. *that my lord the king may get heat;* and somewhat similar to this, Galen, that great physician, prescribed in like cases[4].

Ver. 3. *So they sought for a fair damsel throughout all the coasts of Israel,* &c.] Not only a damsel, but a beautiful one, that she might be the more acceptable to the king; who otherwise, if deformed and ugly, would not have endured her in his sight, or received at her hands, and much less suffered her to lie in his bosom: *and found Abishag a Shunammite;* a native of the city Shunem, a city in the tribe of Issachar, Josh. xix. 18. *and brought her to the king;* for his approbation of her, and to make her his concubine-wife, as he did.

Ver. 4. *And the damsel was very fair,* &c.] And so very agreeable to the king to be in his presence, and wait upon him, and take things of her hand, as well as lie with him: *and cherished the king;* enlivened his spirits by her amiable countenance, her graceful behaviour, and tender care of him, and especially by bedding with him: *and ministered to him;* serving him with her own hands whatever he took for his sustenance: *but the king knew her not;* as a man knows his wife; which shews that she was his wife, and that it would not have been criminal in him had he known her; but this is observed, not to point at the chastity of David, but his feebleness, and loss of desire after women, and that the damsel remained a virgin; and that was the ground of Adonijah's request, and his hope of succeeding.

Ver. 5. *Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted*

[4] Vid. Poli Synopsis in loc.

himself, &c.] This was his mother's name, 2 Sam. iii. 4. his father David being old and infirm, and not like to live long, nor able to oppose him; and he being the eldest son, and a comely person, was inspired with ambition to set up for king: *saying, I will be king*: though he knew that Solomon was appointed of God, and promised by David, and expected by the people to be king, yet he was resolved to set up himself for king, and try if he could not get himself to the throne; on this he was bent and determined: *and he prepared him chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him*; just as Absalom had done, when he had the same thing in view, to make him respectable among the people, see 2 Sam. xv. 1.

Ver. 6. *And his father had not displeased him at any time*, &c.] Always humoured him in every thing, let him have his own way and will, and granted him what he desired, and never corrected him for his faults, or made him ashamed, as the Targum, by telling him of them, and chastising him for them; this was not to the credit of David, being guilty of the same sin with Eli; and on this Adonijah presumed much, that he would not contradict and countermand in this as he had not in other things before: *in saying, why hast thou done so?* never so much as asked a reason of his conduct, so far was he from reproving him for it: *and he also was a very goodly man*; of a comely countenance, tall and well proportioned, as his brother Absalom, and which was another thing on which he built his hopes of succeeding in his enterprise; for in those times, as in after-times, and other nations, a comely aspect and personable appearance recommended a man to the choice of the people for a supreme magistrate, see the note on 1 Sam. ix. 2. *and his mother bare him after Absalom*; not that the same woman bore him as did Absalom; for Absalom's mother was Maachah, this man's Haggith; but she bore him after Absalom's mother had bore him, so that he was next son; and now Amnon, Chileab, or Daniel, and Absalom, being all dead, he was the eldest son living, and upon this he founded his claim to the throne, and his hope of succeeding.

Ver. 7. *And he conferred with Joab the son of Zeruiah, and with Abiathar the priest*, &c.] About getting the kingdom into his hands: and they were very proper persons to consult with, who, if gained to his interest, might be of great service, the one being the general of the army, and so had a great interest in the soldiery, with whom he could make way for him, and defend him, and the other was the high-priest, who might be thought to have a great share in the affections of the people, and whose office it was to anoint the king; and he might the rather apply to them, knowing them to be, on some accounts, discontented persons: *and they following Adonijah, helped him*; they took on his side; Joab knowing David's hatred of him on account of his murder of Abner and Amasa, and especially for his slaying his son Absalom, and his insolent behaviour towards him, and perhaps he might fear, or had an hint of what he had charged Solomon with concerning him; and Abiathar, who saw plainly that the priesthood in Eli's family was declining, and that Zadok was the favourite priest with David, and in all probability would be with Solomon; all which might influence these two persons to join Adonijah, and who, by so doing, greatly encouraged him, and many others to flock to him, which much helped and served his cause.

Ver. 8. *But Zadok the priest*, &c.] Who bid fair to be the high-priest on Solomon's coming to the throne, as he was: *and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada*; who was near David's person, and over his body-guards, the Cherethites and Pelethites: *and Nathan the prophet*; a very great intimate of David's, and his seer, whom he consulted on all occasions: *and Shimei*; who, according to Abarbinel, was Shimei the son of Gera, who had cursed David, and was afraid of entering into the conspiracy, lest he should be involved in trouble again; though some think this may be that Shimei, one of Solomon's twelve officers, as after constituted, ch. iv. 18. *and Rei*; whom the same writer takes to be Hushai the Archite, David's friend: *and the mighty men which belonged to David*; that were about his person, his guards, the Cherethites and Pelethites: *were not with Adonijah*; they did not join him, and indeed were not invited by him.

Ver. 9. *And Adonijah slew sheep and oxen and fat cattle*, &c.] To make a feast of for those that were of his party, which was numerous, and some of them persons of the first rank, and therefore a large and elegant entertainment was provided for them: *by the stone of Zoheleth, which is by En-rogel*; or the fullers' fountain, as the Targum, where the fullers washed their clothes, using their feet in doing it, from whence it had its name; and which they laid upon this stone for the water to drain out of them, Zoheleth signifying a slow motion of waters, or on which they beat them to get out the spots; the Targum calls it the stone of a watch-tower, on which they could stand and look to a great distance; or, as Jarchi and Ben Gersom suggest, it was a large smooth stone, which young men used to come to, and cast to and fro to try and exercise their strength; it was, as Josephus[*] says, in or near the king's gardens: *and called all his brethren the king's sons*; which David by his wives and concubines had in Hebron and Jerusalem; who were all younger than he, and so had not the pretension he had, and who might be displeased at the appointment of Solomon as well as he; see 1 Chron. iii. 4, 9. *and all the men of Judah the king's servants*; excepting those in ver. 8—10.

Ver. 10. *But Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, and the mighty men, and Solomon his brother, he called not.*] Did not invite them to this feast; not Nathan, who he might know had prophesied of Solomon's succession in the throne, and therefore it could not be thought he would be drawn over to him; nor *Benaiah and the mighty men*; David's body-guards, over whom this officer was; and still less Solomon, his competitor and rival.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore Nathan spake unto Bath-sheba the mother of Solomon*, &c.] Who not only had an interest in the king, being his wife, and an easy access to him, but had a special concern in this affair, as it affected

[*] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 14. sect. 4.

her son, to whom the succession of the kingdom was designed and promised: *hast thou not heard that Adonijah the son of Haggith doth reign?* has usurped the throne, and is proclaimed king by a party, who at least have drank his health as such; has taken the title, and is about to exercise the power of a king; this Bathsheba might not have heard of, and which he expresses in this manner to quicken her to make an immediate application to the king: *and David our Lord knoweth it not;* being so infirm, and in his bed, and nobody about him to inform him of it; it was done without his knowledge, and far from being with his consent and approbation.

Ver. 12. *Now therefore come, let me, I pray thee, give thee counsel,* &c.] How to conduct in this affair, which she being a woman, and no doubt surprised and confounded at this relation, might be at a loss what to do; wherefore Nathan, being a wise man, and a faithful friend, offers to give the best advice he could, and desires her attention to it: *that,* says he, *thou mayest save thine own life, and the life of thy son Solomon;* which would be the usurper's first care to take away, that he might have no rival, and none to disturb him in his government; which step has been often taken by usurpers to secure themselves, see Judg. ix. 5.

Ver. 13. *Go and get thee in unto King David,* &c.] That is, go into the chamber where the king lay, at once, without any ceremony: *and say unto him, didst not thou, my lord, O king, swear unto thine handmaid, saying, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne;* though no mention is elsewhere made of such an oath, there undoubtedly was one, of which Nathan had knowledge, either from David or Bathsheba, or from them both, or might be present himself at the making of it; for not only Bathsheba affirms it, ver. 17. but David owns it and confirms it, ver. 30. *why then doth Adonijah reign?* surely it cannot be with the king's knowledge and consent, so manifestly contrary to his promise and oath.

Ver. 14. *Behold, while thou yet talkest there with the king,* &c.] Before, or by the time she could deliver the above words to him, or such as she should think fit to use, to awaken the king to a concern for the interest of her and her son: *I will also come in after thee;* directly into the king's chamber: *and confirm thy words;* as he could very well do, if he was present as a witness of the oath he had made to her, as well as he could confirm the truth of Adonijah's usurpation; nay, could plead the will and promises of God he had formerly notified to him: or, *fill up thy words*[f], make up what might be wanting in her address to him, in her account of things, or in the arguments used by her; he means, that he would second her in her motion in favour of Solomon, and press the king to take some steps for the security of the succession to him. Nathan knew it was the will of God that Solomon should succeed in the kingdom, he had promised it by him, see 2 Sam. vii. 12. 1 Chron. xxi. 8, 9. yet, as a wise and good man, he thought it right to make use of all proper means to attain the end.

Ver. 15. *And Bathsheba went in unto the king into the chamber,* &c.] Where he lay, being bed-rid; she took Nathan's advice, and directly went to the king's apartment: *and the king was very old;* and decrepit, borne down with the infirmities of old age, though but 70 years of age: *and Abishag the Shunammite ministered unto the king;* she was then waiting upon the king, and serving him with what was necessary and proper for him; and perhaps there was no other in the chamber at that time.

Ver. 16. *And Bathsheba bowed, and did obeisance to the king,* &c.] Not only as being her husband, but her sovereign; and this behaviour might intimate, that she had something to say to him, and more than to inquire of his health: *and the king said, what wouldest thou?* what hast thou to say to me? or to ask of me? what is thy will and pleasure, or thine errand to me?

Ver. 17. *And she said unto him, my lord, thou swarest by the Lord thy God unto thine handmaid,* &c.] Which was a very solemn oath, and binding, and which she puts David in mind of, knowing that so conscientious a man as he was would religiously observe it: saying, *assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne;* be his successor in it, and established on it.

Ver. 18. *And now, behold, Adonijah reigneth,* &c.] Has set up himself as king, and is by some saluted as such; but lest it should be thought by David that she suggested by this that he was guilty of the breach of his oath, or on any account to be blamed, she adds: *and now my lord, O king, thou knowest it not;* which as it acquitted him from all blame, so it made the sin of Adonijah the more heinous, that he should do this without consulting his father about it; and was not only a neglect of him as a father, and an act of disrespect and disobedience to him as such, but even of high treason, to assume the throne in his father's life-time, without his consent.

Ver. 19. *And he hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance,* &c.] Has made a grand entertainment, and is feasting and rejoicing; which was another instance of irreverence and disrespect to his aged father, labouring under the infirmities of old age, and on his dying bed, and he carousing, and shewing all the tokens of pleasure in the view of his death, and wishing for it: *and hath called all the sons of the king;* invited them to his entertainment, in order to gain them to his interest: *and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the captain of the host;* two persons, though of eminent rank, she knew David had no respect for, and therefore it would not be pleasing to him to hear that they were invited, had this affair been more acceptable than it was; for Bathsheba, considering the shortness of the time she had to think, and the flurry she must be in, very artfully threw together the most material things that might work upon the mind of David in her favour: *but Solomon thy servant hath he not called;* which made it a plain case that it was not a feast of a peace-offering, nor a common friendly entertainment, but a feast made on account of his accession to the throne; and that he looked upon Solomon as his rival, and bore an ill will to him on that account, and had a design upon him.

Ver. 20. *And thou, my lord, O king,* &c.] As for

[f] ומלאתי complebo, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; explebo, Ar.

thee, or what concerns thee, or is incumbent on thee, will appear from the expectations of the people: *the eyes of all Israel are upon thee, that thou shouldest tell them who shall sit on the throne of my lord the king after him*; this she said, to dissipate any fears that might possess his mind on hearing what Adonijah had done, that the people in general had assented to it, and encouraged him to it; whereas the body of the people were waiting to hear what was the will and determination of David: for they not only considered him as having a power to name a successor, as was afterwards done by Rehoboam, but as one that had the mind of God revealed to him who should be his successor, to which they should pay a regard.

Ver. 21. *Otherwise it shall come to pass, when my lord the king shall sleep with his fathers*, &c.] That is, shall die, and be buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors, where he shall lie till he awakes in the morning of the resurrection: *that I and my son Solomon shall be counted offenders*; or *sinners* [a]; not as if she would be reckoned an adulteress, and her son as illegitimate, as some think, and so be branded and treated as such; but as being traitors, making pretensions to the throne, she on the behalf of her son, and he for himself, when he had no right to it, being the younger son, and not declared successor by his father.

Ver. 22. *And, lo, while she yet talked with the king*, &c.] Just as she was concluding her speech to him: *Nathan the prophet also came in*; as he promised he would; perhaps was at the chamber-door all the while Bathsheba was speaking, and when he perceived she was just finishing, he entered in without ceremony, as he had used to do, being the king's seer and counsellor, and a prophet, who had admittance to the king at any time.

Ver. 23. *And they told the king*, &c.] Some that attended at the door, or were in the chamber: *behold, Nathan the prophet*: or he is in the room, which the king through his infirmities might not be sensible of: *and when he was come in before the king*; nearer to him, and as to be properly in his presence: *he bowed himself before the king with his face to the ground*; shewing him the same reverence, though in bed, as if on his throne.

Ver. 24. *And Nathan said, my lord, O king*, &c.] He addresses him as with great veneration and respect due to his office, so as if he knew nothing of Bathsheba's application to him; and therefore begins and tells his story, as if the king had never heard any thing relative to it: *hast thou said, Adonijah shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne?* surely it can never be, because of the notice which he himself had given him from the Lord, that one to be born should succeed him, plainly pointing to Solomon; and also because of the oath which he had sworn, to which Nathan was privy, that Solomon should reign after him; and yet if he had not given such orders, it was exceeding strange that Adonijah should presume to do what he had done.

Ver. 25. *For he is gone down this day*, &c.] From Jerusalem, which lay high, to the stone of Zoheleth, in En-rogel, which lay in the valley, ver. 9. *and hath slain oxen, and fat cattle, and sheep in abundance*; not by way of sacrifice, but for a feast, on account of his coming to the kingdom: *and hath called all the king's sons*; invited them to the entertainment: *and the captains of the host*; or army; not only Joab, it seems, the general of it, but the captains of thousands and hundreds under him, being desirous of engaging the militia in his favour, and which was not an impolitic step: *and Abiathar the priest*; to consult with by Urim and Thummim, and to anoint him, and use his interest with the populace for him, who might be supposed a man of influence, being the high-priest of the nation: *and, behold, they eat and drink before him*; they were now at it, at this time, they were not only invited, but they accepted the invitation, and came; which is more than what was before related: *and say, God save King Adonijah*; they proclaimed and saluted him as king, and drank his health, and wished him all prosperity; and so the Targum, "may King Adonijah prosper!"

Ver. 26. *But me, even me thy servant*, &c.] Meaning himself, Nathan the prophet, who was David's servant, his seer, and counsellor: *and Zadok the priest*; for whom David had a great respect: *and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada*: who was captain of his body-guards; here Nathan observes more than Bathsheba had, and supplies what she had omitted, and so filled up her words, as in ver. 14. *and thy servant Solomon, hath he not called*; which shewed his ill intention.

Ver. 27. *Is this thing done by my lord the king*, &c.] With his knowledge and consent, and by his orders: *and thou hast not shewed it unto thy servant*; meaning himself, who had brought him a message from the Lord, signifying that Solomon should succeed him; and therefore if that had been countermanded, it seemed strange that he should not have acquainted him with it: or *to thy servants*, as the Arabic version; for the word has a plural termination, though pointed as singular; and so it may mean not only himself, but the rest of David's faithful servants that were about him at court, as Kimchi observes: *who should sit on the throne of my lord the king after him?* if he had altered his mind, or had had any direction from the Lord to make any change, he wondered at it that he should neither acquaint him, nor any of his trusty friends, with it.

Ver. 28. *Then King David answered and said*, &c.] Observing that Nathan confirmed the account that Bathsheba had given, and that it must be a matter of fact that Adonijah had usurped the throne, gave orders to those about him, saying, *call me Bathsheba*; who either went out of the room when Nathan entered it, or however removed to some distant part of it, out of the sight of David: *and she came into the king's presence, and stood before the king*; came to the side or foot of his bed, hearkening to what he had to say to her.

Ver. 29. *And the king sware*, &c.] To his former oath, he added another for greater confirmation: *as the Lord liveth*; which was the proper form of an oath, which ought to be taken by the living God; and as what would lay him under the greater obligation to observe it, he adds, *that hath redeemed my soul out of all distress*; saved his life when in the most imminent danger; delivered him out of the hand of Goliath, and from the Philistines and other enemies, in his wars with them; and from Saul and his persecuting rage

[a] חטאים peccatores, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

and fury, and from the rebellion of his son Absalom, and the insurrection of Sheba.

Ver. 30. *Even as I sware unto thee by the Lord God of Israel*, &c.] And so owns and confirms the truth of what Nathan had suggested to Bathsheba, and she had asserted, ver. 13, 17. *saying, assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead*: this was the substance of the oath: *even so will I certainly do this day*; perform this oath, and set Solomon on the throne.

Ver. 31. *Then Bathsheba bowed with her face to the earth, and did reverence to the king*, &c.] Thereby expressing her veneration of him, and thankfulness to him for his favour to her and her son, in fulfilling his promise and oath: *and said, let my lord King David live for ever*: which though a common form of salutation of kings, not only in Israel, but in other nations, is not to be considered as a mere compliment, but as expressing the real desires and affection of her heart to the king; signifying hereby that her solicitations on the behalf of her son did not arise from any desire of the king's death; she heartily wished him health to live long and easy; and all her request was, that Solomon her son might succeed him, whenever it pleased God to remove him; or seeing he was now a dying man as it were, her prayer was that his soul might live for ever in happiness in the world to come; so Kimchi interprets it.

Ver. 32. *And King David said, call me Zadok the priest*, &c.] Not Abiathar the high-priest, for he had joined Adonijah; and besides Zadok was David's favourite priest, and for him the high-priesthood was designed, as it was in a little time translated to him: *and Nathan the prophet*: who very probably went out of the room when Bathsheba was called in: *and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada*: the captain of his guards: *and they came before the king*: who it is very likely sat up in his bed, and they stood around him.

Ver. 33. *And the king said unto them, take ye the servants of your lord*, &c.] Meaning his own servants, his life-guards, the Cherethites and Pelethites, as appears from ver. 38. the Jews[a] from hence gather, that a king is superior to an high-priest, since David calls himself the lord of Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet: *and cause Solomon to ride upon mine own mule*; for it seems on such a creature David used to ride, as did his sons; horses not being so common in Judea as they were afterwards. Some of the Jews[b] say it was not lawful to ride upon a mule, and that this case of David is to be excepted; for they pretend that this was a peculiar mule; and if the instance of his son is urged, they reply, an argument from what kings and their sons used to do is of no force. Now this was one way of testifying that it was his will that Solomon should reign in his stead; for no private person might ride upon the beast the king was wont to ride on; this is now one of the Jewish canons[c], "no one may ride "on the king's horse, nor sit on his throne, nor use "his sceptre:" *and bring him down to Gihon*: a fountain near Jerusalem, on the west side of it, which flowed from Mount Gihon, 2 Chron. xxxii. 30. and xxxiii. 14. the same with Siloah according to the Targum, of which mention is made, John ix. 7. The reason for this order is not easily given; whether it was to denote the peaceableness and gentleness of Solomon's government, the waters of Shiloah moving softly, Isa. viii. 6. or the spread, constancy, firmness, and perpetuity of it, as the Jews say[d], since the water of a fountain is ever running; or because there might be a concourse of people there, and so he would be anointed and proclaimed king in a public manner, and be attended to the city with great pomp and solemnity.

Ver. 34. *And let Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anoint him there king over Israel*, &c.] For it might be done by either of them, as the unctions of Saul and David shew: *and blow ye the trumpet, and say, God save King Solomon*; the blowing of the trumpet was to make it public; the proclamation of him as king was to be made by the sound of it, and the acclamation of the people was to express their concurrence with it, their loyal affection to the new king, and their hearty wishes for his health, prosperity, and long life.

Ver. 35. *Then ye shall come up after him*, &c.] When anointed, proclaimed, and huzzaed, then he was to mount the mule, and ride before them as their king, at the head of them; they following after, in token of their subjection to him: *that he may come and sit upon my throne*; at Jerusalem, in the king's palace, and there exercise his kingly power he would now be invested with: *for he shall be king in my stead*; even during David's life, as well as after his decease: *and I have appointed him to be ruler over Israel, and over Judah*; that is, over all the twelve tribes of Israel; Judah may be particularly mentioned, though included in Israel, because Adonijah had invited the men of Judah to his feast and party, ver. 9. and therefore had they not been named, might think he had no power over them.

Ver. 36. *And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada answered the king*, &c.] In the name of the rest: *and said, Amen*; they all assented to it, and expressed their satisfaction in it: *the Lord God of my lord the king say so too*; let it appear, by the prosperity and success that shall by divine Providence attend the new king, that this is according to the will of God.

Ver. 37. *As the Lord hath been with my lord the king, even so be he with Solomon*, &c.] To guide and direct him, protect and defend him, succeed and prosper him; the Targum is, "as the Word of the Lord has been for "the help of my lord the king, so let him be for the "help of Solomon:" *and make his throne greater than the throne of my lord King David*; which he knew would not displease David, who not only had an affectionate regard for Solomon his son, but wished heartily the prosperity of the kingdom of Israel; and the wish on all accounts was grateful to him, though to an envious and ambitious prince it might have been disagreeable.

Ver. 38. *So Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada*, &c.] The three men that David sent for on this occasion: *and the Cherethites and the Pelethites*; not the sanhedrim, as Ben

[a] Bemidbar Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 186. 3.
[b] Vid. Bartenoram in Misn. Celaim, c. 8. sect. 1.
[c] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 5.
[d] T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 12. 1.

Gersom, but David's guards, over whom Benaiah was: these *went down* from *Jerusalem, and caused Solomon to ride upon King David's mule;* as he had ordered: *and brought him to Gihon;* or Siloah, as the Targum; hence the Jews say[e], they don't anoint a king but at a fountain; but this is the only instance of it.

Ver. 39. *And Zadok the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle,* &c.] Not out of the tabernacle of Moses, for that was at Gibeon; see 1 Chron. xxi. 28. and if the oil had been there, it would have been too far to have fetched it, since haste was now required; but this was taken out of the tabernacle David had built for the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 17. where the ark was, and before which the pot of oil was; so Jarchi; but Kimchi indeed says, that though it was at this time at Gibeon, Zadok went thither, or sent thither to fetch it; and though it is said, the pot of oil was set before the ark, this was when the ark was in the tabernacle; but when they took it out from thence at the war with the Philistines, that and the pot of manna were left in the tabernacle; and they took nothing but the ark; but if they brought the pot afterwards, and put it before the ark in Jerusalem, then it may be understood of the tabernacle David pitched for it; but that he disapproves of. Here Zadok is only said to take the oil, and anoint with it; which he did either as the deputy of the high-priest, or he was made use of because the high-priest was on the side of Adonijah: *and anointed Solomon;* whether it was by pouring it on his head, as Saul was anointed, 1 Sam. x. 1. or, as the Jews say[f], by putting it round about his head in the form of a crown, and then between his eye-brows, is not very material; and they also say[g], that it is not usual to anoint the son of a king that has been anointed; and that the reason of the anointing of Solomon was, because of the sedition of his brother Adonijah, and to confirm the kingdom to him; this anointing was an emblem of the gifts, graces, and virtues, necessary to qualify a king for the discharge of his office: *and they blew the trumpet;* and proclaimed him king: *and all the people said, God save King Solomon;* wished him long life and happiness, and gave him a general huzza.

Ver. 40. *And all the people came up after him,* &c.] Following him from the fountain to the city, with their loud acclamations: *and the people piped with pipes;* which were hollow instruments, and full of holes which they blew with their mouths, and played upon with their fingers; Jarchi says they were flutes, and very probably: *and rejoiced with great joy;* which they expressed by such loud shouts: *so that the earth rent with the sound thereof;* an hyperbolical expression, shewing the great numbers gathered together on this occasion, and the sonorous acclamations they made.

Ver. 41. *And Adonijah and all the guests that were with him,* &c.] Or that were *called*[h]; that is, invited to the entertainment he had made: *heard it, as they had made an end of eating;* the shouting of the people, which reached their ears just as they had finished their meal, and before they had risen from the table, where they had been a long while; for when Nathan went in to David, they were then eating and drinking, ver. 25. and when he had finished his speech to David, Bathsheba was called in, and the kingdom promised to her son with an oath, three persons of the first rank were sent for, and had their orders and instructions, for the immediate execution of which they made preparation, and had Solomon down to Gihon, and there anointed him king, and brought him up to Jerusalem again; all which were done before Adonijah and his guests rose from table: *and when Joab heard the sound of the trumpet, he said, wherefore is this noise of the city being in an uproar?* the city is in a tumult by the noise that is made, what should be the meaning of it? he speaks as one surprised, and in great concern, being general of the army, whose care should be to preserve the peace of the city, and prevent mutiny and disorder.

Ver. 42. *And while he yet spake, behold, Jonathan the son of Abiathar the priest came,* &c.] Whom his father had left in the city, to observe what passed there, and give him notice of it: *and Adonijah said unto him, come in, for thou art a valiant man, and bringest good tidings;* which seems to be not a very wise speech, as if there was a connexion between being valiant, and bringing good news, or that the one had any influence upon the other; though perhaps it means no more than a good man, *a man of virtue*[i], as it may be rendered; one that fears sin, as the Targum, and so would report nothing but what was true, and therefore might be depended on; see 2 Sam. xviii. 27. the same phrase is rendered a worthy man, ver. 52.

Ver. 43. *And Jonathan answered and said to Adonijah, verily,* &c.] Or, *nay, but*[k] it is not so as thou imaginest; it is not good tidings, but bad tidings to thee I bring: *our lord King David hath made Solomon king;* of which he gives the following account in proof of it.

Ver. 44. *And the king hath sent with him,* &c.] To the fountain of Gihon: *Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites;* over whom the latter was captain: *and they have caused him to ride upon the king's mule;* by his order and direction.

Ver. 45. *And Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, have anointed him king in Gihon,* &c.] Or at Gihon; that is, Siloah, according to the Targum; here the act of anointing is ascribed to them both, as in ver. 34. Zadok very probably applied the oil to him, and Nathan might be some way or other assisting in it; however he was here present, not only as approving of it, but declaring it as a prophet, that it was according to the will of God, as well as of the king: *and they are come up from thence rejoicing:* with a multitude of people along with them: *so that the city rang again:* with the blowing of trumpets, the sound of pipings, and the shouts of the people: *this is the noise which ye have heard;* which had so alarmed them.

Ver. 46. *And also Solomon sitteth on the throne of*

[e] T. Bab. Ceritot, fol. 5. 2.
[f] Ibid.
[g] Ibid.

[h] קראים invitati, V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, &c.
[i] איש חיל vir virtutis, Montanus, Vatablus.
[k] אבל nequaquam, V. L. at, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

the kingdom.] Where he was placed to exercise his regal power when returned to Jerusalem, as a further token and confirmation of his being really and actually king.

Ver. 47. *And moreover the king's servants came to bless our lord the king*, &c.] To give him thanks for the wise and good provision he had made before his death for the welfare of the kingdom, by making Solomon his son king in his stead, and to congratulate him upon it; which shewed that they highly approved of it, and were ready to swear allegiance to Solomon, and therefore Adonijah had nothing to hope for from them: *saying, God make the name of Solomon better than thy name;* that is, may he be more famous, and his name be more celebrated in the world than his was, or be more respectable and valued among his people Israel: *and make his throne greater than thy throne;* see ver. 37. *and the king bowed himself upon the bed;* signifying not only his approbation of what was done, but also of their prayers and wishes; as well as he bowed himself to give thanks to God that he had lived to see this work done, as follows.

Ver. 48. *And also thus said the king*, &c.] Being in a proper posture for an address to God: *blessed* be *the Lord God of Israel, which hath given* one *to sit on my throne this day, mine eyes seeing it;* he ascribes this whole affair to God, and his kind providence, though all things were done according to his own orders; and gives thanks to him, who had directed him to take such steps as these were, and that the business was finished without any obstruction, and to the great joy and satisfaction of the people; and that there was such a prospect of Solomon's having a happy and peaceable reign.

Ver. 49. *And all the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid*, &c.] Though many of them were military men, the general of the army, and the captains thereof, ver. 19, 25. yet they were struck with a panic, their courage failed them, they had no spirit left in them, their hearts became as weak as water; had they exerted themselves according to their character, betaken themselves to arms, and put themselves at the head of their troops in favour of Adonijah, it would have given Solomon and his friends a great deal of trouble; no doubt this panic was of God: *and rose up, and went every man his way;* or to his house, as the Arabic version; on hearing what Jonathan reported, they immediately rose up from table in great haste, and made the best of their way to their houses, that it might not be known that they had been with Adonijah.

Ver. 50. *And Adonijah feared because of Solomon*, &c.] Lest he should seize him as an usurper and traitor, and put him to death: *and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar;* either that which was at Gibeon, where the tabernacle now was: see ch. iii. 4. so Jarchi; or rather that which was nearest, the altar that David had built in the threshing-floor of Araunah, 2 Sam. xxiv. 25. the altar was a sort of asylum, or refuge, for such who had committed any crime worthy of death; not by divine appointment, but by custom, it being supposed that none would presume to defile with blood that which was sacred to the Lord; or shed the blood of men where the blood of beasts was poured; or use severity and strict justice, but mercy, where sacrifices were offered to atone for sin, and mercy was shewn on account of them; these were notions, and this a custom, which obtained very early, and even among the Jews; see Exod. xxi. 14. as well as among Gentiles; with whom it was usual, as to flee to the statues of their emperors, and to the temples of their deities, so likewise to their altars; this was customary among the Molossians, Samothracians, Crotoniatæ, and Messenians; and particularly the altar of Jupiter Servator was an asylum, or place of refuge, to the Ithacians [l]. Cornelius Nepos [m] has given us an instance of one that fled to a temple of Neptune, and sat upon the altar for his security, as here Adonijah laid hold on the horns of this, that none might force him from it.

Ver. 51. *And it was told Solomon*, &c.] By some of his courtiers: *saying, behold, Adonijah feareth King Solomon;* lest he should take away his life: *for, lo, he hath caught hold on the horns of the altar;* which was the dernier resort of the guilty when they despaired of mercy otherwise: *saying, let King Solomon swear unto me this day that he will not slay his servant with the sword;* he owns Solomon to be king, and himself his subject and servant; this no doubt he did to conciliate his favour, nor did he think his life safe, unless Solomon promised with an oath that he would not take it away.

Ver. 52. *And Solomon said, if he will shew himself a worthy man*, &c.] Will behave himself well as a good subject, and be careful not to offend for the future, or appear to be one that fears sin, as the Targum; particularly the crimes of sedition, rebellion, and treason: *there shall not an hair of him fall to the earth;* not the least hurt should be done him: *but if wickedness shall be found in him, he shall die;* that is, if any crime worthy of death be committed by him, or any overt-act of treason, and the like, he should surely be put to death, and find no mercy, notwithstanding the present general pardon. This was very wisely done by Solomon, to begin his reign without shedding blood even of delinquents; and especially of his brother, and his elder brother too; and by granting his life for the future on his good behaviour.

Ver. 53. *So King Solomon sent, and they brought down Adonijah from the altar*, &c.] It being built upon an hill, as both that at Gibeon, and in Araunah's threshing-floor, were: *and he came and bowed himself to King Solomon;* in a way of reverence and subjection, acknowledging him to be king, and himself his subject: *and Solomon said to him, go to thine house;* in peace; signifying that he pardoned him, and he might go home, and enjoy his family and substance; and withal intimating that he should only regard the affairs of his family, and not trouble himself with those of the kingdom and state. Abarbinel fancies, that because Solomon said, that if he shewed himself to be a worthy man, or a man of fortitude and valour, that Adonijah thought that his meaning was, that he should go before

[l] Alexander ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 3. c. 20.

[m] Vit. Pausan. l. 4. c. 4.

him as a man of war, and minister to him; which made him so ready to come and stand before him; in which he was mistaken, Solomon meant no such thing; nor would he take him into his court and service, but sent him home to his own house.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter gives an account of the charge David gave to his son Solomon, a little before his death, to walk in the ways of the Lord, ver. 1—4. and of some instructions delivered to him concerning some particular persons he should either shew favour to, or execute justice on, ver. 5—9. and the next account in it is concerning his death and burial, and the years of his reign, ver. 10, 11. after which it relates an address of Bathsheba to Solomon in favour of Adonijah, which was refused, and the issue of it was his death, ver. 12—25. and the deposition of Abiathar from the priesthood, ver. 26, 27. and the putting of Joab to death for his treason and murders, ver. 28—34. in whose post Benaiah was put, as Zadok was in the place of Abiathar, ver. 35. and lastly the confinement of Shimei in Jerusalem, who had cursed David, ver. 36—38. who upon transgressing the orders given him was put to death, ver. 39—46.

Ver. 1. *Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die*, &c.] The number of his days fixed and determined by the Lord, Job xiv. 5. and which might be perceived as drawing nigh, both by himself and others, through the growing infirmities of old age, decays of nature, and various symptoms of an approaching dissolution which were upon him: see Gen. xlvii. 29. Abarbinel observes, that he is called only David, not King David; because Solomon his son was now anointed king, and reigned in his stead; so in ver. 10, 11. but there is another reason given by some Jews [s], that no man, even a king, has power in the day of death; he is no king then, he has no rule over that, but that rules over him: *and he charged Solomon his son*: gave him his last and dying charge: *saying*: as follows.

Ver. 2. *I go the way of all the earth*, &c.] A path which is the path of death [t], which all pass in, kings and peasants, high and low, rich and poor, great and small, good and bad; none are exempted, all must die, and do; it is the appointment of God, a decree which can never be reversed; all experience confirms it: this same phrase is used by Joshua, from whom David seems to have borrowed it, and shews that that book was written in his days, Josh. xxiii. 14. *be thou strong therefore*: not discouraged at my death, being a common thing, and to be expected; nor at being left alone, the Lord can give thee wisdom and counsel, assistance and strength, protection, and defence; take heart therefore, and be of good courage: *and shew thyself a man*: in wisdom and understanding, and in fortitude of mind, though so young a man; which were necessary for the government of so great a people, and to guard him against the secret intrigues of some, and the open flatteries of others, and the fear of attempts against his person and government, and the temptations he might be liable to, to do wrong things; and especially they were necessary to enable him to keep the commands of God, as follows; which required great strength of mind and of grace, considering the corruptions of nature, the temptations of Satan, and the snares of men; see Josh. i. 7.

Ver. 3. *And keep the charge of the Lord thy God*, &c.] Which may in general respect his whole walk and conversation, and his obedience to the law and will of God; and in particular his just government of Israel committed to his charge: *to walk in his ways*; directed to in his word: *to keep his statutes and his judgments*; his laws, ceremonial, moral, and judicial: *and his testimonies*; as the above laws, which testify of his mind, and declare what he would have done and observed: *as it is written in the law of Moses*; which a king of Israel was obliged to write a copy of, keep by him, and read it, and rule according to it: *that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself*; to reign in righteousness, and according to the law of God, is the only way to have a prosperous and happy reign: or *that thou mayest act wisely* [r]; the law of God furnishing out the best rules of government and maxims of policy; see Deut. iv. 6, 7.

Ver. 4. *That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me*, &c.] His word of promise concerning the kingdom of David, and the succession of it, and confirm and establish it: *saying, if thy children take heed to their way*: they are directed to walk in, even the way of the Lord, and not turn to the right hand or the left: *to walk before me in truth*; in the sincerity and integrity of their hearts, according to the word of truth, and under the influence of the spirit of truth: *with all their heart, and with all their soul*; in the most cordial manner, with the strongest affection and zeal; with all eagerness and earnestness; with their whole hearts engaged in every duty performed by them: *there shall not fail thee* (said he) *a man on the throne of Israel*; one to succeed him in the throne; this, with respect to his throne, literally considered, was conditional; but, spiritually considered, was absolute, and had its fulfilment in the Messiah, whose throne is for ever; see Luke i. 32, 33.

Ver. 5. *Moreover thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiah did unto me*, &c.] In slaying Absalom, contrary to his orders, and in behaving insolently towards him on account of his mourning for him, and at other

[s] Bereshit Rabba, sect. 96. fol. 83. 2.
[t] ——— omnes una manet nox,
Et calcanda semel via lethi. Horat. Carmin. l. 1. ode 28. ver. 15. 16.

[r] למען תשכיל ut prudenter agas, Montanus, Tigurine version; ut intelligas universa, V. L.

times; but as these things might not be personally known to Solomon, only by hearsay, this may respect his disloyalty towards him, in joining with Adonijah, who set himself up for king in his life-time, and without his knowledge and consent; or it may respect the instances next mentioned, in which he did injury to the interest, honour, and character of David: *and* (or *even*) *what he did to the two captains of the host of Israel, unto Abner the son of Ner, and unto Amasa the son of Jether*: to Abner who was under Ish-bosheth, and Amasa under David, who had not only the promise of the post, but was actually in it when Joab slew him; and indeed out of envy to him for it: *and shed the blood of war in peace*; when they were at peace with him, as if they had been in open war; and even under a pretence of friendship to them, asking of their peace and welfare, as if he meant nothing less than to behave peaceably towards them; hence the Targum is, "whom he slew in craftiness:" *and put the blood of war upon the girdle that was about his loins, and in his shoes that were in his feet*; which particularly respects the affair of Amasa, whose blood he shed with his sword, that dropped out of its scabbard, girded upon his loins, and into which he put it again, all over bloody, and wore it girded upon his loins; and which he also stooped for when it fell, as if he was going to unloose or buckle his shoes, and into which the blood ran down when he stabbed him; and after this barbarous action marched on without any shame or remorse, with his bloody sword on his loins, and the blood of the murdered in his shoes.

Ver. 6. *Do therefore according to thy wisdom, &c.*] Which though young began to appear in him, even in the life of his father; he therefore exhorts him to use the wisdom he had, and take the first and fittest opportunity to cut him off for his former murders and late treason, as a dangerous man to his government and the peace of it: *and let not his hoary head go down to the grave in peace*; that is, let him not die a natural, but a violent death; and let not his grey hairs be any argument for sparing him, or any reason for delaying the taking of him off, because he would in course die quickly; for he must be now an old man, as old as David, or perhaps older; since he had been his general 40 years, even all the time of his reign; see 2 Sam. ii. 13.

Ver. 7. *But shew kindness to the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, &c.*] Who perhaps was now dead, and therefore he would have kindness shewn to his posterity for his sake: *and let them be of those that eat of thy table*; as Mephibosheth had at his, who also perhaps was dead, since no notice is taken of him; and as David would have had Barzillai, but he desired to be excused on account of his age: *for so they came to me, when I fled because of thy brother Absalom*: that is, they came to him, not only Barzillai, but his sons it seems; and fed him or furnished him with provisions, when he was obliged to fly to the other side Jordan, because of the rebellion of his son Absalom.

Ver. 8. *And behold* thou hast *with thee Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Bahurim, &c.*] Of whom, and of his native place, see the note on 2 Sam. xvi. 5. he was now at Jerusalem, and so with Solomon, or near at hand; and was on his side, and of his party: see ch. i. 8. but not to be trusted, or looked upon as a real friend: *which cursed me with a grievous curse, when I went to Mahanaim*; a place on the other side Jordan, of which place, and the curses this man cursed David with, see 2 Sam. xvi. 7, 8. and xvii. 24. *but he came down to me at Jordan*; after the defeat of Absalom, and when David was returning, and humbled himself to him, and begged his pardon: *and I sware unto him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword*; but this oath was not binding upon his successor, and especially should he commit a new crime.

Ver. 9. *Now therefore hold him not guiltless, &c.*] Don't look upon him as an innocent person; and if he commits an offence against thee, as he has against me, don't acquit him as I have done: *for thou art a wise man*; so it seems he was before the appearance of the Lord to him at Gibeon, even before his father's death he had given some proofs of it to David himself: *and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him*; to watch and observe him, and, if found offending, to punish him according to the rules of justice, and the laws of the land: *but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood*; spare him not on account of his age, but put him to death whensoever he shall be found guilty, let him not die a natural death.

Ver. 10. *So David slept with his fathers, &c.*] Died as his ancestors before him did; for, buried with them he was not; and therefore can't be understood of his lying with them in the grave, but in the state of the dead; he died according as the Jews say [s] on the day of Pentecost, and according to Bishop Usher [t] A. M. 2990, and before Christ 1014. *and was buried in the city of David*; not at Beth-lehem, in the sepulchre of Jesse, who was a private man; but being a king, in his own city, the hold of Zion he took from the Jebusite, and which afterwards was called by his name, 2 Sam. v. 7. and his sepulchre remained unto the times of the apostles, upwards of 1,000 years, Acts ii. 29. see the note there.

Ver. 11. *And the days that David reigned over Israel* were 40 *years, &c.*] So says Eupolemus [u], an Heathen writer, which are thus reckoned: 7 *years reigned he in Hebron*; the 6 months over are omitted, 2 Sam. v. 5. this part of his reign was over Judah only: *and* 33 *years reigned he in Jerusalem*; over the twelve tribes, in all 40, which round number is only given; though in fact he reigned 6 months more.

Ver. 12. *Then sat Solomon on the throne of David his father, &c.*] So he did in his life-time, with his consent, and by his order, and now by the agreement of the whole people: *and his kingdom was established greatly*; all submitting to it, and none opposing it.

Ver. 13. *And Adonijah the son of Haggith came to Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, &c.*] Into her apartment; Abarbinel thinks it was a few days after the death of David: *and she said, comest thou peaceably?* in a friendly manner, with no ill design, only to pay a friendly visit; for she might fear he came to avenge

[s] T. Hieros. Chagigah, fol. 78. 1.
[t] Annals, &c. p. 26.

[u] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30.

himself on her, and destroy her, because she had been the instrument of disappointing him of the kingdom, and of getting her son Solomon set upon the throne, and established in it; and therefore could not tell what envy, rage, and disappointment, might prompt him to: *and he said, peaceably;* he meant no harm unto her.

Ver. 14. *He said, moreover, I have something to say unto thee, &c.*] Signifying that he came upon business: *and she said, say on;* intimating her readiness to hear what it was.

Ver. 15. *And he said, thou knowest that the kingdom was mine, &c.*] Belonged to him by virtue of his birthright; he was heir to it, being the eldest son: *and all Israel set their faces on me, that I should reign;* which was not true; for, as Bathsheba says, the body of the people were in suspense, their eyes being on David, waiting to hear whom he would declare his successor; and when Solomon was declared and anointed, vast numbers attended him; unless Adonijah thought that the high-priest, and general of the army, with the captains, represented the whole people; however this he observes by way of preface, to shew how unhappy he was, being disappointed, and to move the compassion of Bathsheba, that she might be the more easily prevailed upon to seek to obtain so small a favour as he was about to ask: *howbeit the kingdom is turned about, and is become my brother's;* things had taken another turn, and what was his, and he thought himself sure of the other day, was now become his brother's; such were the uncertainty and vicissitude of human affairs: *for it was his from the Lord;* by the appointment of the Lord, by a promise of his, and a prophecy concerning it; which if he knew of, it was both vain and sinful in him to act contrary thereunto; or it was brought about by the overruling providence of God, which he now plainly saw and submitted to; this he said to shew that he had laid aside all hopes of the kingdom, and was fully satisfied of the disposition of it in Providence, and so to hide his real design in the petition he was about to make.

Ver. 16. *And now I ask one petition of thee, &c.*] And but one, and a small one too, as Bathsheba herself after calls it: *deny me not,* or *turn not away my face*[z]; with shame and sorrow, which would be the case should he be denied: *and she said unto him, say on;* let me hear it.

Ver. 17. *And he said, speak, I pray thee, unto Solomon the king, &c.*] He owns him to be king, and which he the rather did to engage her to take his suit in hand, and to cover his design: *for he will not say thee nay;* or turn away thy face, or deny thy request; she being his mother, for whom he had a great affection, and to whom he was under obligation on all accounts: *that he give me Abishag the Shunammite to wife;* which was contrary to the law of God, Lev. xviii. 8. which surely Adonijah must have been ignorant of, and Bathsheba likewise; or the one would never have made such a request, nor the other have undertaken to try to obtain it; but perhaps they did not take her to be David's wife, or the marriage to be consummated, because he knew her not: but yet not being returned to her father's house, and being at the dispose of Solomon, prove that she must be a concubine-wife, and which became the property of the next heir and successor; see 2 Sam. xii. 8. nor did Adonijah apply to her or her friends; which, if he was really in love with her, he would have done, if at her own or their disposal; but this he knew, that she was solely at the disposal of Solomon, to whom he did not care to apply himself, but makes use of his mother.

Ver. 18. *And Bathsheba said, well, &c.*] Very well spoken, the thing is good and right: *I will speak for thee unto the king;* and use her interest with him, not seeing into his design, but pitying an unfortunate man.

Ver. 19. *Bathsheba therefore went unto King Solomon, to speak unto him for Adonijah, &c.*] She went from her own house to the palace; for she might not live at court; or however had an apartment to herself, from whence she went to the king with her suit in favour of Adonijah: *and the king rose up to meet her, and bowed himself unto her;* upon her entrance into the presence-chamber, in honour to her as a parent, he rose up from his throne, and made his obeisance to her, as a dutiful son: *and sat down, and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother;* a magnificent seat or throne, as the word is, was ordered to be set for her: *and she sat on his right hand;* where he placed her in honour to her as his mother; so Nero[a] placed Tiridates king of Armenia at his right hand, to do him honour.

Ver. 20. *Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee, &c.*] It was but one, and a little one, and therefore she hoped it would be granted: I pray thee, *say me not nay;* don't refuse it, or deny it me, or turn away my face with shame and disappointment: *and the king said, ask on, my mother, for I will not say thee nay;* since it is a small one, as thou sayest, and provided it is fit and lawful to be granted.

Ver. 21. *And she said, let Abishag the Shunammite be given to Adonijah thy brother to wife.*] For so Adonijah was by his father's side; and Bathsheba makes use of the relation, the more to move upon him to grant the request.

Ver. 22. *And King Solomon answered and said unto his mother, &c.*] With as much gentleness and mildness as he could, but inwardly fired at her request, and amazed at it, and could not forbear using some degree of tartness and resentment: *and why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah?* is this a small petition? is this a fit and lawful one? *ask for him the kingdom also;* for this is what he means by it, that by marrying the king's widow he may step into the throne whenever any opportunity offers, as any uneasiness, or insurrection in the kingdom, or the death of Solomon; for none but a king, the Jews say[b], might marry a king's widow, not any private man; and therefore for Adonijah to ask this was interpreted affecting the kingdom, and aspiring to it, and taking his measures to obtain it; yea, it is said[c], that none but another king, the successor, might make use of his servants, handmaids, and ministers; and it is observed,

[z] חשיבי את פני ne avertere facias faciem meam, Pagninus.
[a] Suetonius in Vit. Neron. c. 13.

[b] Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 2.
[c] Maimon. Hilchot Sanhedrin, c. 2. sect. 1.

that Abishag was free to Solomon, but not to Adonijah: *for he is mine elder brother;* and has that to plead in his favour, and if he could obtain this, it would strengthen his title, or at least be a plausible pretence, which he might make use of, when opportunity served, to gain the people to his interest: *even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab the son of Zeruiah;* she might as well ask for them as for him; whose interest it was, and therefore desirous it might be that he should be king, that so the one might be continued in the office of high-priest, and the other as general of the army; who, Solomon knew, bore him no good will, but were secretly his enemies; and he suspected that this was a scheme of theirs, and that it was by their advice Adonijah made this request; so the Targum, "are not he, and Abiathar the priest, and Joab the "son of Zeruiah, in the counsel?" in this counsel; it is what they had consulted among themselves as a preparation to bring about a design they are contriving: probably Solomon had private notice that they were plotting against him, and this confirmed him in the truth of it; and therefore all of them were upon this punished with deprivation of office, or loss of life.

Ver. 23. *Then King Solomon sware by the Lord,* &c.] To prevent his mother pressing him to have her petition granted: *saying, God do so to me, and more also:* lay such and such evils upon me, and more than I care to express: *if Adonijah have not spoken this word against his own life:* to his own prejudice, and even to the loss of his life; in which Solomon suggests it would issue, being a fresh overt-act of treason; he knew, from what Bathsheba said, that this was his petition, and that he had spoken of this to her, and put her upon making it for him; and who no doubt related to Solomon the whole of the conversation that passed between them, and to which he seems to have some respect in his answer.

Ver. 24. *Now therefore, as the Lord liveth,* &c.] Which is another oath; and one may easily perceive hereby in what a temper and disposition Solomon was, how warm, earnest, and vehement, how resolute against the petition, and how determined he was to punish Adonijah and his confederates: *which hath established me, and set me upon the throne of David my father, and who hath made me an house, as he promised;* who had placed him on his father's throne, and established him there, in spite of all his enemies, and had given him a firm and stable kingdom, which was not to be shaken and subverted by the power and policy of conspirators, according to the promise of God by Nathan, 2 Sam. vii. 11—13. *Adonijah shall be put to death this day:* both for his former conspiracy, he only having had a reprieve, and which was to continue on his good behaviour, and for his fresh attempt in forming treasonable schemes to ascend the throne if possible; wherefore, being a dangerous man, and no longer to be trusted, Solomon was determined to dispatch him at once, and being established in his kingdom, he had nothing to fear from those in the conspiracy with him.

Ver. 25. *And King Solomon sent by the hand of Benaiah the son of Jehoiada,* &c.] Orders to execute him, and proper persons to do it; perhaps some of the Cherethites and Pelethites under him, to assist at least in it: *and he fell upon him, that he died;* Benaiah rushed in upon him with his men, and thrust his sword into him, and killed him; executions used to be done in those times and countries by great personages, as the instances of Gideon, Doeg, and others, shew, and not by common executioners.

Ver. 26. *And unto Abiathar the priest said the king,* &c.] Who was either at court, or he sent for him, and thus addressed him: *get thee to Anathoth;* a city of the tribe of Benjamin, given to the priests, Josh. xxi. 18. of which place Abiathar might be originally, and whither he is bid to return: *unto thine own fields;* which belonged to him there, either by inheritance or purchase; and these he was to mind, and not perform the functions of his office, however as high-priest, and at Jerusalem, and the tabernacle there, and still less appear at court, or meddle with state-affairs, only to attend to his private domestic concerns: *for thou art worthy of death;* in joining with Adonijah in the lifetime of David, and setting him up as a king without his knowledge, and in opposition to Solomon, contrary to the will of God, and promise of David, of which he, being high-priest, can't be thought to be ignorant, and for his late confederacy with Adonijah, of which Solomon had knowledge: *but I will not at this time put thee to death;* he does not give him a full pardon, only a respite; suggesting, that should he be guilty of any overt act, he would be put to death another time, though not now: *because thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David my father;* when he fled from Absalom, 2 Sam. xv. 24. *and because thou hast been afflicted in all wherein my father was afflicted;* shared with him in all his afflictions under the persecutions of Saul, from the time he slew the priests at Nob, and at the rebellion of Absalom; in each of which he accompanied him, and suffered and sympathized with him.

Ver. 27. *So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest unto the Lord,* &c.] He deposed him from his office of high-priest, otherwise I suppose he might officiate as a common priest, at least in some of the branches of it; this was done by his own authority as a king, and not as a prophet, as Bellarmine vainly distinguishes; and not by the authority of the college of the priests, at the instance of Solomon, as Fortunatus Schacchus says [d], for which there is no foundation: *that he might fulfil the word of the Lord;* which he might do intentionally, having knowledge of it, or however eventually: *which he spake concerning the house of Eli in Shiloh;* of which house Abiathar was, and which, according to that prophecy, was to be demolished, and the priesthood translated from it, which was in the line of Ithamar, to another house, in the line of Eleazar; the word of the Lord, referred to, is in 1 Sam. ii. 31—36. and iii. 12—14.

Ver. 28. *Then tidings came to Joab,* &c.] Of the death of Adonijah, and the deposition of Abiathar: *for Joab had turned after Adonijah;* publicly appeared at his feast, when he was saluted king by him, and others, and privately gave him advice in the affair of Abishag: *though he turned not after Absalom;* did not

[d] Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. 3. c. 50. col. 1009.

join with him in his rebellion, but faithfully adhered to David; and yet both in his life-time, and after his death, acted the traitorous part in favour of Adonijah: Ben Gersom gives these words a different sense, as if he was blameworthy in both cases; that he turned after Adonijah to make him king, without consulting David, and having his consent; and he did not turn after Absalom, to deliver him from death, as David commanded him; but the former sense is best: *and Joab fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord;* which was at Gibeon, see 2 Chron. i. 3. it was four miles from Jerusalem to the north, situated on an hill [e]; according to Josephus [f], it was 40 furlongs, or five miles, from it: though Kimchi thinks it was the altar in Jerusalem he fled to, which was before the ark, in the tent David made for it; but that is never called the tabernacle of the Lord, only that of Moses: Joab's fleeing hither shewed guilt, and that he was in the conspiracy of Adonijah, and was conscious he deserved to die, and now expected it, since Adonijah was put to death; whilst he remained reprieved or pardoned, he thought himself safe, but now in danger, and therefore fled for it: *and caught hold of the horns of the altar;* see the note on ch. i. 50.

Ver. 29. *And it was told King Solomon that Joab was fled unto the tabernacle of the Lord,* &c.] This account was brought him very probably by some of his courtiers: *and, behold, he is by the altar;* to which he betook himself for refuge, laying hold on the horns of it: *then Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, go, fall upon him;* slay him; Josephus [g] says, the orders were to cut off his head; but perhaps it might be only to lay hold on him, and take him thence, and bring him to Solomon to have judgment passed upon him; for the Targum is, "exercise your power over "him," take him into custody; and certain it is that the first orders were not to slay him, at least upon the spot where he was.

Ver. 30. *And Benaiah came to the tabernacle of the Lord,* &c.] At Gibeon: *and said unto him;* that is, to Joab: *thus saith the king, come forth;* meaning, out of the tabernacle; which plainly shews that his orders were not to slay him in it: *and he said, nay, but I will die here;* since he must die, he chose to die there; but what was his reason for it is not so clear; the Jews, some of them, say, to save his goods, and that they might come to his heirs, which would have been forfeited to the crown if he had been tried and condemned in a court of judicature; others, that he might be buried with his ancestors, whereas, had he been sentenced to death by the court, he would have been buried in the common place of malefactors; but rather he thought, or at least hoped, he should not die at all; either that, by gaining time, Solomon might be prevailed upon to pardon him; or however that he would not defile that sacred place with his blood; or, if he should die, he chose to die there, as being a sacred place, and so might hope to receive some benefit from it, as to his future state, where sacrifices were offered to atone for sin: *and Benaiah brought the king word again, saying, thus said Joab, and thus he answered me;* told me he would not come out, and, if he must die, he would die there.

Ver. 31. *And the king said unto him, do as he hath said, and fall upon him, and bury him,* &c.] Let him die where he is, slay him upon the spot, and then bury him; not by the altar, but in his own sepulchre, as after related, that is, give orders to bury him there; for Benaiah being a priest, could not be concerned in the burial of him, and besides it was below the dignity of his office: *that thou mayest take away the innocent blood, which Joab shed, from me, and from the house of my father;* which had been too long connived at, and had called for vengeance; and now here was a proper opportunity upon fresh sins committed to avenge it, and so remove the guilt, which lay upon him and his father's house, for not inflicting deserved punishment on him for it.

Ver. 32. *And the Lord shall return his blood upon his own head,* &c.] By way of retaliation, blood for blood: *who fell upon two men more righteous and better than he;* after named; for though they had been in open rebellion against David, yet had submitted, and were reconciled and received into favour; and even their open crimes were not so bad, Solomon judged, as his secret treacherous murders of innocent persons in cool blood; they were men of more honour and integrity than he was, not so cruel and barbarous, though guilty in other respects: *and slew them with the sword, my father not knowing thereof;* this is observed to remove all suspicion, and which doubtless had been entertained by some, that David had an hand in their death; and that Joab did what he did with his knowledge and consent, and by his advice and order; they having been both concerned in rebellion against him, the one under Ish-bosheth, and the other under Absalom: to wit, *Abner the son of Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa the son of Jether, captain of the host of Judah;* the reason of the two hosts, of which they were captains or generals, being thus distinguished, is, because the tribes of Israel were on the side of Ish-bosheth, whose general Abner was, in opposition to Judah, who made David their king; and, on the other hand, they were the men of Judah that were first and chiefly in the rebellion of Absalom, whose general Amasa was; of the murder of these two men by Joab, see 2 Sam. iii. 27. and xx. 10.

Ver. 33. *Their blood shall therefore return upon the head of Joab, and upon the head of his seed for ever,* &c.] Not only upon Joab, but upon his posterity as long as there would be any; signifying, that Joab's death would not be a sufficient satisfaction, but the punishment of his murders would be continued to his offspring: see 2 Sam. iii. 29. *but upon David, and upon his seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne, shall there be peace for ever from the Lord;* such traitors and murderers being removed, peace and happiness might be expected and believed would attend the family and kingdom of David; whether this be considered as a prayer, or a prophecy, it can and will have its full accomplishment only in the kingdom of the Messiah the son of David, of the increase of whose government, and

[e] Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 98.
[f] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 11. sect. 7.
[g] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 1. sect. 4.

the peace thereof, there shall be no end, Isa. ix. 7. Psal. lxxii. 7.

Ver. 34. *So Benaiah the son of Jehoiada went up*, &c.] To Gibeon, which was a great high place, ch. iii. 4. *and fell upon him, and slew him*: at the altar; or, dragging him from it at some distance, drew his sword and slew him: *and he was buried in his own house in the wilderness*: not in his dwelling-house strictly taken, but in a garden or field adjoining to it, which house was in the wilderness; not a waste place uninhabited; for, as Kimchi observes, this word sometimes signifies a place uninhabited, though not tilled, but left for pasture of cattle; and in such a place might Joab's house be, at least his country-house, where he might have a farm, and fields, and cattle, as it is plain he had, 2 Sam. xiv. 30.

Ver. 35. *And the king put Benaiah the son of Jehoiada in his room over the host*, &c.] Advanced him from being captain of his life-guards to be general of the army: *and Zadok the priest did he put in the room of Abiathar*; from a common priest he promoted him to the high-priesthood; whereby that office was restored to its ancient line, the family or Eleazar, having been in the line of Ithamar for many years; and the prediction of the destruction of Eli's house, made 80 years ago, began to be fulfilled, 1 Sam. ii. 31—36.

Ver. 36. *And the king sent and called for Shimei*, &c.] Who had cursed his father; he lived at Bahurim, in the tribe of Benjamin, and from thence he sent for him to him, 2 Sam. xvi. 5. *and said unto him, build thee an house in Jerusalem and dwell there, and go not from thence any where*: the orders were to remove from Bahurim to Jerusalem, where he was to provide himself a dwelling-house, and there continue, and never go out of the city, at least not further on any side of it than it was to the brook Kidron, which was not more than half a mile from the city. This Solomon ordered, to prevent this man going about in the country sowing and stirring up sedition; and that he might be under his eye and notice, that should he commit any evil, and give him an opportunity of punishing him, he might do it as his father had directed him; and he might judge from the temper of the man, and indeed from the nature of men in general, that what they are forbidden they are the most prone unto, that he would transgress in this case, and give him an occasion against him.

Ver. 37. *For it shall be, on the day thou goest out*, &c.] Out of the city of Jerusalem: *and passest over the brook Kidron*: which is particularly mentioned, because this lay in his way to Bahurim, his native place; he must cross that to go to it, see 2 Sam. xv. 23. and xvi. 5. and where it might reasonably be supposed he would some time or another be inclined to go, either through business, or a desire to see it again: *thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die*: it may be depended on, as what will be most certainly the case; no reprieve nor pardon will be granted: *thy blood shall be on thine own head*: fair warning being given, he could blame none but himself, should he be guilty and suffer.

Ver. 38. *And Shimei said unto the king, the saying is good*, &c.] It was an act of goodness in the king, and what was good, grateful, and acceptable to him: for being sent for by him, and knowing how he had used his father, and hearing of several traitors being put to death, he expected this would have been his case; and wherefore, instead of being put to death, was only obliged to quit his habitation in the country, and come and live at Jerusalem, a pleasant and delightful city, and the metropolis of the nation, it was very agreeable to him: *as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do*; and he not only promised, but swore to it, which Solomon obliged him to, ver. 42. *and Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days*; he accordingly built or purchased a house in Jerusalem, and removed from Bahurim to it, where he lived for the space of three years, as follows.

Ver. 39. *And it came to pass, at the end of three years*, &c.] He had dwelt at Jerusalem: *that two of the servants of Shimei ran away to Achish the son of Maachah king of Gath*: he being a churlish, ill-natured man, always cursing or beating them, or imposing too hard service upon them, or not allowing them the necessaries of life; wherefore they broke away from him, and fled to Gath, and put themselves under the protection of the king of that place, who was now at peace with Israel, and a tributary to them: if this Achish was the same that was David's friend, who sheltered him when persecuted by Saul, he must be an old man; for that was between 40 or 50 years ago; and as he seems to be, since he is called the son of Maoch, 1 Sam. xxvii. 2. which may be thought to be the same with Maachah here.

Ver. 40. *And Shimei arose, and saddled his ass, and went to Gath to Achish to seek his servants*, &c.] And demand them; through the passion he was in with his servants, and his hurry to get them home, and the covetous disposition which prevailed on him, he might forget, or be tempted to neglect, the prohibition he was under not to go out of Jerusalem; or he might think Solomon had forgot it; or that he could come and go secretly without his knowledge; or if he should know of it, he might hope he would never punish him with death for so small a fault; however, so it was ordered by the providence of God leaving him to his own lust, and the temptations of Satan, that he might suffer just punishment for cursing David: *and Shimei went and brought his servants from Gath*: for the king being at peace with Israel, and a tributary to them also, did not choose to detain them, but delivered them up, lest it should be resented, and bring him into trouble.

Ver. 41. *And it was told Solomon*, &c.] By the spies he set to watch and observe his motions, or by some others who had seen him go out and return, and knew that it was contrary to the king's orders: *that Shimei had gone from Jerusalem to Gath, and was come again*; which was 34 miles from Jerusalem [b]; whereas his utmost bounds, whither he might go, was the brook Kidron, about half a mile from it.

Ver. 42. *And the king sent and called for Shimei*, &c.] He sent messengers to him, and by them ordered him to come to him, who accordingly came: *and he said unto him, did not I make thee swear by the*

[b] Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 124.

Lord: which, though not before mentioned, was no doubt done, nor did Shimei deny it: *and protested unto thee:* that is, declared before witnesses: *saying, know for certain, that on the day thou goest out:* namely, out of the city of Jerusalem: *and walkest abroad any whither:* further at most than the brook Kidron, or any other place equally distant from Jerusalem, on any side of it; for when he went to Gath, he did not go over Kidron, but went the road the reverse. Kidron lay to the east, and Gath to the west of Jerusalem: now the protestation made to him was, that if he went out of Jerusalem any way, *that thou shalt surely die:* it would be sure and certain death to him: *and thou saidst unto me, the word that I have heard is good;* not only he promised to obey it, and that with an oath, but declared it was agreeable and acceptable to him, and therefore the offence was a very aggravated one.

Ver. 43. *Why then hast thou not kept the oath of the Lord,* &c.] Which was made by him, and in his presence, and in which he was appealed to, and so by not keeping it was guilty of perjury: *and the commandment that I have charged thee with?* and so guilty of disobedience to him as his sovereign; for which two reasons he ought to die.

Ver. 44. *The king said moreover to Shimei,* &c.] Not as another reason for his putting him to death, but to remind him of his former sins, and to observe to him the providence of God in suffering him to fall into others, that justice might take place upon him for them also: *thou knowest all the wickedness which thine heart is privy to, that thou didst to David my father;* which conscience must bear witness to, and accuse him of, not only of the words and actions themselves uttered and done by him, but of the malice and wickedness from whence they sprung: *therefore the Lord shall return thy wickedness upon thine own head;* the punishment of it; which though not directly inflicted for that, yet in providence was brought about as a just retaliation for it.

Ver. 45. *And King Solomon* shall be *blessed,* &c.] With a long and peaceable reign, and large dominions, notwithstanding all the attempts to make him unhappy: *and the throne of David shall be established before the Lord for ever;* the kingdom of David over Judah for a long time, in his natural line; and the kingdom of Israel, spiritual Israel, for ever in his son the Messiah; and that in the presence of the Lord, he observing, ordering, and succeeding all things to that purpose.

Ver. 46. *So the king commanded Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, which went out,* &c.] From the presence of the king, and took Shimei with him to the proper place of execution, it not being fitting to execute him before the king: *and fell upon him, that he died;* put him to death by the sword: *and the kingdom was established in the hand of Solomon;* Adonijah the usurper, and Joab the general of the army, who took on his side, being both put to death; and Abiathar the high-priest deposed, who was in the same conspiracy; and Shimei, a dangerous and troublesome man, dispatched, there remained none to give any disturbance; so that he now sat easy and quiet on his throne, and things with respect to the civil government were on a firm and settled foundation.

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter relates the marriage of Solomon with Pharaoh's daughter, ver. 1. his piety and devotion, ver. 2, 3, 4. his prayer for wisdom and understanding, which was acceptable to God, who promised to grant his request, with an addition to it, ver. 5—15. an instance and proof of the wisdom given him in determining a case between two harlots brought before him, which greatly raised his reputation, and gave him reverence among his people, ver. 16—28.

Ver. 1. *And Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh king of Egypt,* &c.] Pharaoh was a common name of the kings of Egypt, of whom no mention is made in Scripture from the times of Moses until this time; which may seem strange, when it is considered that that kingdom was a potent one, and near the land of Canaan; but it was governed by a race of kings in this period of time, of whom, as Diodorus Siculus[i] says, there is nothing worthy of relation. The name of this Pharaoh, according to Eupolemus[k], an Heathen writer, was Vaphres; for he says, that David contracted a friendship with this king, and he relates some letters which passed between him and Solomon, concerning sending him workmen for the building of the temple, which are still preserved; but Calvisius[l] thinks it was Sesostris; what this affinity was is next observed: *and took Pharaoh's daughter;* that is, married her; who, according to Ben Gersom, was proselyted first to the Jewish religion; which is very probable, or otherwise it can hardly be thought Solomon would marry her; and as the 45th psalm, and the book of Canticles, supposed to be written on that occasion, seem to confirm; to which may be added, that it does not appear she ever enticed or drew him into idolatry; for, of all the idols his wives drew him into the worship of, no mention is made of any Egyptian deities. The Jews say[m] Rome was built the same day Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter, but without foundation: this was not Solomon's first wife; he was married to Naamah the Ammonitess before he was king, for he had Rehoboam by her a year before that; for Solomon reigned only 40 years, and Rehoboam, who succeeded him, was 41 years of age when he began to reign, ch. xi. 41. and xiv. 21. *and brought her into the city of David;* the fort of Zion: *until he had made an end of building his own house;* which was 13 years in building, and now seems to have been begun, ch. vii. 1. *and the house of the Lord;* the temple, which also, according to the Jewish chronology[n], was begun build-

[i] Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 42.
[k] Apud Euseb. Præparat. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30, 31, 32.
[l] Chronolog. p. 191, 192.

[m] T. Bab. Sabbat. fol. 56. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 21. 2.
[n] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 15. p. 41.

ing before his marriage of Pharaoh's daughter, and was seven years in building; and therefore this marriage must be in the 4th year of his reign; for then he began to build the temple, ch. vi. 37, 38. and so it must be, since Shimei lived three years in Jerusalem before he was put to death, after which this marriage was, ch. ii. 37. *and the wall of Jerusalem round about;* all which he built by raising a levy on the people, ch. ix. 15. and when these buildings were finished, he built a house for his wife, but in the mean while she dwelt in the city of David.

Ver. 2. *Only the people sacrificed in high places,* &c.] On the tops of their houses, on hills and mountains, and particularly at the high place in Gibeon, where the tabernacle was: *because there was no house built unto the name of the Lord until those days;* to which they were obliged to repair as afterwards, and there offer their sacrifices, as the Lord had commanded, Deut. xii. 5, 6.

Ver. 3. *And Solomon loved the Lord,* &c.] The worship of the Lord, as the Targum: and which he shewed by *walking in the statutes of David his father;* in which his father walked, which were the statutes of the Lord, or which he exhorted him to walk in, and were the same, ch. ii. 3. *only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places:* besides that at Gibeon, which it seems David did not.

Ver. 4. *And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there,* &c.] About 4 or 5 miles from Jerusalem; see the note on ch. ii. 28. *for that was the great high place;* not that the place itself might be higher than others that were used; but here were the tabernacle of Moses, and the altar; so that it was a more dignified place, and more sacred because of them: 1,000 *burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar;* the brazen altar of burnt-offerings there; not at one time, but on several days successively; though Jarchi says on one day; and which was a prodigious number, never was known the like, unless at the dedication of the temple, ch. viii. 63, 64.

Ver. 5. *In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night,* &c.] This was not a common natural dream, but an extraordinary, divine, and supernatural one, a prophetic dream, a night-vision, such as God used to speak in to his prophets; in which he had the full use of his reasoning powers, was under divine impressions, and in a spiritual frame of mind, and in the exercise of grace; it was not a mere dream that the Lord did appear to him, but he really did appear to him whilst sleeping and dreaming, by some display of his glory in some way or another: *and God said, ask what I shall give thee;* he did not hereby dream that God said to him, but he really did say this; bid him ask what he would and it should be given him; he knew what he designed to give, but he would have it asked of him, as he will be inquired of by all his people to do that for them which he has intended and provided for them; and it is encouragement enough for them to ask, since he has promised to give.

Ver. 6. *And Solomon said,* &c.] In his dream; not that he dreamt he said, when he did not; but he really said, as follows: *thou hast shewed unto thy servant David my father great mercy;* bestowed many favours and blessings upon him, both temporal and spiritual: *according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee;* in the truth of doctrine and worship, according to the revealed will and word of God, and which he observed with great strictness, living soberly, righteously, and godly, though not without failings and imperfections, yet with great integrity and sincerity; and this holy walk of his was not the cause of God's shewing mercy to him, nor was it in proportion to that, but what he was influenced to by the mercy that was shewn him: *and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day;* a son to be his successor, meaning himself; which was an additional favour to all the rest, and was in reserve, and now bestowed, as time had made to appear.

Ver. 7. *And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father,* &c.] Removed by death, in whose stead he reigned by the appointment of God, and through his overruling providence, notwithstanding the attempts made to prevent it, and therefore to God he ascribes it: *and I am but a little child;* not in age and stature, but in knowledge and understanding; for though his father called him a wise man, and he was judged so by others, and really was one, yet in his own opinion and thoughts of himself, such was his modesty and humility, that he was but a child as to his intellectual powers and capacity for government: some understand this of age; and the Jews commonly say he was but twelve years of age when he was anointed king, which they reckon thus; that he was born at the time that Amnon ravished Tamar, two years after which was Absalom's sheep-shearing, when he slew Amnon, on which he fled to Geshur, and was there three years; here are five years; he returned thence and was at Jerusalem two years; lo, seven years; he rebelled and was slain, and after that there was a famine of three years, which make ten; and in the year following David numbered the people, which was nine or ten months in doing; the next year he died, which was the fortieth of his reign, in all twelve years: so reckon Jarchi and Kimchi; and Eupolemus, an Heathen writer [n], is express for it, who says, that David, when he had reigned forty years, delivered up the kingdom to Solomon his son, being then twelve years of age, which he must receive from the tradition of the Jews; the same is said by several of the ancient fathers, as Ignatius [o] and Jerom [p]; but this cannot be fact; for, if so, his son Rehoboam must be born to him when he was but eleven years of age; see the note on ver. 5. it is best therefore to interpret this of the sense he had of the weakness of his understanding, and of his incapacity for government, as the next clause explains it: *I know not* how *to go out or come in;* in the administration of government, to execute his office as a king, in allusion to shepherds, as kings are sometimes called, going in and out before their sheep.

[n] Apud Euseb. ut supra.
[o] Epist. ad Magnesios, p. 141. Ed. Voss.
[p] Epist. Rufino & Vitali, fol. 24, 25. tom. 2.

Ver. 8. *And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen*, &c.] To be his special and peculiar people above all people on the earth; this is not to be understood locally, though Jerusalem, where his palace was, was in the middle of the land; but of the exercise of his office, he being placed over the people, and among them, and having the care and inspection of them: *a great people, that cannot be numbered and counted for multitude*; being for number as the stars in the sky, and as the sand upon the seashore, as had been promised.

Ver. 9. *Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart, to judge thy people*, &c.] Not an understanding of things spiritual, nor of things natural, though both were given him, but of things political, what related to the civil government, that he might be able to judge or rule the people of Israel in the best manner: *that I may discern between good and bad*; not merely between moral good and evil, of which he had a discernment; but between right and wrong in any case or controversy that came before him between man and man, that so he might be able to pass a right sentence, and do justice to every one: *for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?* who are so very numerous, and have so many causes to be heard and tried, and those many of them very intricate and difficult; so that no man is equal to such arduous work, unless he has more than an ordinary capacity given him by the Lord.

Ver. 10. *And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing.*] Understanding in the affairs of civil government; since he had respect not to his own private benefit and advantage, but the good of the people he governed, and the honour and glory of God, who had set him over them, they being his chosen people, and whose vicegerent he was.

Ver. 11. *And God said unto him*, &c.] Being yet in a dream: *because thou hast asked this thing*; wisdom for government: *and hast not asked for thyself long life*; which is naturally desired by men, and always reckoned a great temporal blessing, and especially to be wished for by a king living in great pomp and splendour: *neither hast asked riches for thyself*; to support his grandeur; for though David his father had left him much, yet not for himself, but for the building of the temple: *nor hast asked the life of thine enemies*; victory over them, and to have it in his power to take away their lives when he pleased; which kings, and especially tyrants, are desirous of, such as are ambitious, haughty, and revengeful: *but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment*; where the right of a cause lay, that so he might make a right judgment of it, and pass a righteous sentence, a sentence not to the injury of any.

Ver. 12. *Behold, I have done according to thy words*, &c.] Expressed in his request; he not only promised he would grant him it, but he had already done it, or at least had begun to do it: *lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart*; had greatly increased his wisdom and understanding in things political, things respecting civil government, and also in things natural, in the knowledge of the things of nature, as appears from ch. iv. 33. and of all arts and sciences: *so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee*: which some restrain to kings, and to the kings of Israel; that there were none of the kings before him, as Saul and David, like him for wisdom, nor any of the kings of Judah and Israel after him: but it may include all men of all nations in the world, since he is said to be wiser than all men; and some other nations, and particular men of other nations, famous for wisdom, are expressly mentioned as inferior to him, ch. iv. 30, 31. but then this must be understood of men since the fall; for Adam, doubtless, had a larger stock of knowledge and understanding in his state of innocence than ever Solomon had; and it must be restrained to political and natural knowledge; for, as for divine knowledge, Kimchi excepts Moses; and we may well except the apostles of Christ for spiritual and evangelical knowledge; and as for our Lord, the antitype of Solomon, he is greater than him in all kind of knowledge, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge being hid in him, see Matt. xii. 42. Col. ii. 3.

Ver. 13. *And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked*, &c.] That is, intended to give him, and now promised it, and was about to bestow it on him: *both riches and honour*; the former through the presents and tribute of the nations about him, and his trading to foreign parts; and the latter chiefly through his wisdom, the fame of which was spread everywhere: *so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days*; that is, none like him for riches and honour among all the kings of the neighbouring nations so long as he lived; though there might be kings in after-times as rich, or richer than he, as Crœsus, Alexander, &c. but then not so honourable as he; so, putting both together, there were no kings like him before or after, and especially if wisdom be added to them, as in 2 Chron. i. 12.

Ver. 14. *And if thou wilt walk in my ways*, &c.] Prescribed and directed to in his word: *to keep my statutes and my commandments*; ceremonial, moral, and judicial: *as thy father David did walk*; which Solomon himself had obsesved, ver. 6. and whose walk was worthy of his imitation: *then I will lengthen thy days*; the other promises of riches and honour are absolute, but this of long life conditional, depending upon his holy walk and conversation; and hence, because he failed in this the Jews observe he did not attain to long life, dying, as they suppose, at 52 years of age; which is grounded on a wrong hypothesis, that he was but 12 yeare of age when he began to reign, and he reigned 40 years, as before observed.

Ver. 15. *And Solomon awoke, and, behold, it was a dream*, &c.] Not that it was nothing but a dream, a natural one, a vain and empty one, but a divine and supernatural one, a dream of prophecy, as the Jews call it, or a prophetic dream; a true one, which had its full accomplishment in him, the truth of which he perceived as soon as he awoke; for he found himself possessed of such a measure of wisdom and knowledge he never had before, which occasioned the thanksgiving and joy next expressed: *and he came to Jerusalem*; from Gibeon, accompanied by his nobles and servants: *and stood before the ark of the covenant of the Lord*; which was in a tent David had pitched for it there, 2 Sam. vi. 17. here he stood with holy reve-

rence, as in the presence of the Lord, and as a servant of his, to minister to him, and as a worshipper of him, with a heart full of gratitude for the great things he had done for him, and promised to him: *and offered up burnt-offerings, and offered peace-offerings;* by way of thankfulness for his quiet settlement in the kingdom, for the Lord's appearance to him at Gibeon, and for what he had already given, and promised to give: *and made a feast to all his servants;* in a way of joy and gladness for the above favours: this feast was either the part of the peace-offerings he offered, which belonged to the offerer to eat with his friends, or this was a special feast made at his own palace for his courtiers.

Ver. 16. *Then came there two women* that were *harlots unto the king,* &c.] The same day, as Abarbinel thinks, the night before which the Lord had appeared to Solomon; this came to pass through the providence of God, that there should be immediately an instance and proof of the wisdom and understanding the Lord had given to Solomon; these women, according to the Targum, were victuallers or inn-keepers; and so Ben Gersom thinks they were sellers of food, as Rahab; though he observes it is possible they might prostitute themselves: this may be said in their favour, that common prostitutes do not usually bear children, or, when they do, take no care of them, have no affection for them, and much less are fond of them, as these seem to be; but, on the other hand, no mention being made of their husbands, and living together in one house, and alone, and being impudent, brawling, and litigious, give great suspicion of the truth of the character they bear in our version and others: *and stood before him;* to lay their case before him, and each plead their own cause; it may be, it had been tried in another court before, and could not be determined, and so was brought to the king; and, if so, the wisdom of Solomon was the more conspicuous, in deciding it in the manner he did.

Ver. 17. *And the one woman said,* &c.] Who was the plaintiff: *O my lord, I and this woman dwell in one house;* pointing to the defendant, who stood by her: *and I was delivered of a child with her in the house;* she being present at the delivery, and she only, as it should seem.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, the third day after I was delivered,* &c.] Of a child, as before expressed: *that this woman was delivered also;* of another child; and being both of the same sex, both sons, as afterwards appears; and being so nearly of an age, it was difficult to distinguish them; *and we were together;* there was *no stranger with us in the house, save we two in the house;* so that in this trial no evidences could be produced on either side.

Ver. 19. *And this woman's child died in the night,* &c.] Whether the same night following the day it was born is not certain; *because she overlaid it;* or laid upon it, being heavy through sleep, and not knowing what she did, turned herself upon it, and smothered it; because it had no previous illness, or any marks of any disease it could be thought to die of, and perhaps there might be some of its being overlaid.

Ver. 20. *And she arose at midnight,* &c.] Perceiving what she had done, that she had overlaid her child, and it was dead; either through fear of punishment inflicted on persons thus negligent, or because of the disgrace of it, taking no more care of her child, she made use of the following stratagem: *and took my son from beside me, while thine handmaid slept;* this served to puzzle the cause, for how could she know what she did when she was asleep? this she could not prove, it was only conjecture: *and laid it in her bosom, and laid her dead child in my bosom;* where she found it in the morning; but still what proof was there that it was the other woman's, and not her own, that lay dead in her bosom?

Ver. 21. *And when I rose in the morning to give my child suck,* &c.] As she used to do: *behold, it was dead;* her own child, as she thought at first: *but when I had considered it in the morning;* it was towards morning, or just at break of day, when she arose to suckle it, and found it dead: but when it was broad day, and the light of the morning was increased, she more narrowly viewed it, and by its features, or some marks she had observed; *behold, it was not my son which I did bear;* she was fully satisfied it was not her own child, but another.

Ver. 22. *And the other woman said,* &c.] The defendant: *nay, but the living* is *my son, and the dead* is *thy son;* she denied what the other said, but offered nothing in proof of it: *and this said;* she who was the plaintiff replied in the same language: *no; but the dead* is *thy son, and the living* is *my son;* without being able to add any thing in confirmation of what she had deposed: *thus they spake before the king;* several times, over and over again, what is before expressed, having nothing to produce on either side in proof of their assertions; so that it was very difficult to determine to whom the living child belonged.

Ver. 23. *Then said the king,* &c.] As judge, summing up what had been said on both sides, which were only bare assertions without proof; the one affirming what the other denied, and the other denying what the other affirmed: *the one saith, this* is *my son that liveth, and thy son* is *the dead; and the other saith nay; but thy son* is *the dead, and my son* is *the living;* this he repeated to shew to all present that no determination could be made by what had been said on each side, and that some other method must be taken.

Ver. 24. *And the king said, bring me a sword,* &c.] The design of which might not at first appear to the court, and it might be thought strange, and greatly wondered at: what should be the meaning of it: *and they brought a sword before the king;* his commands were obeyed.

Ver. 25. *And the king said,* &c.] To one of his officers: *divide the living child in two;* not that he meant it should be actually done, though it might at first be thought he really intended it, and so strike the minds of some with horror, as it did, however, the mother; but he ordered this, to try the affections of the women, and thereby come to the true knowledge of the affair; though some think he knew it before by their countenances and manner of speech, but that he was desirous all present might see it, and be satisfied of it: *and give half to the one, and half to the other;* since both claimed it.

Ver. 26. *Then spake the woman, whose the living*

child was, unto the king, &c.] In haste, and with great vehemency, lest the executioner should at once dispatch it: *(for her bowels yearned upon her son:)* not being able to bear to see his life taken away: *and she said, O my lord:* or, *on me*[a], *my lord:* let the sin, the lie that I have told, be on me, and the punishment of it; she rather chose to be reckoned a liar, and to endure any punishment such an offence deserved, than that her child should be cut asunder: *give her the living child, and in no wise slay it:* being willing to part with her interest in it, rather than it should be put to death: *but the other said, let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it:* for as she knew it was not her own, she had no affection for it, nor desire to have it; chose rather to be clear of the expense of keeping and nursing it, and would, by its being put to death, be avenged of her adversary, who had brought this cause before the king.

Ver. 27. *Then the king answered and said, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it*, &c.] That is, to her who desired it might not be slain, but rather be given to her who had no right to it: *she is the mother thereof:* which might be strongly concluded from her compassion for it, her eagerness and earnestness to have its life spared, and from the indifference of the other, yea, from her cruelty and barbarity in moving to have it divided.

Ver. 28. *And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged*, &c.] In the above case; the decision of it was divulged throughout the land, and the fame of it was spread everywhere: *and they feared the king:* reverenced him as a wise, judicious, and faithful king, and feared to do any thing of a criminal nature, as perceiving that he was so sagacious and penetrating, that he would discover it quickly, and bring them to shame and punishment: *for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him to do judgment:* that God had put more than ordinary wisdom into him, to make a right judgment in causes that came before him, and finish them in the most just and equitable manner.

CHAP. IV.

AS in the preceding chapter we have a proof of the wisdom and understanding which the Lord gave to Solomon, as promised, so in this an account is given of the riches and honour he was possessed of; of him as king over all Israel, and of his princes, ver. 1—6. of the providers of food for his household in the several parts of the land, ver. 7—19. of the largeness and extent of his dominions, and of the peace and prosperity thereof, ver. 20, 21, 24, 25. of his daily provisions for his household and for his cattle, ver. 22, 23, 26, 27, 28. and of his superior wisdom and knowledge to all others in all nations, which brought some out of all to hear it, ver. 29—34.

Ver. 1. *So King Solomon was king over all Israel.*] As David his father was not at first, only over Judah, and as Solomon's successors were not, after the division of the kingdom under his son Rehoboam; though this seems to have a particular respect to what is related in the preceding chapter concerning the wisdom of Solomon, for which he was so famous, that he reigned by the consent of all, and in the hearts of all the people of Israel.

Ver. 2. *And these were the princes which he had*, &c.] That were in office about him, in the highest posts of honour and trust: *Azariah the son of Zadok the priest;* or rather his grandson, since Ahimaaz was the son of Zadok, and Azariah the son of Ahimaaz, 1 Chron. vi. 8, 9. though another Zadok may be meant, and his son not a priest but a prince, as the word may be rendered, and was Solomon's prime minister of state, and the rather, since he is mentioned first.

Ver. 3. *Elihoreph and Ahiah, the sons of Shisha, scribes*, &c.] Their father Shisha, the same with Sheva, was scribe only in David's time; and he being dead very probably, both his sons were continued in the office as secretaries of state, Solomon having more business for such an office, see 2 Sam. xx. 25. *Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder;* who was in the same office in the times of David, and now held it under Solomon, 2 Sam. viii. 16. and xx. 24.

Ver. 4. *And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the host*, &c.] General of the army in the room of Joab, ch. ii. 35. *and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests;* so they were when Solomon came to the throne; but Abiathar was deposed by him after some time, though he might retain the name afterwards, and be employed, as Ben Gersom thinks, in case of necessity, in the room of Zadok, or, however, be employed as a common priest at Jerusalem, upon a reconciliation with Solomon; though Kimchi thinks another Abiathar is meant, which is not so likely.

Ver. 5. *And Azariah the son of Nathan was over the officers*, &c.] The twelve officers who provided food for Solomon's household after mentioned: *and Zabud the son of Nathan;* another of the sons of Nathan the prophet; for he being a principal instrument of setting Solomon on the throne, had interest enough to promote his sons to the chief places of honour and trust: and this here was *principal officer*, and *the king's friend;* a chief minister about him, very intimate with him, that kept him company, privately conversed with him, was in his secrets, and admitted to great privacy and nearness to him.

Ver. 6. *And Ahishar was over the household*, &c.] Steward of the household: *and Adoniram the son of Abda was over the tribute*, over those that collected the tribute, as the Targum, whether from the people of Israel or other nations, or both; this man was in the same post in David's time, 2 Sam. xx. 24.

Ver. 7. *And Solomon had twelve officers over all Israel*, &c.] Not with respect to the twelve tribes of Israel, for it does not appear that they had each of them a tribe under them, but some particular places

[a] בי in me, Montanus; so Abarbinel.

in a tribe; but with respect to the twelve months of the year, in which each took his turn: *which provided victuals for the king and his household: each man his month in a year made provision*: furnished food of all sorts out of the country in which they presided for the space of one month in a year; by which means there was always a plenty of provisions at court for the king's family, and for all strangers that came and went, and no one part of the land was burdened or drained, nor the price of provisions raised; these seem to be the twelve phylarchi, or governors of tribes, Eupolemus[r], an Heathen writer, speaks of, before whom, and the high-priest, David delivered the kingdom to Solomon; though in that he was mistaken, that they were in being then, since these were officers of Solomon's creating.

Ver. 8. *And these are their names*, &c.] Or rather the names of their fathers: for of many of them not their own names but their fathers' names are given, as being well known: *the son of Hur, in Mount Ephraim*: a fruitful country in the tribe of Ephraim, from whence this officer was to furnish the king with provisions for one month in the year.

Ver. 9. *The son of Deker in Makaz*, &c.] A place in the tribe of Dan, on the borders of it: *and in Shaalbim, and Beth-shemesh, and Elon-beth-hanan*: all in the same tribe, see Josh. xix. 41, 42, 43.

Ver. 10. *The son of Hesed in Aruboth*, &c.] Which seems to have been in the tribe of Judah by the places that follow: *to him* pertained *Sochoh*: there were two places of this name in that tribe, Josh. xv. 35, 48. *and all the land of Hepher*: there was an Hepher in the land of Canaan, which was a royal city in the times of the Canaanites, Josh. xii. 17. and there was an Hepher, the name of a man, a descendant of Judah, to whom, very probably, this land belonged, 1 Chron. iv. 6. unless it can be thought to be the portion of land given to the daughters of Hepher, Josh. xvii. 3.

Ver. 11. *The son of Abinadab in all the region of Dor*, &c.] The same with Dor and her towns, which belonged to the half-tribe of Manasseh, on this side Jordan, Josh. xvii. 11. *which had Taphath the daughter of Solomon to wife*: not when he was first put into this office, when, in all probability, Solomon had not a daughter marriageable; but behaving well in it, in process of time he bestowed a daughter of his on him.

Ver. 12. *Baana the son of Ahilud*, to him pertained *Taanach and Megiddo, and all Beth-shean*, &c.] All which were places in the tribe of Manasseh, Josh. xvii. 11. *which is by Zartanah beneath Jezreel*; so described, to distinguish it, as is thought, from Zaretan in Josh. iii. 16. and the country this officer presided over reached also from *Beth-shean to Abel-meholah*, even *unto* the place that is *beyond Jokneam*; the two first of these were in the tribe of Manasseh, and the last in the tribe of Zebulun, Josh. xix. 11.

Ver. 13. *The son of Geber in Ramoth-gilead*, &c.] A city in the tribe of Gad, and was a city of refuge, Josh. xx. 8. *to him* pertained *the towns of Jair the son of Manasseh, which are in Gilead*, of which see Numb. xxxii. 41. *to him also* pertained *the region of Argob, which is in Bashan, threescore great cities with walls, and brasen bars*; called by Josephus[s] Ragaba, beyond Jordan; see the note on Deut. iii. 4.

Ver. 14. *Ahinadab the son of Iddo* had *Mahanaim*.] Another city on the other side Jordan, where both Ish-bosheth and David sometimes dwelt, 2 Sam. ii. 8. and xvii. 24. this and the places adjacent must be very fruitful, since this officer was to furnish the king with provisions for a month once a year from hence.

Ver. 15. *Ahimaaz* was *in Naphtali*, &c.] Out of that tribe he made a monthly provision annually: *he also took Basmath the daughter of Solomon to wife*; another daughter of Solomon's, in course of time, see ver. 11.

Ver. 16. *Baanah the son of Hushai* was *in Asher*, &c.] In the tribe of Asher; a very plentiful tribe, particularly for oil; this officer was perhaps the son of Hushai, the Archite, David's friend, and, it may be, promoted for his sake: *and in Aloth*; which signifies ascensions, mountains went upon by steps; near to this place was an high mountain, called the ladder of Tyre[t]; perhaps that and the parts adjacent may be meant here.

Ver. 17. *Jehoshaphat the son of Paruah in Issachar*.] In the tribe of Issachar; he had the whole tribe at his command to make a monthly provision out of for the king once a year, as had the preceding officer and the following one.

Ver. 18. *Shimei the son of Elah in Benjamin*.] So described, to distinguish him from that Shimei that cursed David, who was of the same tribe.

Ver. 19. *Geber the son of Uri* was *in the country of Gilead*, &c.] Which was beyond Jordan, and inhabited by the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh; this must be understood of all the country, excepting what was under the jurisdiction of the son of Geber, ver. 13. and which had been *the country of Sihon king of the Amorites, and of Og king of Bashan*; until it was taken from them by Moses: *and he was the only officer which was in the land*; which is not true of Geber; for there was another officer in the land of Gilead besides him, the son of Geber before observed, unless it should be rendered *in that land*, in that part of the land he had; but then the same might have been observed of all the rest of the officers: the words may be rendered best, *and there was one officer in the land*; which some understand of one officer over all the rest, Azariah the son of Nathan, ver. 5. but it seems best what other Jewish writers say[u], that this was another officer appointed for the intercalated month; when there were 13 months in the year, there was an officer in the land fixed for that month to make provision out of the land; perhaps any where, where he pleased, being not limited to any certain place. These 12 providers for Solomon's family were emblems of the twelve apostles of Christ, appointed to provide food for his family, the church; and if you add to them the Apostle Paul, it will make 13, as this officer did.

Ver. 20. *Judah and Israel were many, as the sand which is by the sea in multitude*, &c.] Being blessed with great fruitfulness in their families, and having no pestilential disease among them, nor wars to lessen their number, and so the promise to Abraham was ful-

[r] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 30.
[s] Antiqu. l. 13. c. 15. sect. 5.

[t] Vid. Joseph. de Bello Jud. l. 2. c. 10. sect. 2.
[u] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 12. 1.

filled, Gen. xxii. 17. and which was an emblem of Christ's spiritual subjects, especially in the latter day, whom Solomon was a type of, see Hos. i. 10. *eating, and drinking, and making merry*; having a large increase of the fruits of the earth, and in no fear of any enemies; expressive of the spiritual joy of believers in the kingdom of Christ, and under the word and ordinances, Cant. ii. 3, 4. and v. 1. Rom. v. 2, 3, 11. and xiv. 17.

Ver. 21. *And Solomon reigned over all kingdoms*, &c.] Not only over Judah and Israel, but all people round about him, they standing in fear of him; or who brought him presents, or paid tribute to him, which was an acknowledgment of superiority over them, and doing homage to him: *from the river unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt*; that is, from the river Euphrates, as the Targum, which was the border of his proper domains to the east, to Palestine, inhabited by the Philistines, which lay to the west, and as far as the border of Egypt, which was the southern boundary; a like and larger extent of Christ's kingdom is given, Psal. lxxii. 8. Zech. ix. 10. *and they brought presents, and served Solomon all the days of his life*; this explains in what sense other kingdoms besides were ruled by Solomon, and subject to him; of Christ his antitype, see Psal. lxxii. 10, 11.

Ver. 22. *And Solomon's provision for one day was 30 measures of fine flour*, &c.] The measure here used was the *corus*, or *cor*, the same with the homer, which was equal to ten ephahs, and, according to Bishop Cumberland [w], held 75 wine-gallons and five pints, and somewhat more; by which may be known how many gallons of fine flour these 30 measures held, which were all consumed in one day: *and 60 measures of meal*; of a coarser sort, for the servants, not so finely dressed; the same measure is here used as before; and it is observed by some, that one cor is equivalent to 648 Roman pounds, and allowing to one man two pounds a day for his food, there would be food enough for 29,160 men out of 90 times 648, or 58,320 pounds [x]. Others exaggerate the account; Vilalpandus says it would have sufficed 48,600 persons; Seth Calvisius 54,000, and Salianus 70,000 [y]; the Jews say [z] that he had 60,000 that ate at his table; that is, who were maintained at his court.

Ver. 23. *Ten fat oxen*, &c.] Such as were kept up in the stall and fatted: *and 20 oxen out of the pastures*; which were killed as they were taken from thence, and not put up to be fed: *and 100 sheep*; out of the folds: *beside harts, and roe-bucks, and fallow deer*; which were clean creatures, according to the Levitical law, Deut. xiv. 5. these were hunted in fields, or taken out of the park, or were presents from other countries; so that here was plenty of beef, mutton, and venison: for the spiritual application of this to the antitypical Solomon, and his provisions, see Matt. xxii. 4. *and fatted fowl*; such as we call capons [a]; some Jewish writers [b], because of the likeness of sound in the word here used, take them to be Barbary fowls, or such as were brought from that country: there is a sort of birds called βαρβαροι, which were without a voice, that neither heard men, nor knew their voice [c].

Ver. 24. *For he had dominion over all* the region *on this side the river*, &c.] Or beyond the river Euphrates, in the sense before given, ver. 21. which accounts for the plenty of provisions he had, and the revenue with which he supported such a table he kept: *from Tiphsah even to Azzah*; or Gaza, one of the five principalities of the Philistines. Tiphsah is thought to be the Thapsacus of Pliny [d], which both he and Ptolemy [e] place near the river Euphrates, since called Amphipolis; the former places it in Syria, the latter in Arabia Deserta; and which Strabo [f], from Eratosthenes, describes as 4,800 furlongs from Babylon, and from the place where Mesopotamia begins not less than 2,000 furlongs: *over all the kings on this side the river*; the river Euphrates, or beyond it, in the sense before explained, as the kings of Syria, Arabia, *&c. and he had peace on all sides round about him*; in which he was a type of Christ, the Prince of peace.

Ver. 25. *And Judah and Israel dwelt safely*, &c.] Without fear of any injury done to their persons or properties by any enemy; which is, and will be, more abundantly fulfilled in Christ, the antitype of Solomon, Jer. xxiii. 5. *every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree*; which were principal trees in the land of Judea, put for all the rest; and the phrase denotes the happy, safe, quiet, full, and peaceable enjoyment of all outward blessings, and is used of the times of the Messiah, Mic. iv. 4. *from Dan even to Beer-sheba*; which were the two extremities of the land of Israel, north and south: *all the days of Solomon*; so long this peace and safety continued, there being no wars in his time.

Ver. 26. *And Solomon had 40,000 stalls for horses*, &c.] In 2 Chron. ix. 25, it is only 4,000; and therefore some think that here is a mistake of the copier, of *arbaim*, 40, for *arbah*, 4; which it is thought might be through divine permission, in such lesser matters, without any prejudice to the authority of the Scriptures in matters of faith and practice; but without supposing this, a reconciliation may be made, by observing, that here the writer, as Ben Gersom notes, gives the number of the horses that were in the stables, which were 40,000, there the stables themselves, which were 4,000, ten horses in a stable; or here he numbers the stalls, which were 40,000, and there the stables, which were 4,000, there being ten stalls in each; and the word there has the letter *yod* in it more than here, which is the numerical letter for *ten*, and may point thereunto; or here the writer speaks of all the stalls for horses Solomon had throughout the kingdom, there of those only he had in Jerusalem. Benjamin of Tudela [g] affirms, that these stalls, or stables, which Solomon built very strong of large stones, are still in being in Jerusalem, and that there is

[w] Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 3. p. 86.
[x] Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. p. 516.
[y] Vid. Witsii Miscellan. tom. 2. exercit. 10. sect. 26.
[z] Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 8. 2.
[a] So David de Pomis, Tzemach David, fol. 12. 3. and some in Kimchi in loc.

[b] Baal Aruch & R. Elias Levit. Tishbi, in voce ברבר.
[c] Scholia in Aristoph. Aves, p. 550.
[d] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 24.
[e] Geograph. l. 5. c. 19.
[f] Geograph. l. 16. p. 514.
[g] Itinerar. p. 43.

no building to be seen like it any where; but no other writer speaks of them; nor is it at all probable that they should remain: *for his chariots, and* 12,000 *horsemen:* some of the said stalls of horses were for his chariots, to draw in them for various uses, of which he had 1,400, ch. x. 26. and others to mount 12,000 horsemen, who were placed in divers parts, to defend the kingdom.

Ver. 27. *And these officers provided victuals for King Solomon, &c.*] The 12 before mentioned; and this is repeated here, after the account of his horses, to observe, that they provided for them also, as well as for the sake of what follows; that the large provision made by them was not only for Solomon's family and domestic servants, but for strangers from different parts, who came upon messages to him, or to visit him, and to behold the splendour of his court: *and for all that came to Solomon's table;* which was an open table for all comers, as there were some from all parts of the earth, ver. 34. *every man in his month;* each of the 12 officers provided food in the month assigned to him: *they lacked nothing:* they always had enough to supply the king with, and they failed not in the performance of their duty, nor came short of their salaries, being fully and punctually paid them.

Ver. 28. *Barley also, and straw for the horses and dromedaries, &c.*] Or rather mules, by comparing the passage with 2 Chron. ix. 24. the particular kind of creatures meant is not agreed on; though all take them to be a swifter sort of creatures than horses; or the swifter of horses, as race-horses or posts horses: barley was for their provender, that being the common food of horses in those times and countries, and in others, as Bochart[h] has shewn from various writers; and in the Misnah[i] it is called the food of beasts; and Solomon is said to have every day for his own horses 200,000 Neapolitan measures of it, called *tomboli*[k]; so the Roman soldiers, the horse were allowed a certain quantity of barley for their horses every morning, and sometimes they had money instead of it, which they therefore called *hordiarium*[l]; and the *straw* was for the litter of them: these *brought they unto the place;* where the officers *were;* not where the king was, as the Vulgate Latin version; where Solomon was, as the Arabic version, that is, in Jerusalem; nor where the officers were in their respective jurisdictions, as our version supplies it, which would be bringing them to themselves; but to the place where the beasts were, whether in Jerusalem, or in any other parts of the kingdom: *every man according to his charge;* which he was monthly to perform.

Ver. 29. *And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, &c.*] In things natural, moral, divine, and spiritual, and that not slight and superficial, but exceeding deep, and large beyond expression; and this he had not from the acuteness of his genius merely, nor from his industry and diligence: but by the gift of God, as whatsoever solid wisdom and understanding is in any man, it is from the liberal hand of God, the fountain of wisdom, Jam. i. 5. *and largeness of heart, even as sand that is on the sea-shore;* he had a genius and capacity to receive any thing; his knowledge was vast and comprehensive; it reached to and included things innumerable, as the sand of the sea; there was scarce any thing under the heavens, or on the earth, and in the sea, but came within the compass of it, as what are after mentioned shew.

Ver. 30. *And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east, &c.*] The Arabians, and Persians, famous for wisdom, and who lay to the east of the land of Judea; whose wisdom lay in the knowledge of the stars, in divination by birds, and soothsaying[m]: *and all the wisdom of Egypt;* which it was eminent for in the times of Moses, and in which he was learned and well-skilled, Acts vii. 22. and hence in later times the philosophers of the Gentiles travelled to get knowledge, as Pherecydes, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Plato, and others to Egypt, said to be the mother of arts and sciences[n].

Ver. 31. *For he was wiser than all men, &c.*] Not only that lived in his time, but in ages past since the fall of Adam, and in times to come, especially in natural wisdom and knowledge, in all the branches of it; for though some men excel in some part of knowledge, yet not in all, as Solomon did; *than Ethan the Ezrahite, and Heman, and Chalcol, and Darda, the sons of Mahol;* men of the same names are said to be sons of Zerah, grandson of Judah, 1 Chron. ii. 6. wherefore these are either other men, or their father had two names; or Mahol here may be an appellative, and describe the character of these men, and point at what they were famous for, as that they were sons of music, piping, and dancing, as Mahol may signify; the Jews have a tradition[o], that Ethan is Abraham, and Heman Moses, and Chalcol Joseph: *and his fame was in all nations round about;* not for his riches and grandeur only, but chiefly for his wisdom.

Ver. 32. *And he spake 3,000 proverbs, &c.*] Wise sayings, short and pithy sentences, instructive in morality and civil life; these were not written as the book of Proverbs, but spoken only, and were taken from his lips, and spread by those that heard them for the use of others, but in process of time were lost; whereas the above book, being written under divine inspiration, is preserved: *and his songs were 1,005;* some things that were useful to improve the minds and morals of men he delivered in verse, to make them more pleasant and agreeable, that they might be the more easily received and retained in memory; but of all his songs, the most excellent is the book of Canticles, called *the Song of Songs,* being divine and spiritual, and dictated by the inspiration of the spirit of God: he was both a moral philosopher and poet, as well as a botanist and naturalist, and well-skilled in medicine, as the following words suggest.

Ver. 33. *And he spake of trees, &c.*] Of all trees, herbs, and plants, of the nature, virtues, and use of

[h] Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 9. col. 158, 159. Vid. Homer. Iliad. 4. ver. 191. and Iliad. 8. ver. 560.
[i] Sotah, c. 9. sect. 1.
[k] Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 19. 2.

[l] Vid. Valtrinum de re Militar. Roman. l. 2. c. 15. p. 236.
[m] Midrash Kohelet, fol. 70. 3.
[n] Macrob. in Somn. Scip. c. 19. 21. & Saturnal. l. 1. c. 15.
[o] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in 2 Reg. fol. 80. I.

them: *from the cedar-tree that is in Lebanon;* a mountain on the northern border of Judea, famous for cedars, the tallest and largest of trees: *even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall;* which grew about Jerusalem, and in the mountains of it, as an Arabic writer testifies [p], the lowest and least herb; so that what is between the cedar and hyssop include trees and plants of every kind and sort: whether the same herb we call hyssop is meant, is not certain; some take it to be mint; others marjoram; some houseleek; others the wall-flower; Levinus Lemnius [q] supposes it to be Adiantum, or maiden hair: the Targum interprets it allegorically, that he prophesied of the kings of the house of David in this world, and in the world to come of the Messiah: *he spake also of beasts, and of fowls, and of creeping things, and of fishes;* he understood the nature of all sorts of animals in the earth, air, and sea, and discoursed of their names, kinds, qualities, and use, with the greatest ease and perspicuity; the Jews fancy that Aristotle's History of Animals is his, which that philosopher lighted on, and published it in his own name. Suidas [r] says it was reported that Solomon wrote a book of medicines for all diseases, which was fixed to the entrance of the temple, which Hezekiah took away, because sick people applied to that for cure of their disorders, and neglected to pray to God.

Ver. 34. *And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, &c.*] Who sent their ambassadors to his court to know the truth of what was reported, and bring them some proofs and specimens, by which they might judge of the truth of the relations that had been told them; which perhaps might seem to them to be beyond all belief: *which had heard of his wisdom:* for the fame of it was spread everywhere by merchants and travellers, and such sort of persons, who had been at Jerusalem, and were masters of various anecdotes relating to Solomon; which they industriously spread in the several parts of the world they had dealings in.

CHAP. V.

THIS chapter relates Solomon's preparation for building the temple: on Hiram, king of Tyre, sending a congratulatory letter to him, he returned another to him, signifying his intention to build an house for God, and requesting him to supply him with timber, and men to work it, ver. 1—6. to which Hiram readily agreed, and sent him cedar and fir, and Solomon in return sent him food for his household; and things went on very amicably between them, ver. 7—12. the chapter concludes with an account of Solomon's workmen, where, how, and in what they were employed, ver. 13—18.

Ver. 1. *And Hiram king of Tyre sent servants unto Solomon, &c.*] His ambassadors, to condole him on the death of his father, and congratulate him on his accession to the throne; this king is called by the Phœnician historians [s] Hirom, and by Eupolemus [t] Suron, as he is Huram in 2 Chron. ii. 3. and by Theophilus of Antioch [u] Hierom the son of Abeimalus, in the 12th year of whose reign the temple was built: *for he had heard that they had anointed him king in the room of his father:* that the Israelites had anointed him king: *for Hiram was ever a lover of David;* a friend and ally of his; and we never read of the Tyrians being at war with him, or assisting to any of his enemies.

Ver. 2. *And Solomon sent to Hiram, &c.*] A letter, either by the hand of his ambassadors when they returned, as Kimchi thinks, or by ambassadors Solomon sent on purpose. Josephus [w] appeals to the Tyrian archives for the genuineness of these letters that passed between Hiram and Solomon; and Eupolemus, an Heathen writer [x], has both this which Solomon sent to Hiram, and that which Hiram sent in answer to it, which agree with those in the sacred records: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 3. *Thou knowest how that David my father could not build an house unto the name of the Lord his God, &c.*] As he designed, and was desirous of; and which Hiram might know not only by common fame, but from David himself, between whom there was an intercourse, and that in relation to cedars for building, which David had of Hiram, 2 Chron. ii. 3. *for the wars which were about him on every side;* or warriors, as the Targum, the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, and Syrians: *until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet;* made them subject and tributary to him, as he did at length, see 2 Sam. vii. 1. and viii. 1. *&c.* so the Cetib, or textual reading, is; but the Keri, or marginal reading, is, *under the soles of my feet;* that is, Solomon's, which agrees with what follows; it was true of both.

Ver. 4. *But now the Lord my God hath given me rest on every side, &c.*] From foreign enemies; for Solomon had no wars with any: so that there is *neither adversary;* or Satan, no internal enemy in his kingdom, as well as no external ones, Adonijah, Joab, and other ill-designing persons, being cut off: *nor evil occurrent;* nothing that rose up, and met him, to discourage or hinder the prosecution of the good work he had in view.

Ver. 5. *And, behold, I purpose to build an house unto the name of the Lord my God, &c.*] For his worship, and for his honour and glory: *as the Lord spake unto David my father;* by the prophet Nathan, 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13. *saying, thy son whom I will set upon thy throne in thy room, he shall build an house unto my name;* which was no small encouragement to Solomon to go about this work; in which he was a type of Christ,

[p] Isaac Ben Omram apud Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 50. col. 590.
[q] Herb. Bibl. Explicat. c. 26.
[r] In voce ὕσσωπος.
[s] Apud Joseph. contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 17, 18.
[t] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 33, 34.
[u] Ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 131, 132.
[w] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 2. sect 8.
[x] Ut supra.

the builder of his temple, the church, see Zech. vi. 12, 13.

Ver. 6. *Now therefore command thou that they hew me cedars out of Lebanon*, &c.] That is, order his servants to cut them down there for him. Some think that Lebanon belonged to the land of Israel, and therefore Solomon did not ask for the cedars upon it, but for his servants to hew them for him; but as it lay upon the borders of Israel, part of it might belong to them, and another part to Hiram, and on which the best cedars might grow, and so he furnished Solomon both with trees, and men to cut them, as it seems from ver. 10. see also 2 Chron. ii. 3, 8. *and my servants shall be with thy servants*: to assist them, and to carry the timber from place to place, and to learn how to hew timber: *and unto thee will I give hire for thy servants, according to all that thou shalt appoint*; pay them for their work and service, as Hiram himself should judge fit and reasonable for them; no mention being made of paying for the timber, seems to countenance the notion that the trees were Solomon's; but when the quantity of provisions sent yearly to Hiram for his household, besides what the servants had, is observed, it seems to have been sent as an equivalent to the timber received by Solomon, see ver. 10, 11. *for thou knowest that there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Sidonians*; it is not said Tyrians, the Sidonians, perhaps, being more skilful in this than they were; and the Sidonians are said by Homer[y] to be πολυδαιδαλοι, very ingenious; and they were both under the jurisdiction and at the command of Hiram; so Eupolemus[z] makes the inscription of Solomon's letter to him to run thus, to Suron (*i. e.* Hiram) king of Tyre, Sidon, and Phœnicia. The Jews being chiefly employed in husbandry, and in feeding cattle, were very unskilful in mechanic arts, and in this of cutting down trees, and hewing timber; for there is skill to be exercised therein; the proper time of cutting down trees should be observed, the part in which they are to be cut, and the position in which they are to be put when cut down, as Vitruvius[a] directs, with other things, and Pliny[b] observes the same.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass, when Hiram heard the words of Solomon*, &c.] The letter read he sent him: *that he rejoiced greatly*; that the friendship which had subsisted between him and David was like to be continued between him and his successor, but chiefly for what follows: *saying, blessed be the Lord this day*; or Jehovah, by which he seems to have some knowledge of the true God, the God of Israel, and might worship him, though along with him other deities, as some Heathen princes did: *which hath given unto David a wise son over this great people*: which he perceived by the letter he sent him, and by his solicitous concern to build an house for the worship and honour of God, and by various other things which his ambassadors reported to him they had seen and heard in Solomon's court.

Ver. 8. *And Hiram sent to Solomon*, &c.] A letter to him, to the following purpose: *saying, I have considered the things which thou sentest to me for*: whether he could, and whether it was fitting he should grant his request; which was acting like a wise and prudent prince: and *I will do all thy desire concerning timber of cedar, and concerning timber of fir*; or of cypress, as in Josephus's copy of this letter, and which grew on Lebanon[c]; these were odorous, sound, and durable timber, especially the cedar, and therefore chosen by Solomon for building.

Ver. 9. *My servants shall bring* them *down from Lebanon unto the sea*, &c.] The Mediterranean sea, on which Tyre stood: *and I will convey them by sea in floats*; which were either a sort of carriage for the timber the Tyrians and Sidonians had, being furnished with various navigable vessels; or these were the timber itself, and the planks of it, which being fastened together, were set afloat under the direction of some boats with oars, of which they had plenty: *unto the place that thou shalt appoint me*; which was Joppa, as appears from 2 Chron. ii. 16. belonging to the land of Israel, in the same sea: *and will cause them to be discharged there*; either to be unloaded from the vessels, or to be unloosed and taken up separately: *and thou shalt receive* them; by his servants appointed there to bring them to Jerusalem, which was 40 miles from Joppa: *and thou shalt accomplish my desire in giving food for my household*; signifying, that all that he desired in return was, that he would supply him with corn or wheat, which he stood in need of, and his letter in Josephus[c] expresses; and we find in after-times this place was supplied with bread-corn from Judea, see Ezra iii. 7. Ezek. xxvii. 17. Acts xii. 20.

Ver. 10. *So Hiram gave Solomon cedar-trees, and fir-trees*, &c.] Ordered his servants to cut them down from Lebanon, and sent them to him in floats, which he received: according to *all his desire*; he had as many as he requested, and what he wanted.

Ver. 11. *And Solomon gave Hiram twenty thousand measures of wheat* for *food to his household*, &c.] This measure was the Hebrew measure *cor*, or *corus*, and, according to Bishop Cumberland[d], its contents were 17,477 solid inches; it was equal to ten ephahs, each of which held two gallons and an half, and the cor held 75 wine-gallons five pints, and somewhat more; according to some[e], what it held was equal to 648 Roman pounds; so that 20,000 of them contained 12,960,000 pounds of wheat: *and 20 measures of pure oil*; squeezed out of the olives without breaking them; the same kind of measure is here expressed as before, and the quantity answered to 12,960 Roman pounds; another writer[f] reckons a cor to contain 1,080 Roman pounds; so that Hiram had every year 21,600 pounds of oil. In 2 Chron. ii. 10. it is 20,000 baths of oil; now not to take notice that the measures are different, a bath was but the tenth part of a cor, reference is had to different things; here the writer relates what was given to Hiram for his own family, there what was given to the workmen, where several other things are

[y] Iliad. 23. ver. 743.
[z] Ut supra.
[a] De Architectura, l. 2. c. 9.
[b] Nat Hist. l. 16. c. 39.
[c] Diodor. Sic. l. 19. p. 700.

[c] Ut supra.
[d] Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 3. p. 86.
[e] Vid. Scheuchaer. Physic. Sacr. p. 517.
[f] Van Till in Cantic. Mosis, p. 54.

mentioned besides these: *thus gave Solomon to Hiram year by year*: so long as the building lasted, and the workmen were employed; but Abarbinel thinks that he gave it to him as long as he lived, out of his great munificence and liberality.

Ver. 12. *And the Lord gave Solomon wisdom, as he promised him*, &c.] Which, among other things, appeared in his preparations for building the temple, and in his agreements with Hiram for timber and workmen for that purpose, and by continuing and confirming friendship between himself and Hiram, who was so serviceable to him: *and there was peace between Hiram and Solomon, and they two made a league together*: in order to continue and establish peace and friendship between them, which Solomon might lawfully do, the Tyrians being no part of the seven nations with whom alliances were forbidden.

Ver. 13. *And King Solomon raised a levy out of all Israel*, &c.] Not of money, but of men, as follows: *and the levy was 30,000 men*: for what purpose, and how they were employed, the next verse shews.

Ver. 14. *And he sent them to Lebanon, 10,000 a month by courses*, &c.] In their turns; these are the servants of his he proposed to be with Hiram's servants, assisting in cutting down the trees, and squaring the timber in Lebanon, ver. 6. *a month they were in Lebanon*, and *two months at home*; that they might not be over-worked; for they wrought but four months in the year in the hard service in Lebanon, the rest of their time was spent in managing their domestic affairs; these were Israelites: *and Adoniram was over the levy*; the same that was over the tribute or the collectors of the tax, ch. iv. 6. and, according to the Targum, these were such persons.

Ver. 15. *And Solomon had 70,000 that bare burdens*, &c.] To carry the stones from the mountains out of which they were dug, and which were near Jerusalem, to the city; these were strangers in Israel, as were those that follow: *and 80,000 hewers in the mountains*: that dug the stones out of the quarries, and squared them; these, with the others, made 150,000, see 2 Chron. ii. 17. according to Jacob Leon [g], the number of workmen at the temple for seven years was 163,600, and some make them more.

Ver. 16. *Besides the chief of Solomon's officers which were over the work*, &c.] Over the whole work, preparatory for the building of the temple; though it seems chiefly to have respect to that of hewing the stones, and bringing them to the city: 3,300 *which ruled over the people that wrought in the work*; to keep them to their work, and to see that they performed it well: in 2 Chron. ii. 18. they are said to be 3,600, which is 300 more than here; those 300 are the chief officers mentioned in the former part of this verse, which were over the whole work, and even over the 3,300 overseers, and with them made up the sum of 3,600: so Jacob Leon [h] observes there were 3,300 master workmen, and 300 commanders over them all.

Ver. 17. *And the king commanded, and they brought great stones*, &c.] Not in quality, but in quantity, large stones, fit to lay in the foundation; strong, and durable against all the injuries of time, as Josephus says [i]: *costly stones*; not what are commonly called precious stones, as gems, pearls, &c. but stones of value, as marble, porphyry, &c. *and hewed stones*; not rough as they were taken out of the quarry, but hewed, and made smooth: *to lay the foundation of the house*; which, though out of sight, was to be laid with goodly stones for the magnificence of the building; so the church of Christ, its foundation is said to be laid even with sapphires and other precious stones, see Isa. liv. 11. Rev. xxi. 19.

Ver. 18. *And Solomon's builders and Hiram's builders did hew them*, &c.] The stones; for it seems Solomon had not only hewers of wood, but of stone, from Hiram: *and the stone-squarers*; or rather the Giblites, the men of Gebal, which were under the jurisdiction of Tyre, and were skilful in this sort of work, as some of them were in others, see Ezek. xxvii. 9. *so they prepared timber and stones to build the house*; both Solomon's and Hiram's builders, and the large number of workmen, both Israelites and strangers; which latter were an emblem of the Gentiles concerned in the building of the spiritual temple, the church of Christ, Zech. vi. 15. and whereas the number of strangers that wrought for the building was far greater than that of the Israelites, it may denote the greater number of Gentiles in the Gospel church-state.

CHAP. VI.

THIS chapter gives an account of the building of the temple, for which preparations were before made, and begins with the time of its building, ver. 1. gives the dimensions of it and the porch before it, ver. 2, 3. observes the windows in it and chambers about it, ver. 4—10. and while it was building, Solomon had a word from the Lord relative to it, ver. 11—14. and then the account goes on concerning the walls of the house, and the flooring of it, ver. 15—18. and the oracle in it, and the cherubim in that, ver. 19—30. and the doors into it, and the carved work of them, ver. 31—36. and the chapter is concluded with observing the time when it was begun and finished, ver 37, 38.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass in the 480th year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt*, &c.] The Tyrian writers [k] make it 560 years from hence; but this no doubt is rightest, which Junius reckons thus; 40 years Israel were in the wilderness, 17 under Joshua, 299 under the judges, 80 under Eli, Samuel, and Saul, 40 under David, add to which the 4 years of Solomon, and they make 480 [l]; they are somewhat differently reckoned by others [m], from the

[g] Relation of Memorable Things in the Temple, ch. 3. p. 14.
[h] Ibid.
[i] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 2.

[k] Apud Theophil. ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 131.
[l] So Gerard. Voss. Chron. Sacr. Isagoge, dissert. 8. c. 7. p. 198.
[m] Vid. Vitring. Hypotypos. Hist. Sacr. p. 43.

coming out of Egypt to Joshua 40 years, from thence to the first servitude under Cushan 25, from thence to the death of Abimelech 256, under Thola 23, from thence to the Ammonitish servitude 4, under that 18, under the judges, Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon, 31, Samuel and Saul 40, David 40, and Solomon 3, in all 480: *in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel;* when he was clear of all disturbers of his government, and had got all things ready for the building of the temple, and had gathered together gold and silver enough of his own to defray the expenses; for, as for what David gave him, he put that into the treasury of the Lord's house, see ch. vii. 51. *in the month Zif, which is the second month;* and so must be Jiar, for Abib or Nisan was the first, and Jiar was the second, which answered to part of our April and part of May; called Zif either from the splendour of the sun, being now higher, and so the greater; or from the trees and flowers of the field being in all their glory; and so the Targum here calls it, the month of splendour of flowers: and it was on the 2d day of it, *that he began to build the house of the Lord;* and a very fit and proper season of the year it was to begin it in, see 2 Chron. iii. 2.

Ver. 2. *And the house which King Solomon built for the Lord,* &c.] For his worship, honour, and glory: *the length thereof was* 60 *cubits;* from east to west, including the holy place and the most holy place; the holy place was 40 cubits, and the most holy place 20; the same measure, as to length, Eupolemus, an Heathen writer [n], gives of the temple, but is mistaken in the other measures: *and the breadth thereof* 20 cubits; from north to south: *and the height thereof* 30 *cubits;* this must be understood of the holy place, for the oracle or most holy place was but 20 cubits high, ver. 20. though the holy place, with the chambers that were over it, which were 90 cubits, three stories high, was in all 120 cubits, 2 Chron. iii. 4. some restrain it to the porch only, which stood at the end, like one of our high steeples, as they think.

Ver. 3. *And the porch before the temple of the house,* &c.] Which stood at the east end of it: 20 *cubits* was *the length thereof, according to the breadth of the house;* which was from north to south, and of the same dimension, so that they exactly answered each other: *and* 10 *cubits* was *the breadth thereof before the house;* which being added to it, make the whole of the building, most holy place, holy place, and porch, 70 cubits; the height of the porch is not here given, but in 2 Chron. iii. 4. where it is said to be 120 cubits high, equal to the height of the house, with the chambers over it; but there the breadth of the porch is not given, as it is here; by these dimensions we may observe the difference between the tabernacle and the temple; the temple was twice as long, and as broad, and thrice as high as that, see Exod. xxvi. 8, 16. This fabric was an emblem of the church of God, sometimes called an holy temple, and the temple of the living God, 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 21.

Ver. 4. *And for the house he made windows of narrow lights.*] Or *open, shut* [o], which could be both, having shutters to them, to open or shut at pleasure; windows which they could open, and look through at them, or *shut* when they pleased; the Targum is, "open within, "and shut without;" or, as others understand it, they were wide within, and narrow without; by being narrow without, the house was preserved from bad weather, as well as could not so easily be looked into by those without; and by being broader within, the light that was let in spread itself within the house; which some interpret only of the holy place, the most holy place having, as they suppose, no windows in it, which yet is not certain: now these windows may denote the word and ordinances of the church of God, whereby light is communicated to men; which in the present state is but narrow or small, in comparison of the new Jerusalem church-state, and the ultimate glory; and especially so it was under the legal dispensation, which was very obscure; see Cant. ii. 9. Isa. lx. 8.

Ver. 5. *And against the wall of the house he built chambers round about,* &c.] Or near it, as Jarchi interprets it, for the beams of them were not fastened in in it, ver. 6. or rather *upon* it [p]; and when they are said to be round about the house, it must be understood of the two sides, north and south, and of the west end only, for at the east end, where the porch was, there were none: against *the walls of the house round about,* both *of the temple and of the oracle;* that is, both of the holy and the most holy place: *and he made chambers round about;* the said buildings; which is repeated that it might be observed; how many chambers there were, is not said; Josephus says [q] there were 30 of them, and over them others of the same measure and number, and over them others also; so that there were three stories of them, and in all 90; and which is countenanced by what follows in the next verse, and agrees with Ezek. xli. 6. the Jewish doctors say [r], there were 38 of them, 15 on the north, 15 on the south, and eight on the west; they that were to the north and south were five upon five, and five over them; and they that were to the west were three upon three, and two over them; upper rooms or chambers were rare in Heathen temples [s]: these chambers were for the priests, where they lodged and laid up their garments, and ate their holy things; and were emblems of congregated churches, where the true members thereof, who are priests to God, have communion with him, and partake of divine things.

Ver. 6. *And the nethermost chamber was five cubits broad,* &c.] The nethermost row of them, which were upon the first floor: *and the middle* was *six cubits broad, and the third* was *seven cubits broad;* so that the middlemost was a cubit larger than the lowest, and the highest a cubit lager than that: the reason of which was, *for without* in the wall *of the house he made narrowed rests round about;* or rebatements; the thickness of the wall, as it was raised, became narrower at the height of every five cubits; thus the wall being supposed to be six cubits broad, as in Ezek. xli. 5. when it came to be five cubits high, it was narrowed a cubit,

[n] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34.

[o] שקפים אטמים apertas clausas, Vatablus; perspectui accommodas, clausas, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[p] על קיר super parietem, V. L. Montanus.

[q] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 2.

[r] Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 3.

[s] Pausan. Laconic. sive l. 3. p. 199.

which left a projection, rebatement, or bench for the beams of the first chambers to be laid upon, which made the second row of chambers broader by a cubit; and the same being observed in the next story, made the highest a cubit broader than the middlemost: and this was done, *that* the beams *should not be fastened in the walls of the house*: or be inserted into them, which could not be done without making holes in it; and these holes could not be made without an iron instrument, and which was not to be used, as the next words shew; whereas by the above method the beams of the chambers could be laid upon the buttresses, benches, or rebatements left, without the use of any: the gradual enlargement of these chambers, as they rose higher, may denote the enlargement of the church of God, both as to numbers, gifts, and grace, the nearer it comes to the heavenly state, as in the spiritual and personal reign of Christ.

Ver. 7. *And the house, when it was in building*, &c.] And all the while it was building: *was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither*: being hewn or squared by the builders and stone-squarers of Solomon and Hiram, ch. v. 18. wherefore the builders had nothing more to do than to lay them in their proper places in the building; it was built with these stones quite up to the ceiling, as Josephus says[t]; and these so admirably polished, and so artificially joined together, that not the least sign of an ax, or of any working-tool, could be discerned in them: *so that there was neither hammer*, nor *ax*, *nor any tool of iron, heard in the house while it was in building*: the first of these observations shews, that none are to be laid in the spiritual building of the church, but such as are first hewed and squared by the spirit, grace, and word of God: or who have an experience of the grace of God, are sound in the faith, and of becoming lives and conversations; and the other denotes, that such as are therein, whether ministers or members, should do all they do for the edification of the church in a quiet and peaceable manner, without clamour, contention, jars, and tumults.

Ver. 8. *The door of the middle chamber* was *in the right side of the house*, &c.] The south side of it: *and they went up with winding stairs into the middle* chamber; which were without-side the chambers, and which winded about for the sake of taking up less room, and which led up to the door of the middle chamber, on the south of which they went into it; according to the Vulgate Latin and Tigurine versions, they went up in the form of a cockle, or the shell of a snail; in like manner as was the ascent of the temple of Pan at Alexandria, as Strabo[u] relates: *and out of the middle into the third*; the third chamber, and by winding stairs up to that; and the like might be on the north side, though not expressed, and on the west: the Jews say[w], that in the second temple, these winding stairs went from the north-east to the north-west, whereby they went up to the roof of the chambers, and so to the south and west; with this compare Ezek. xli. 7. and which may represent the windings and turnings of God's people in this present state, their many afflictions and tribulations, through which they pass from one state to another.

Ver. 9. *So he built the house, and finished it*, &c.] The body of it, the walls of the holy and most holy place, with the chambers on the sides of them, and the porch at the end that led into them: *and covered the house with beams and boards of cedar*; with hollow boards, as the Targum, which formed an arch ceiling to it, and made it look very grand and beautiful; and then over them were laid beams and planks of cedar, not properly as a flat roof to it, but rather as a flooring for other buildings; for upon this, as in the next verse, there were chambers built.

Ver. 10. *And* then *he built chambers against all the house five cubits high*, &c.] Which some understand of the same chambers in ver. 5, 6. here made mention of again for the sake of giving the height of them, not before given; but they were built against, or upon the wall of the house, these against, or rather upon the whole house itself; and are the chambers referred to in the notes on ver. 2. which consisting of three stories of 90 cubits, raised the whole house to an equal height with the porch, 2 Chron. iii. 4. as is there intended[x]; these are the upper chambers in 2 Chron. iii. 9. *and they rested on the house with timber of cedar*: or on the timber of cedar, the beams of cedar, with which the house was covered, as in the preceding verses; on these the chambers rested, being built upon them; and in one of these chambers the disciples might be after Christ's ascension, Acts i. 13.

Ver. 11. *And the word of the Lord came to Solomon*, &c.] The word of prophecy, as the Targum, foretelling what would be the case of this building, according to the obedience or disobedience of him and the people of Israel; which was brought to him either by an impulse of the spirit of God upon him; or by the hand of a prophet, as Kimchi thinks; and some of the Jewish writers[y], as he particularly, name Ahijah the Shilonite as the prophet that was sent with this message to him: *saying*, as follows.

Ver. 12. Concerning *this house which thou art in building*, &c.] Or with respect to that, these things are to be said as from the Lord: *if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them*; even all the laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial; and this respects not only Solomon personally, but his successors, and even all the people of Israel: *then will I perform my covenant with thee, which I spake unto David thy father*; by Nathan the prophet; not only that he should build an house for God, which should be a settled dwelling-place, but that his own house and kingdom should be established for a long time to come, and his posterity should enjoy the presence of God in this house, provided regard was had to the precepts and ordinances of the Lord.

Ver. 13. *And I will dwell among the children of Israel*, &c.] In this house now building, and which was in the middle of the land, and where he would meet with

[t] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 2.
[u] Geograph. l. 17. p. 547.
[w] Misn. Middot, c. 4. sect. 5. See Lightfoot's Prospect of the Temple, &c. c. 12. p. 1071.
[x] Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. ut supra.
[y] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 53.

them, and accept their sacrifices, not only of slain beasts, but of prayer and praise: and *will not forsake my people Israel;* and leave them to the mercy of their enemies, and to be carried captive by them, but protect and defend them.

Ver. 14. *So Solomon built the house, and finished it.*] He went on with it until he had completed it, animated and encouraged by the promise of the divine Presence in it, provided a proper regard was had to the will and ways of God. Abarbinel thinks the above message was sent him in the midst of his work, to strengthen and caution him from a dependence on the continuance of the fabric, because of the strength of it; since its perpetuity depended on his, his successors', and the people's conduct and behaviour; wherefore conscious to himself of his own integrity, and hoping well of posterity, he was not discouraged, but proceeded in his undertaking until he had brought it to perfection.

Ver. 15. *And he built the walls of the house within with boards of cedar,* &c.] For as yet he had only built the stone walls of it without, but now he wainscotted it with cedar boards: and not only them, but *both the floor of the house, and the walls of the ceiling;* or from *the floor of the house unto the walls of the ceiling:* that is, from the floor, including that, *to the walls* on each side, reaching up to *the ceiling, he covered on the inside with wood;* of one sort or another, cedar or fir, or both: particularly he *covered the floor of the house with planks of fir;* which Hiram sent him, ch. v. 8, 10. which is differently interpreted; by Josephus cypress; by others, as the Tigurine version, pine-tree wood; it is very probable it was of the cedar kind, and not the floor only, but the ceiling also, 2 Chron. iii. 5.

Ver. 16. *And he built 20 cubits on the sides of the house,* &c.] At the end or extremity of it, as the Targum; that is, he built the most holy place, which was 20 cubits long, at the end of the holy place, which he wainscotted as the other: *both the floor and the walls with boards of cedar;* or from the floor, including that, to the walls on each side, from wall to wall, and taking in them, they were all lined with cedar-wood: *he even built* them *for it within,* even *for the oracle,* even *for the most holy place;* which explains what building is spoken of, and that the inside of that was covered with cedar from bottom to top.

Ver. 17. *And the house, that is, the temple before it,* &c.] The holy place, which was before the holy of holies: *was 40 cubits long;* and which, with the most holy place, being 20 cubits, as in the preceding verse, made the length of the whole house 60 cubits, as in ver. 2.

Ver. 18. *And the cedar of the house within,* &c.] With which the inside of the place was lined: was *carved with knops;* of an oval form; so the Targum says, they had the appearance of eggs; and Ben Gersom likewise, that they were in the form of eggs: *and open flowers;* not in the figure of buds, but flowers blown, and open, as lilies and others; so the Targum: *all was cedar;* the wainscotting of the house, the sides of it at least, if not the floor, and the carved work of it; and this was done, that the gold might be laid upon it, which could not be done on stone as on wood: and all was so covered, that *there was no stone seen;* of which the outward walls were built: all this denotes the inward beauty of the church, and the curious workmanship of the spirit of God in the hearts of his people, whereby they become all glorious within, adorned with the graces of the blessed Spirit, their stony hearts being kept out of sight, yea, taken away.

Ver. 19. *And the oracle he prepared in the house within,* &c.] In the innermost part of the house he fitted up the oracle, or speaking-place, from whence the Lord spake and gave answer, to receive what was to be put into it: particularly *to set there the ark of the covenant of the Lord;* even the very same that Moses made, for which David had pitched a tent in Zion, and where it now was; for Solomon made no new ark.

Ver. 20. *And the oracle in the fore part,* &c.] Which stood in the fore part of the temple, before a man's face as he entered into it, and went on; or the fore part of the holy of holies, next to the holy place, was of the dimensions as follows, when the back part of it might be higher at least, and be equal to the holy place, even 30 feet; the fore part being lower, and left open to let in the light of the candlesticks, and the smoke of the incense, out of the holy place: this was *20 cubits in length, and 20 cubits in breadth, and 20 cubits in the height thereof;* and was a perfect square, and as the most holy place may be an emblem of the church triumphant, it may denote the perfection of its heavenly state; so the new Jerusalem is a four-square, Rev. xxi. 16. *and he overlaid it with pure gold;* to make it rich, glorious, and magnificent, and may denote the glory of the heavenly state, Rev. xxi. 21. and so Florus[a], the Roman historian, calls it the golden heaven, as it were, into which Pompey went, and saw the great secret of the Jewish nation, the ark: *and so covered the altar* which was *of cedar;* the altar of incense, which is here mentioned, because it was near the most holy place, ver. 22. this altar by Moses was made of shittim-wood, but Solomon's was of cedar it seems; unless, as the words will bear to be rendered, *he covered the altar with cedar*[a]; though made of shittim-wood, it had a covering of cedar over it; or if of stone, such a covering was on it, that it might better receive the gold which was afterwards put upon it.

Ver. 21. *So Solomon overlaid the house within with pure gold,* &c.] The inside of the holy of holies with fine gold, which gold amounted to 600 talents, 2 Chron. iii. 8. and these to 7,332,000 ducats of gold, or 3 millions and 45,000 pounds sterling: *and he made a partition by the chains of gold before the oracle;* between the holy and the most holy, and were instead of a vail in the tabernacle of Moses between them; or here was also a vail beside the partition made by chains of gold across the oracle; for the partition was a wall of the thickness of a cubit, as Maimonides[b] says; and in 2 Chron. iii. 14. express mention is made of a vail of blue, &c. and in imitation of this had the Heathens

[a] De Gest. Roman. l. iii. c. 5.
[a] ארז ויצף operuit cedro, Montanus.
[b] Hilchot Beth Habechirah, c. 4. sect. 2.

their deities within vails[c]: *and he overlaid it with gold*; the partition-wall.

Ver. 22. *And the whole house he overlaid with gold*, &c.] Both the holy place, and the most holy place: *until he had finished all the house*; in this splendid and glorious manner: *also the whole altar that* was *by the oracle*; the altar of incense, which stood just before the entrance into the oracle, or most holy place: *he overlaid with gold*; he overlaid it all over with gold; hence it is called the golden altar, and was an emblem of the excellent and effectual mediation and intercession of Christ, Rev. viii. 3, 4. Agreeably to this account Eupolemus, an Heathen writer[d], testifies, that the whole house, from the floor to the roof, was covered with gold, as well as with cedar and cypress wood, that the stone-work might not appear; and so the capitol at Rome, perhaps in imitation of this temple, its roofs and tiles were gilded with gold[e]; a magnificent temple, like this, was at Upsal in Switzerland, as Olaus Magnus relates[f].

Ver. 23. *And within the oracle he made two cherubim of olive-tree*, &c.] Or of the oil-tree, as in Isa. xli. 19. see Neh. viii. 15. for there are other trees besides olives, out of which oil is pressed, as pine-trees, cypress-trees, &c. and which some think are here meant; though the Targum interprets it of the olive-tree: these cherubim are different from those made by Moses, and were besides them; these were larger than they; these were made of olive-wood, they of gold; these stood on the floor of the house, they at the two ends of the mercy-seat, and were made out of it, and were with it in this holy place in Solomon's temple: these two cherubim may be emblems of the angels in their greatness and glory, who are always in the presence of God, behold his face, and wait to do his will; or it may be rather of the two witnesses, said to be the two olive-trees standing before the God of the whole earth, Rev. xi. 3, 4. who have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, and have sight and knowledge of the mysteries of the ark and mercy-seat; have their commission from heaven, and speak according to the oracles of God; these are said to be of image-work, 2 Chron. iii. 10. *i. e.* of various forms, as the face of a man, a lion, an ox, and eagle, Ezek. i. 10. Dr. Lightfoot thinks[g] they resembled the two Testaments, which in their beginning and end reach the two sides of the world, the creation and the last judgment, and in the middle do sweetly join the one to the other: each *ten cubits high*; half as high as the most holy place; emblems either of the high angels, those thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, or of men of uncommon size as to their gifts and grace.

Ver. 24. *And five cubits* was *the one wing of the cherub*, &c.] When stretched out on one side: *and five cubits the other wing of the cherub*: on the other side him: *from the uttermost part of the one wing, to the uttermost part of the other wing*, were *ten cubits*: half the breadth of the house.

Ver. 25. *And the other cherub* was *ten cubits*, &c.] That is, its wings stretched out measured so many cubits, as did those of the other: *both the cherubim were of one measure, and of one size*; of the same height and stature, of the same breadth of their wings, and of the same bulk of their bodies; they were of *image-work*: 2 Chron. iii. 10. very probably in the form of men: and this uniformity may denote the perfect agreement of angels; or else the consent of the true faithful witnesses of Christ in all ages, who have all agreed in the person, office, and grace of Christ, as represented by the mercy-seat and ark, which these cherubim covered with their wings.

Ver. 26. *The height of the one cherub* was *ten cubits, and so* was it *of the other cherub*.] Which is repeated from ver. 23. that it might be observed, being of an extraordinary size.

Ver. 27. *And he set the cherubim within the inner house*, &c.] The holy of holies: *and they stretched forth the wings of the cherubim*; the carvers that framed them, they wrought them in that form; or impersonally, the wings of the cherubim were stretched out; this was the position of them, they overshadowed and covered the mercy-seat and ark, and even the other two cherubim that were at the ends of the mercy-seat: *so that the wing of the one touched the* one *wall*; the southern wall: *and the wing of the other cherub touched the other wall*; the northern wall; they reached from wall to wall, even the whole breadth of the house, which was 20 cubits, as their wings thus spread were, ver. 24, 25. 2 Chron. iii. 11. *and their wings touched one another in the midst of the house*; which was ten cubits, and that was the spread of the wings of each of them; so that the wing of the right side of the one, stretched out, touched the wing of the left side of the other in the same position; in 2 Chron. iii. 13. their faces are said to be *inward*, or *toward the house*; either toward the holy place, and so faced those that came into that and saw them; or towards the inner part of the holy of holies, their backs being to the holy place, or their faces were inward, and looked obliquely to each other.

Ver. 28. *And he overlaid the cherubim with gold*.] Which may denote the purity and excellency of angels; or the precious gifts and graces of the spirit, with which the witnesses of Christ are adorned.

Ver. 29. *And he carved all the walls of the house about with carved figures of cherubim, and palm-trees, and open flowers*, &c.] That is, of palm-trees, those in full blow: if the cherubim are an emblem of angels, the palm-trees fitly enough represent just and upright men, who both appear in the church of God below, and in heaven above; in both which are to be seen the open and full-blown flowers of divine grace, especially in the latter state: *within and without*; on the walls of the most holy place, both within and without; and so upon the walls of the holy place, in each of which were these sculptures, which were very ornamental, and were emblematical; see Ezek. xli. 17, 18, 19, 20.

Ver. 30. *And the floor of the house he overlaid with gold within and without*.] Both the floor of the holy place, and of the holy of holies; so the street of the new Jerusalem is said to be pure gold, Rev. xxi. 21. this

[c] Apulei Metamorph. l. xi. p. 176.
[d] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34. p. 450
[e] Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 33. c. 2. Vid. Ryequium de Capitol. Roman. c. 16
[f] De Ritu Gent. Septent. l. 3. c. 3.
[g] Prospect of the Temple, c. 15. sect. 4.

expresses the purity and magnificence of it, particularly the holy conversation of them that dwell in the church, in heaven, signified hereby.

Ver. 31. *And for the entering of the oracle he made doors of olive-tree,* &c.] The door of the holy of holies was a two-leaved or folding-door, made of olive-wood; typical of Christ, the door into the church above and below, the way to heaven and eternal life, the true olive-tree: *the lintel* and *side-posts* were *a fifth part* of the wall; four cubits, 20 cubits being the breadth of the oracle; or the lintel was four cubits, 20 being the height of it also, ver. 20.

Ver. 32. *The two doors also* were of *olive-tree,* &c.] The two leaves of the door, as before observed, repeated for the sake of the ornament of them, as follows: *and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers;* as upon the walls, ver. 29. *and overlaid* them *with gold;* the two doors: *and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm-trees;* thin plates of gold.

Ver. 33. *So also made he for the door of the temple,* &c.] The holy place: *posts* of *olive-tree, a fourth part* of the wall; which was five cubits, its breadth being 20; this door was a cubit wider than that into the most holy place, more entering into the one than into the other; as more go into the church on earth than into the heavenly glory.

Ver. 34. *And the two doors* were of *fir-tree,* &c.] The posts were of olive, but the doors of fir, and they were both folding-doors, as appears by what follows: *the two leaves of the one door* were *folding, and the two leaves of the other door* were *folding:* which, taking up less room, made the passage wider, see Ezek. xli. 24.

Ver. 35. *And he carved* thereon *cherubims, and palm-trees, and open flowers,* &c.] As upon the doors of the most holy place, ver. 32. see Ezek. xli. 25. *and covered* them *with gold, fitted upon the carved work;* plates of gold were fitted, as to the dimensions of them, to the cherubim, palm-trees, and open flowers.

Ver. 36. *And he built the inner court,* &c.] The court of the priests, 2 Chron. iv. 9. so called to distinguish it from the outer court, where the people assembled: this was built *with three rows of hewed stone, and a row of cedar beams;* the rows of stones were one upon another, topped with a row of cedar beams; or rather the cedar was a lining to the stones; and the whole is supposed to be about three cubits high, and was so low, that the people in the outward court might see the priests ministering for them, and could converse with them; under the second temple, as Maimonides [h] says, the court of the priests was higher than that of the court of Israel two cubits and an half, called the great court, for which doors were made, and those overlaid with brass, 2 Chron. iv. 9.

Ver. 37. *In the 4th year was the foundation of the house of the Lord laid,* &c.] The 4th year of Solomon's reign: *in the month Zif;* see the note on ver. 1.

Ver. 38. *In the 11th year,* &c.] That is, of the reign of Solomon: *in the month Bul;* which is *the 8th month;* from the month Abib or Nisan; this month answers to part of our October, and part of November; it is the same month sometimes called Marchesvan; it had the name of Bul, because of the rains which usually fell in this month, as Kimchi thinks, like a flood; and Noah's flood is called Mabbul, from the same root [i], and when all the fruits were withered, and the leaves were fallen from the trees; or, as Jarchi supposes, because the grass was consumed in the field, and they were obliged to mix provender for cattle, deriving the word from another root [k]: in this month *was the house finished throughout all the parts thereof:* the porch, the holy place, and holy of holies, with all the chambers and courts belonging to it: *and according to all the fashion of it;* which David had given to Solomon, to frame it by: *so he was seven years in building it;* and six months, which are not mentioned, only the round number is given, as appears by comparing it with ver. 1.

CHAP. VII.

THIS chapter gives an account of some buildings of Solomon for himself, ver. 1—12. and of other things for the use of the temple; of two pillars of brass, ver. 13—22. of the molten sea, ver. 23—26. and of 10 bases, and 10 lavers on them, ver. 27—39. with other utensils and ornaments, ver. 40—57.

Ver. 1. *But Solomon was building his own house* 13 *years,* &c.] He made more haste with the house of God than with his own, for that was but seven years in building; which shewed greater regard to the honour of God than to his own glory, or even convenience; nor was this built till after that: *and finished all his house;* or houses he undertook to build, the singular for the plural; even the house of God, his own palace, and that for the daughter of Pharaoh, and that which is next mentioned, which were in all 20 years a-building, ch. ix. 10.

Ver. 2. *He built also the house of the forest of Lebanon,* &c.] Besides the temple, his own palace, and the queen's; so called, not because it was built on Mount Lebanon, which lay at the northern border of the land, at a great distance from Jerusalem, whereas this was both a magazine of arms, and a court of judicature, ver. 7. see ch. x. 17. Isa. xxii. 8. neither of which can be supposed to be far from Jerusalem; but because not only it was built of the cedars of Lebanon, but in a situation, and among groves of trees which resembled it; it seems to have been a summer-house; and so the Targum calls it, a royal house of refreshment: the length was 100 *cubits, and the breadth thereof* 50 *cubits, and the height thereof* 30 *cubits:* so that it was in every measure larger than the temple; and there was good reason for it, since into that only the priests entered; whereas into this went not only Solomon's family, but

[h] Hilchot Beth Habechirah, c. 6. sect. 3.
[i] בלל concidit, Buxtorf.
[k] בלה consumpsit, vel בלל miscuit, ib.

his courtiers and nobles, and all foreign ambassadors, and whoever had any business with him, which required various rooms to receive them in: *upon four rows of cedar pillars*; or piazzas: *with cedar beams upon the pillars*; which laid the floor for the second story.

Ver. 3. *And* it was *covered with cedar above the beams, that lay on* 45 *pillars*, 15 *in a row.*] On the second floor were three rows of pillars, 15 in a row, which made 45, that stood to east, north, and south; and upon these pillars beams, which were the floor of the third story, over which was a roof of cedar-wood.

Ver. 4. *And* there were *windows in three rows*, &c.] Both in the 2d and 3d stories, east, north, and south, there being none in the west, where the porch stood: *and light* was *against light in three ranks*; or the windows, through which light was let, answered to each other.

Ver. 5. *And all the doors and posts* were *square with the windows*, &c.] The doors into the several stories and and apartments, and the posts and lintel of them, and the windows over them, were all square: *and light* was *against light in three ranks*; they answered one another as before.

Ver. 6. *And he made a porch of pillars*, &c.] At the west end of the house: *and the length thereof was* 50 *cubits*; answerable to the breadth of the house: *and the breadth thereof* 30 *cubits*; which, added to the length of the house, made it 130: *and the porch was before them*; the four rows of cedar pillars of the house, ver. 2. this porch was either for his guards to keep watch in; or for his courtiers to walk in, sheltered from rain or the like; or perhaps only for grandeur and magnificence: *and the* other *pillars and the thick beam were before them*; the pillars of the porch, on which were laid beams of cedar for a story over them, and so on; these were before and right against, and answered to the pillars of the house.

Ver. 7. *Then he made a porch for the throne*, &c.] The ivory throne on which he sat to hear and try causes, ch. x. 18. *where he might judge*, even *the porch of judgment*; which had its name from thence; this was either in his house in the forest of Lebanon, or in his palace at Jerusalem; the former seems best: *and* it was *covered with cedar from one side of the floor unto the other*; that is, the whole floor.

Ver. 8. *And his house where he dwelt*, &c.] Which was properly his dwelling-place, that part of the house where he usually resided: had *another court within the porch, which* was *of the like work*; a court between that and the porch, called the inner court, 2 Kings xx. 4. *Solomon made also a house for Pharaoh's daughter, whom he had taken* to wife; see ch. iii. 1. *like unto this porch*; being built of the same sort of materials, though in a different form.

Ver. 9. *All these* were *of costly stones*, &c.] Marble, porphyry, *&c. according to the measure of hewed stones, sawed with saws, within and without*; they were all hewed, and squared, and polished, and so they appeared both on the inside of the building, and without: *even from the foundation unto the coping*; from the bottom to the top: *and so on the outside toward the great court*; where the people used to assemble when they had causes to be tried, and was adjoining to the king's house.

Ver. 10. *And the foundation* was *of costly stones*, even *great stones*, &c.] Of a great price, and very large: *stones of ten cubits, and stones of eight cubits*; some of one measure, and some of another; not so many cubits square, but of solid measure; they were so many in length.

Ver. 11. *And above* were *costly stones*, &c.] Above the foundation, from thence to the top of the buildings; the whole walls were made of such quite up to the ceiling: *after the measure of hewed stones*; which, according to the Rabbins, as Kimchi says, were five hands breadth: *and cedars*; beams of cedars over them, or these, both the foundation and the walls, were lined with them.

Ver. 12. *And the great court round about*, &c.] Which surrounded Solomon's house: was *with three rows of hewed stones, and a row of cedar beams*; these rows were one upon another, and were a wall to the court, which were either topped with a row of cedar-wood, or that was a lining to the stones: *for the inner court of the house of the Lord*; or rather as, or like to that, as appears from ch. vi. 36. *and for the porch of the house*; not the temple, but Solomon's house.

Ver. 13. *And King Solomon sent and fetched Hiram out of Tyre.*] Not the king of Tyre, but an artificer in it, after described, whom Solomon had heard of, and upon his request Huram sent him to him, 2 Chron. ii. 13. his name is called Hyperon by Clemens of Alexandria [l].

Ver. 14. *He was a widow's son of the tribe of Naphtali*, &c.] In 2 Chron. ii. 14. his mother is said to be of the daughters of Dan, as she might be, and yet her son of the tribe of Naphtali; for either she was of the city of Dan, which is placed in the tribe of Naphtali [m], or her mother was of the tribe of Dan; and therefore she is said to be of the daughters of Dan, when her father was of the tribe of Naphtali, as it is expressed by the Targum on 2 Chron. ii. 14. and in which way most of the Jewish commentators reconcile this; or she was of Dan, and her husband of Naphtali; besides, if there was any mistake, it must be ascribed, not to the sacred historians, but to the king of Tyre, whose words they are in the above place, and who might not be so well acquainted with the tribe this man and his parents were of: *and his father* was *a man of Tyre*; not a Tyrian by birth, but one who had dwelt there a while, and therefore so called, as Obed-edom, for a like reason, is called the Gittite: *a worker in brass*; *and he was filled with wisdom, and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass*; which might be true both of the father and of the son, and especially of the son, who had improved upon his father's knowledge and instructions; and who was skilful to work in other things besides brass, as gold, silver, iron, stone, timber, purple, blue and fine linen, crimson, and all sorts of engraving, and every device that could be put to him by the most ingenious workmen that either David or Solomon had, 2 Chron. ii. 14. but this is only mentioned, because it was in such work he was only employed by Solomon; and it seems, by the mode of expression, that, besides his natural genius,

[l] Stromat. l. 1. p. 332.

[m] Vid. Adrichom. Theat. T. S. p. 105. Fuller's Pisgah-Sight, 107.

and his diligence and industry, he was filled with wisdom from God more immediately for this service, as Bezaleel and Aholiab were for the service of the tabernacle: *and he came to King Solomon, and wrought all his work;* in brass, as follows.

Ver. 15. *For he cast two pillars of brass,* 18 *cubits high apiece,* &c.] In 2 Chron. iii. 15. they are said to be 35 cubits high, which must be understood of the length or height of them both; and whereas that would allow but 17 cubits and a half to a pillar, either the round number of 18 is used, or half a cubit in each may be allowed, either for the base or pedestal into which they were put; or the chapiter at the top of them, into which they might go such a length, and so only what was seen is described: *and a line of* 12 *cubits did compass either of them about;* that was the circumference of them, and therefore their diameter must be four cubits. Eupolemus, an Heathen writer[t], speaks of these pillars, but he makes the circuit of them to be but 10 cubits; and says they were equal in height with the temple, and stood on the right and left, and were made of brass, and covered with gold, the thickness of a finger.

Ver. 16. *And he made two chapiters of molten brass, to set upon the tops of the pillars,* &c.] These were large ovals in the form of a crown, as the word signifies; or like two crowns joined together, as Ben Gersom; or bowls, as they are called, ver. 41. *the height of the one chapiter* was *five cubits, and the height of the other chapiter* was *five cubits;* in 2 Kings xxv. 17. they are said to be but three cubits high; but that is to be understood only of the ornamented part of them, the wreathen work and pomegranates on them, as there expressed; here it includes, with that, the part below unornamented.

Ver. 17. And *nets of checker-work, and wreaths of chain-work, for the chapiters which* were *upon the top of the pillars,* &c.] These were the ornaments of the chapiters; the former being like thick branches of trees, with their boughs and leaves curiously wrought, as the word signifies, and the latter like fringes, such as the Jews wore at the skirt of their garments: *seven for the one chapiter, and seven for the other chapiter:* perhaps with four rows of checker-work, and three of chain-work.

Ver. 18. *And he made the pillars,* &c.] Or adorned them in this manner: *and two rows round about upon the one net-work, to cover the chapiters that* were *upon the top, with pomegranates;* that is, there were two rows of figures like pomegranates upon the net or branch-work that covered the chapiters that were on the top of the pillars; and Kimchi owns, that some copies so read, on the top of the pillars, instead of pomegranates, though he thinks it a mistake: *and so did he for the other chapiter;* put two rows about that also.

Ver. 19. *And the chapiters that* were *upon the top of the pillars* were of *lily-work in the porch,* &c.] Or such as was in the porch of the temple; the work was like that wrought in the form of the flower of lilies open: *four cubits;* of the five cubits of which the chapiters consisted, four of them were of lily-work, the two rows of pomegranates taking up the other; though Dr. Lightfoot[u] thinks, that at the head of the pillar was a border or circle of lily-work, that stood out four cubits under the chapiter, into and along the porch; a four-cubit circle, after the manner of a spread lily.

Ver. 20. *And the chapiters upon the two pillars* had pomegranates *also above, over-against the belly which* was *by the net-work,* &c.] The supplement is needless, according to the above writer; the sense being only, that the chapiters were above the lily-work, which wrought out as far as the belly of the chapiters, or the middle cubit of them, which the pomegranates filled up: *and the pomegranates* were 200, *in rows round about upon the other chapiter;* there were so many in each, which in all made 400, as in ver. 42. In Jer. lii. 23. it is said there were 96 on a side, and yet 100 round about; the meaning of which is, either that there were 24 to every wind, as the word there is, and four on the four angles, and so in all 100; or, as the above learned writer, when the pillars were set to the wall, only 96 appeared in sight in a row, the other four being hid behind them.

Ver. 21. *And he set up the pillars in the porch of the temple,* &c.] Not at the door or entrance into the temple, as Jarchi, but at the entrance into the porch: *and he set up the right pillar;* or the pillar on the right hand as you went in, which was on the north, the front being east: *and called the name thereof Jachin;* which signifies *he will establish, i. e.* the house to which here was an entrance, so long as the pure worship of God should continue in it: *and he set up the left pillar;* or the pillar on the left hand, which was to the south, unless the position of them was as you come out: *and called the name thereof Boaz;* which signifies *in him,* or *it, is strength,* namely, in the Lord that dwelt there; for this has no respect to Boaz, a prince of the house of Judah, from whom all its kings sprung, as the Targum, in 2 Chron. iii. 17. suggests. These names were given them not by Hiram the artificer, but by Solomon, and which were very expressive; not so much of the nobility of the kingdom of the house of David, as the Targum intimates; or of the church of God, the pillar and ground of truth; as of Christ himself, and the two natures in him, and of his royal dignity, signified by the crowns or chapiters on them, decorated as they were, whose legs are as pillars of marble, and in whom are righteousness and strength; which is no small encouragement to those who are entering into the church of God the temple was a type of; who, should they fear, being feeble and weak, that they should totter and fall, here stands Jachin, to let them know the Lord will establish and settle them; or that they should never hold out to the end, here is Boaz to direct them to Christ, in whom their strength lies, see Cant. iv. 15. Isa. xlv. 24. Allusion is had to these, Rev. iii. 12.

Ver. 22. *And upon the top of the pillars was lily-work,* &c.] Which seems to be repeated from ver. 19. and confirms that: *and so was the work of the pillars finished;* in the manner described.

Ver. 23. *And he made a molten sea,* &c.] A large vessel made of molten brass, which, because of the great quantity of water it held, is called a sea; as it

[t] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34. p. 450.

[u] Prospect of the Temple, c. 13. sect. 2. p. 1075.

was usual with the Jews to call a large collection of waters a sea, as the sea of Tiberias and Galilee. This was made by the man of Tyre, as the pillars, by the order of Solomon, and answered to the brasen laver in the tabernacle, only larger than that; and was not only for the priests to wash their hands and feet in, but to dip upon occasion, and by the Jews [p] is expressly said to be a dipping-place for the priests, see 2 Chron. iv. 6. *ten cubits from the one brim to the other:* which was the diameter of it: it was *round all about;* spherical or circular; not as an hemisphere, as Josephus [q], and Procopius Gazæus, but rather cylindrical: *and his height was five cubits:* from the bottom of it, not including the pedestal of oxen on which it stood: *and a line of 30 cubits did compass it round about;* this was the circumference of it; which answers to the diameter of 10 cubits, or near it, a round number being given not strictly mathematical.

Ver. 24. *And under the brim of it round about there were knops compassing it,* &c.] Of an oval form, and therefore the Targum calls them figures of eggs; in 2 Chron. iv. 3. they are said to have the similitude of oxen, being like the heads of oxen, and the other parts oval; or these were in the form of gourds, as sometimes the word is rendered, 2 Kings iv. 39. which had on them the figures of the heads of oxen, and might serve as cocks to let out the water: *ten in a cubit, compassing the sea round about it;* and as the circumference was 30 cubits, there must be 300 of these in the circuit: *the knops were cast in two rows when it was cast;* for these were cast together with the sea, and being in two rows, there must be in all 600 of them.

Ver. 25. *It stood upon twelve oxen,* &c.] Figures of them in brass, of full proportion: *three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east;* and so turned to the four quarters of the world: *and the sea was set above upon them;* as it were on the backs of them, and their mouths served as spouts or cocks, to let water out of it on all sides: *and all their hinder parts were inward,* that they might not be seen, and which met in a centre; they that were north came against those that were south, and they in the east met with those to the west. The brass of the sea, according to Jacob Leon [r], weighed 1,800 arobas, and, with 12 oxen under, 32,500; each aroba being 25 pounds weight.

Ver. 26. *And it was an hand-breadth thick,* &c.] Or four fingers, as in Jer. lii. 21. *and the brim thereof was wrought like the brim of a cup, with flowers of lilies;* embroidered and engraven on it for ornament-sake: *it contained 2,000 baths;* which is reckoned about 500 barrels of water; it was filled by the Gibeonites; in 2 Chron. iv. 5. it is said to receive and hold 3,000 baths, which the Jewish writers [s] thus reconcile; they suppose here it means so many baths of liquid, as the Targum expresses, there of dry measure, which might be heaped up, and so contain more; but as this was a vessel for water, and this distinction seems to answer no purpose, it may be better to observe, that in common, for the use of the priests, whether for washing their hands and feet, or dipping their bodies, it had no more than 2,000 baths in it, but, if filled up to the brim, it would hold 3,000. How a vessel of such dimensions should hold so much is difficult to account for; the Rabbins say [t], that in the two upper cubits of it it was circular, and in the three lower cubits square, by which they imagine it would hold more, and the position of it on the oxen seems to countenance this; but very probably it was wider, and bellied out in the lower part of it, and so more capacious; but of the contents of this, according to mathematical rules, see a treatise of Bishop Cumberland's [u]. It is said [w] of a temple of Neptune's, in the fore part of it were two signs of him, and another of Amphitrite, and that was a brasen sea. This brasen sea of Solomon was typical of Christ, the fountain opened to wash in for uncleanness, by all that are made priests unto God; and this being larger than the laver in the tabernacle, may denote the greater efficacy of Christ's blood than in any thing in the law of Moses to cleanse from sin; and the larger provision made for it, not only for Israel, but for all the people of God in the several nations of the world, in the four quarters of it; being published, and proclaimed, and directed to by the twelve apostles of Christ, and by all Gospel ministers since, signified by oxen for their laboriousness and strength. In the second temple there were no sea, nor bases, after mentioned, nor lavers, but one, which stood between the porch and the altar, which was for the priests to wash their hands and feet at [x].

Ver. 27. *And he made* 10 *bases of brass,* &c.] Seats, stands, or settles for the 10 lavers after mentioned: *four cubits was the length of one base, and four cubits the breadth thereof;* as broad as it was long, and so a square, that the laver might stand firm upon it: *and three cubits the height of it;* from the ground-plates to the surface, that the priests might be able to reach the lavers, and wash their sacrifices.

Ver. 28. *And the work of the bases was on this manner,* &c.] The following was the form in which they were made: *they had borders;* plates of brass all around them, which enclosed them: *and the borders were between the ledges;* which were short staves or bars of brass, that stood upright all around, like the staves of a cart on each side, or the rails of a balcony, only in double rows; and between these were the borders or plates of brass.

Ver. 29. *And on the borders that were between the ledges were lions, oxen, and cherubims,* &c.] The figures of them, for ornament-sake; the cherubim, being distinguished from lions and oxen, might be figures of men, or else of eagles, as Josephus [y], see Ezek. i. 10. *and upon the ledges there was a base above;* a flat piece of brass laid upon the top of the staves or bars: *and beneath the lions and oxen were certain additions made of thin work;* these, according to Dr. Lightfoot [z], whom I chiefly follow in this account, were shelving plates of brass at the bottom of the borders and bars, where the priests washed the sacrifices; the

[p] T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 41. 1.
[q] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 5.
[r] Relation of Memorable Things in the Temple, ch. 4. p. 21.
[s] Shilte Haggiborim, c. 27. fol. 23. 4.
[t] T. Bab. Eruvin, fol. 14. 2.
[u] Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 3. p. 93, &c.
[w] Pausanias Corinthiaca, sive, l. 2. p. 67.
[x] Shilte Haggiborim, c. 27. fol. 24. 2.
[y] Ut supra.
[z] Prospect of the Temple, ch. 38. sect. 2.

filth of which ran off the easier, through the slopiness of them.

Ver. 30. *And every base had four brasen wheels, and plates of brass*, &c.] Flat pieces or planks of brass, on which the wheels stood, and not on the bare floor; so that these wheels seem only to serve as supporters, not to carry the laver from place to place, as is usually said; for they were not like chariot-wheels, on two sides of the carriage, but set one at each square; and besides, when the lavers were placed upon them, they were fixed in a certain place, ver. 39. *and the four corners thereof had undersetters*; or *shoulders*[a], or pillars, which were placed on the plates of brass the wheels were; and served with them to support the lavers when laid upon the bases, and so were of the same use as men's shoulders, to bear burdens on them: *under the laver were undersetters molten*; cast as, and when and where, the bases were, and the plates on which they stood; this explains the use they were of, being under the laver; these pillars stood at the four corners of the base: *at the side of every addition*: made of thin work, ver. 29. they stood by the side of, or within-side, the sloping shelves.

Ver. 31. *And the mouth of it within the chapiter, and above, was a cubit*, &c.] On the lid of the base rose up a lesser base, called the chapiter, which was circular, like a coronet, as the word signifies, the inside of which was hollow, for the lower part of the laver to rest in; this ascended straight up half a cubit, and then widening, went up half a cubit more, and so in its whole height, as here a cubit; the circuit or circumference of which is called the mouth of the base, into which the feet of the laver were set, the measure of which is next given: *but the mouth thereof was round, after the work of the base, a cubit and an half*; which was either the circumference or the diameter of it; one should think the latter: *and also upon the mouth of it were gravings, with their borders, four-square, not round*: though the mouth was round, the border of it was four-square, which had figures engraved thereon, perhaps the same as on the other borders, lions, oxen, and cherubim.

Ver. 32. *And under the borders were four wheels*, &c.] Not under the borders last mentioned, but those in ver. 29. *and the axle-trees of the wheels were joined to the base*; to the four sides of it: *and the height of a wheel was a cubit and half a cubit*; that is, from the plate of brass on which it stood, to the axis or semicircle of it; so that the highest part of the ring being also a cubit and an half, reached to the top of the base, it being but three cubits high, ver. 27.

Ver. 33. *And the work of the wheels was like the work of a chariot-wheel*, &c.] In the same form and fashion as one of them; the Targum is, "like a chariot of "glory;" a splendid one, curiously wrought; unless reference is had in it to the chariot of Ezekiel's vision: *their axle-trees, and their naves, and their felloes, and their spokes, were all molten*; cast together when the base was.

Ver. 34. *And there were four undersetters to the four corners of one base*, &c.] Or pillars, as in ver. 30. *and the undersetters were of the base itself*; they were cast together, and of the same piece of metal with it.

Ver. 35. *And in the top of the base was there a round compass of half a cubit high*, &c.] The same with the chapiter, ver. 31. which rose up straight half a cubit, and widening upwards half a cubit more, here called the round compass of it: *and on the top of the base, the ledges thereof, and the borders thereof, were of the same*; of the same piece of brass with the base, all being cast together.

Ver. 36. *For on the plates of the ledges thereof, and on the borders thereof*, &c.] In this, and the preceding verse, a different word is used, translated *ledges*, from that in ver. 28, 29. the Targum renders it axle-trees; as if the axle-trees of the wheels, and the borders, circumferences, and rings of them, were meant, in which were the following engravings: it literally signifies hands or handles; and Procopius Gazæus says, that the bases had, in the upper part of them, forms of hands holding a circle like a crown: *he graved cherubims, lions, and palm-trees, according to the proportion of every one*; these figures were made as large as the plates of the ledges, and the borders, would allow room for: *and the addition round about*; which were sloping shelves of brass around the base, ver. 29. these were ornamented in like manner.

Ver. 37. *After this manner he made the ten bases*, &c.] This was the form and fashion of them as above described: *all of them had one casting, one measure, and one size*; they were all cast into the same mould, and were exactly alike in their form, figures, and bigness, and each weighed 2,000 talents, and the weight of a talent was 93 pounds and upwards, according to Jacob Leon[b].

Ver. 38. *Then made he ten lavers of brass*, &c.] There was but one in the tabernacle of Moses, and what became of that is not known: some Jewish writers[c] say it was placed in Solomon's temple, and these lavers, five on the right and five on the left of it; however, here were enough provided for the purpose for the priests to wash their burnt-offerings in, 2 Chron. iv. 6. and were typical of the large provision made in the blood of Christ for the cleansing of his people; whose works, services, and sacrifices, as well as persons and garments, need continual washing in that blood; see Rom. xii. 1. Rev. vii. 13. *one laver contained 40 baths*; and a bath, according to Bishop Cumberland[d], held seven wine-gallons, and two quarts and half a pint: *and every laver was four cubits*; that is, square; this was the diameter of it: and *upon every of the ten bases one laver*; for which they were made, even to set the lavers on, and were exactly of the same measure.

Ver. 39. *And he put five bases on the right side of the house*, &c.] On the south side, which is commonly understood; that is, of the courts of the priests, where they were placed for their use: *and five on the left side of the house*; on the north, as it must be, if the south is on the right; though as the entrance into the temple was at the east, when a man went in, the north must be on the right, and the south on the left; and this seems to be the position by what follows: *and he set the sea on the right side of the house eastward, over-against the south*; and therefore the right side must be the north, which is opposite to the south; the sea

[a] כתפת humeri, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.
[b] Relation of Memorable Things in the Temple, c. 4. p. 23.
[c] Targum, Jarchi, and Kimchi, in 2 Chron. iv. 6.
[d] Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 3. p. 70, 71.

seems to have stood north-east, which was for the priests to wash in before they entered on divine service, see the note on Exod. xxx. 20. hence it became customary with the Heathens to wash before they performed any religious worship[e], particularly the hands and feet[f].

Ver. 40. *And Hiram made the lavers, and the shovels, and the basins,* &c.] The lavers are not the 10 before mentioned, of the make of which an account is before given; but these, according to Jarchi and Ben Gersom, are the same with the pots, ver. 45. and so they are called in 2 Chron. iv. 11. the use of which, as they say, was to put the ashes of the altar into; as the *shovels*, next mentioned, were a sort of besoms to sweep them off, and the *basins* were to receive the blood of the sacrifices, and sprinkle it; no mention is here made of the altar of brass he made, but is in 2 Chron. iv. 11. nor of the flesh-hooks to take the flesh out of the pots, as in 2 Chron. iv. 16. *so Hiram made an end of doing all the work that he made King Solomon for the house of the Lord:* what he undertook, and was employed in, he finished, which were all works of brass; of which a recapitulation is made in the following verses to the end of the 45th, where they are said to be made *of bright brass*, free of all dross and rust; *good*, as the Targum, even the best brass they were were made of; the brass David took from Hadarezer, 1 Chron. xviii. 8. which Josephus[g] too much magnifies, when he says it was better than gold.

Ver. 46. *In the plain of Jericho did the king cast them in the clay-ground,* &c.] Which being thick, as the word signifies, and stiff and close, was fit for such a purpose as casting brass; of such clay, furnaces of earth used to be made to melt metals in; but here were large things to be cast, as the two pillars, the sea, the 10 lavers, &c. moulds were made in the ground, and so the melted brass was poured into them, which gave it its different forms; this, no doubt, was done by Haram, though said to be done by the king, because done by his orders: the place where it was done was a part of the plain of Jericho, which lay *between Succoth and Zarthan;* Succoth was in the tribe of Gad, on the other side Jordan; Zarthan was near it on this side, in the tribe of Manasseh, the same that is called Zartanah, ch. iv. 12. and Zaretan, Josh. iii. 16. and Zeredathah, 2 Chron. iv. 17. The first casters of brass are said[h] to be Theodorus and Rhœcus, both Samians.

Ver. 47. *And Solomon left all the vessels* unweighed, *because they were exceeding many,* &c.] The vessels of brass before mentioned, being so large, at least some of them, and so numerous; the Targum is, he laid them up, or placed them; he brought them from whence they were cast, and put them in the sanctuary without weighing them: neither *was the weight of the brass found out;* or *searched*[i]; it never was inquired into; or, as the Targum, there was no end of it, it was so much.

Ver. 48. *And Solomon made all the vessels that* pertained *unto the house of the Lord,* &c.] That is, he ordered them to be made, even all that were in the tabernacle of Moses; all were new-made, excepting the ark, mercy-seat, and cherubim: *the altar of gold:* the altar of incense, which was made of cedar, covered with gold, ch. vi. 20. hence called the golden altar, Rev. viii. 3. *and the table of gold, whereupon the shew-bread* was; this includes all the tables, for there were ten of them, 2 Chron. iv. 8. where they are said to be placed, five on the right hand, and five on the left; which, according to the Jews[k], were not on the right and left of the temple, but on the right and left of the table of Moses, and which being placed on the north side, these must be also, Exod. xl. 22. there being more tables in the temple than in the tabernacle may denote the greater provision of spiritual food in the word and ordinances of the Gospel church, of which the temple was a figure, than under the legal dispensation.

Ver. 49. *And the candlesticks of pure gold, five on the right* side, *and five on the left, before the oracle,* &c.] These stood in the holy place, where the shew-bread tables did, right before the holy of holies; there were ten of these as of them, which were placed, as the same Jewish writers say, not on the right and left of the temple, but on the right and left of Moses's candlestick, which stood on the south side, Exod. xl. 24. these may denote the greater degree of spiritual light in the church of Christ under the Gospel dispensation than under the law: *with the flowers;* the figures of flowers, such as were wrought on the candlestick of Moses: *and the lamps;* which were seven to each candlestick, and so must be in all 70; which may put us in mind of the 70 disciples of Christ, some of the first lights of the Gospel church: *and the tongues* of *gold;* which were used to take the wicks out of the oil, and put into the lamps.

Ver. 50. *And the bowls,* &c.] To keep the oil in: *and the snuffers;* to trim the lamps with; though some interpret the word of musical instruments, as the Targum, of psalteries: *and the basins;* which were to receive the blood of the sacrifices; and, Ben Gersom thinks, particularly the blood of those that were brought into the sanctuary, see Heb. xiii. 11. there were an hundred of them, 2 Chron. iv. 8. *and the spoons;* which held the incense: *and the censers* of *pure gold;* with which the coals were carried from one altar to another, on which the incense was burnt; not only those but all the other vessels were of pure gold: *and the hinges* of *gold*, both *for the doors of the inner house,* the *most holy* place, and *for the doors of the house,* to wit, *of the temple;* the holy of holies and the holy place, the hinges of the doors of each, on which they were hung, and turned, were of gold; so grand and magnificent was this edifice, and so liberal Solomon in the building of it.

Ver. 51. *So was ended all the work that King Solomon made for the house of the Lord,* &c.] Which he ordered to be made to be put into it, either for the ornament of it, or for the use and service of it; all was completely finished in the space of seven years: *and Solomon had brought in the things which David his fa-*

[e] Vid. Virgil. Bucolic. Eclog. 8. affer aquam, &c. Æneid. 2. attrectare nefas, &c. Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 1.
[f] Vid. Sperling de Bapt. Ethnic. p. 88, 89, 101.
[g] Antiqu. l. 7. c. 5. sect. 3.
[h] Pausan. Arcadica, sive, l. 8. p. 479. & Bœotica, sive, l. 9. p. 607.

[i] לא נחקר nec investigari potuerit, Tigurine version; non pervestigatum est, Junius, Tremellius, Piscator.
[k] T. Bab. Menachot, fol. 98. Kimchi in loc. Targum in 2 Chron. iv. 8.

ther had dedicated; had laid up for, and devoted to the building of the temple, and for the service of it; not all, but what was left; what was over and above there was a need of; though the Jews commonly say, that he made use of none of his father's, but built it and furnished it at his own expense; for which reason he did not begin to build as soon as he came to the throne, they suppose, but stayed four years, until he had laid up a sufficiency of his own to defray the expense of it; but it is certain he made use of the brass his father reserved for this work, see 1 Chron. xviii. 8. and which, perhaps it may be said, is the reason it is not mentioned here as laid up: even *the silver, and the gold, and the vessels, did he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord*: he did not convert them to his own use, but laid them up in the treasury of the sanctuary, for the purchase of sacrifices, the repair of the house in future time, *&c.*

CHAP. VIII.

THIS chapter gives an account of the introduction of the ark into the temple, ver. 1—9. of the glory of the Lord filling it, ver. 10, 11. of a speech Solomon made to the people concerning the building of the temple, and how he came to be engaged in it, ver. 12—21. of a prayer of his he put up on this occasion, requesting, that what supplications soever were made at any time, or on any account, by Israelites or strangers, might be accepted by the Lord, ver. 22—53. and of his blessing the people of Israel at the close of it, with some useful exhortations, ver. 54—61. and of the great number of sacrifices offered up by him, and the feast he made for the people, upon which he dismissed them, ver. 62—66.

Ver. 1. *Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel*, &c.] The judges in the several cities, or senators of the great sanhedrim, as others; though it is a question whether as yet there was such a court: *and all the heads of the tribes*: the princes of the 12 tribes: *the chief of the fathers of the children of Israel*: the principal men of the ancient families in every tribe: *unto King Solomon in Jerusalem*: these he summoned together to himself there where the temple was built: *that they might bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion*: whither David brought it, when he had taken that fort, so called, and dwelt in it; and from this mountain Solomon proposed to bring it up to the temple, on a higher mountain, Moriah, not far from one another.

Ver. 2. *And all the men of Israel assembled themselves unto King Solomon at the feast*, &c.] Not of tabernacles, as the Targum on 2 Chron. v. 3. and so Jarchi; though that was in the same month next mentioned, and began on the 15th of it, and held seven days; wherefore this must be the feast of the dedication of the temple, and which was kept before that; since both lasted 14 days, and the people were dismissed on the 23d of the month; now not only the above principal persons convened, but a vast number of the common people got together, to see the solemnity of removing the ark, and of dedicating the temple, and to attend the feast of it, and the more, since in a few days was the time for all the males in Israel to appear there: *in the month Ethanim, which is the 7th month*; it was, as the Targum says, originally the first month; but upon the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in Ab or Nisan, that became the first month, and this was the 7th from that; and is the same with Tisri, which answers to part of September, and part of October, here called Ethanim; which some render the month of the ancients, others of strong ones; either because of the many feasts that were in it, as some say; or because it was the time of in-gathering all the increase and fruits of the earth, which strengthen and support man's life; or rather of *never-failing*, *i. e.* waters, showers falling in this month, and the rivers full of water[l]; so September is *septimus imber*, according to Isidore[m], and the three following months are alike derived; this, by the Egyptians, was called Theuth, and was with them the first month in the year[n]; so Porphyry says[o], with the Egyptians the beginning of the year was not Aquarius, as with the Romans, but Cancer; and so the month of September was the first with the Ethiopians[p], and with most people[q]; though with the Chinese about the middle of Aquarius[r]. Now, though the temple was finished in the 8th month, ch. vi. 38. it was not dedicated until the 7th in the following year; it required time to finish the utensils and vessels, and put them in their proper place, and for the drying of the walls, *&c.*

Ver. 3. *And all the elders of Israel came*, &c.] To Zion, the city of David: *and the priests took up the ark*: from thence; in 2 Chron. v. 4. it is said the Levites did it, whose business it was, Deut. xxxi. 25. and so the priests might be called; for every priest was a Levite, though every Levite was not a priest, and the priests did at all times bear the ark; see Josh. iii. 15. and vi. 4. 2 Sam. xv. 29.

Ver. 4. *And they brought up the ark of the Lord*, &c.] From the city of David to the temple: *and the tabernacle of the congregation*: not the tent David made for the ark, though that might be brought also, but the tabernacle of Moses, which had been many years at Gibeon; but now removed to Zion, and from thence to the temple, where it was laid up, as having been a sacred thing; that it might not be put to common or superstitious uses, and to prevent the being of more places than one for worship: *and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle*; as the candlestick, shew-bread table, incense-altar, *&c.* *even those did the priests and the Levites bring up*: some brought one, and some

[l] Vid. Hackman. Præcidan. Sacr. p. 130, 131.
[m] Origin. l. 5. c. 33.
[n] Lactant. de Fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 6.
[o] De Antro Nymph. prope finem.
[p] Ludolf. Lexic. Ethiopic. p. 65. & Hist. Ethiop. l. 3. c. 6.
[q] Julian. Opera, par. 1. orat. 4. p. 290, 291.
[r] Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 1. p. 92.

another; the priests brought the ark, and the Levites the vessels.

Ver. 5. *And King Solomon, and all the congregation of Israel, that were assembled together,* &c.] On this solemn occasion: were *with him before the ark:* whilst it was in the court of the priests, before it was carried into the most holy place: *sacrificing sheep and oxen, that could not be told nor numbered for multitude;* the phrase seems to be hyperbolical, and designed to denote a great number.

Ver. 6. *And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto his place,* &c.] Destined for it, the like to which it had in the tabernacle: *into the oracle of the house, to the most holy* place; that part of the house where the divine oracle was, the holy of holies; for though into it none but the high-priest might enter, and he but once a year; yet in case of necessity, as for the repair of it, which the Jews* gather from hence, other priests might enter, as was the case now; an high-priest could not carry in the ark himself, and therefore it was necessary to employ others; and besides, as yet the divine Majesty had not taken up his residence in it: even *under the wings of the cherubim;* the large ones which Solomon had made, ch. vi. 23. not those of Moses.

Ver. 7. *For the cherubim spread forth* their *two wings over the place of the ark,* &c.] The most holy place where the ark stood, even from wall to wall: *and the cherubim covered the ark, and the staves thereof above;* so that neither could be seen.

Ver. 8. *And they drew out the staves,* &c.] Not made them larger, as Ben Gersom, than those in the tabernacle of Moses, this place being larger than that; nor did they draw them wholly out, and lay them up in the sanctuary, there being no further use for them, the ark having now a fixed place, and not to be removed; which would have been contrary to Exod. xxv. 15. but they drew them out some little way: *that the ends of the staves were seen out in the holy place before the oracle;* not in that part of the temple commonly called the holy place, in distinction from the most holy, for that seems to be denied in the next clause; nor could they be seen there, since there was a wall and a vail between them; though some think they might be seen when the door was opened, and the vail turned aside; and these also pushing against the vail, might be seen prominent, like the breasts of a woman under a covering, as the Jews express it; but the sense is, that the ends of these were seen out of the ark from under the wings of the cherubim, being a little drawn, in that part of the most holy place which is before the oracle or mercy-seat: *and they were not seen without;* neither quite out of the ark, nor without the most holy place, nor in the holy place; but were only seen by the high-priest when he went in on the day of atonement, and served as a direction to him to go between them before the ark, and there perform his work†; which, through the darkness of the place, and the ark being covered with the wings of the cherubim, he could not otherwise discern the exact place where it stood: *and there they are unto this day;* when the writer of this book lived, even in the same situation.

Ver. 9. There was *nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb,* &c.] That is, there were no other writings; or, as Ben Gersom says, no other part of the law, but the decalogue; otherwise he observes there were in it Aaron's rod and the pot of manna, according to Heb. ix. 4. though the particle there may be rendered *at,* or *with,* or *by,* see the notes there; and so they might be not within it, but in some place on the sides of it, see Deut. xxxi. 26. *when the Lord made* a covenant *with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt;* about two months after.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place,* &c.] The most holy place, having set up the ark of the Lord there, who were all sanctified that were there, and did not wait by course as at other times, see 2 Chron. v. 11. where, in ver. 12, 13. it is said, that at this time, the Levites, who were singers of the families of Asaph, Heman, and Jeduthun, arrayed in fine linen, with their musical instruments in their hands, stood at the east end of the altar of burnt-offering, and 120 priests, blowing their trumpets, praised the Lord together with one sound, declaring his goodness and his mercy, which endure for ever: and then it was *that the cloud filled the house of the Lord:* the whole temple, both the holy of holies and the holy place, and the court of the priests; so that it was visible to all, and was a token of the divine presence of God, of his taking possession of his house, and of his taking up his residence in it.

Ver. 11. *So that the priests could not stand to minister, because of the cloud,* &c.] Either through the darkness it first caused, or through the light that broke out of it, which was dazzling to them, or through the terror it struck their minds with; they could neither minister in the holy place, by offering incense there; and as for the most holy place, none but the high-priest could minister there, and that on one day only; nor in the court of the priests, at the altar of burnt-offerings: *for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord;* a bright and glorious stream came forth from the cloud, and spread itself all over the house, and then took up its abode in the most holy place as in the tabernacle, Exod. xl. 34. see Ezek. xliii. 2, 4, 5.

Ver. 12. *And then spake Solomon,* &c.] Perceiving by this symbol that the Lord was come into his house, to take up his dwelling in it, and seeing the priests and people in consternation at it, spake the following words to their comfort: *the Lord said that he would dwell in the thick darkness;* and now was fulfilling his promise, and therefore to be considered not as a token of his displeasure, but of his gracious presence; this was done for the greater awe of the divine Majesty, and to denote the darkness of the former dispensation; reference may be had to Lev. xvi. 2. or rather this was now said by the Lord, that is, it appeared to be his resolution and determination to dwell in this manner; the Targum is, "the Lord is pleased to cause his Shechinah or divine Majesty to dwell in Jerusalem," in the temple there. This was imitated by the Heathens: hence the Lacedemonians had a temple dedicated to

* Vid. Maimon. Hilchot Beth Habechirah, c. 7. sect. 23.

† Vid. Misn. Yoma, c. 5. sect. 1.

Jupiter Scotitas, or the dark, as Pausanias[v] relates; and the Indian Pagans to this day affect darkness in their temples, and are very careful that no light enter into them but by the door, which is commonly strait and low, and by little crevices in the windows[w].

Ver. 13. *I have surely built thee an house to dwell in,* &c.] Turning himself from the priests and people, he quieted with a few words, he addressed the Lord; having built an house for him, for his worship and glory, with this view, that he might dwell in it, he was now, by the above token, fully assured it would be an habitation for him: *a settled place for thee to abide in for ever;* which is observed in distinction from the tabernacle of Moses, which was often removed from place to place, otherwise this did not continue for ever; though Solomon might hope it would, at least unto the times of the Messiah; and indeed such a building on this spot, for such use, did continue so long, excepting the interval of the 70-years' captivity in Babylon.

Ver. 14. *And the king turned his face about,* &c.] He was before the altar, ver. 22. with his face to that first, and looking towards the holy and the most holy place, filled with the cloud and glory; and now he turned himself and stood with the altar behind him, and looking to the court of the people: *and blessed all the congregation of Israel;* either blessed the Lord before them, or prayed for blessings for them, or congratulated them upon the Lord's taking up his residence in the temple, which was so great an honour and favour to them: *and all the congregation of Israel stood;* ready to receive the king's blessing, and in honour of him, and reverence to the divine Being. The Jews say, none might sit in the court but the kings of the house of David.

Ver. 15. *And he said, blessed be the Lord God of Israel,* &c.] All praise and glory, honour and blessing, be ascribed to the Lord; who had afresh shewn himself to be Israel's covenant-God, by taking up his residence among them in the temple he had filled with his glory: *which spake with his mouth to David my father, and hath with his hand fulfilled it;* who graciously promised him he should have a son that should build an house for him, and which he had by his power and providence faithfully performed; or rather which spake concerning David, so Noldius[x]; for God did not speak with his mouth to David, but to Nathan, of him: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 16. *Since the day that I brought forth my people Israel out of Egypt,* &c.] Which was now about 488 years ago; see ch. vi. 1, 38. and viii. 2. *I chose no city out of all the tribes of Israel to build an house, that my name might be therein;* he had chosen one in his mind from all eternity; but he had not made known this choice, nor the place he had chosen; he gave hints by Moses, that there was a place which he should choose, or declare he had chosen to put his name in, but did not express it, Deut. xii. 5, 11. but now it was a clear case that he had chosen Jerusalem, and that was the city he always had in view, see 2 Chron. vi. 6. *but I chose David to be over my people Israel;* to be their king, and to him he gave the first hint of the place where the temple was to be built, 1 Chron. xxii. 1. and he chose no man, and his family with him, before him, to rule over Israel, and be concerned in such a work, see 2 Chron. vi. 5.

Ver. 17. *And it was in the heart of David my father,* &c.] His mind was disposed to it, his heart was set upon it, he had taken up a resolution: *to build an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel;* for his worship and service, for his honour and glory, 2 Sam. vii. 3.

Ver. 18. *And the Lord said unto David my father,* &c.] By Nathan the prophet: *whereas it was in thine heart to build an house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thine heart;* his design was good, and so far it was acceptable to the Lord, that he thought of such a thing, though it was not his pleasure that he should do it, as follows.

Ver. 19. *Nevertheless, thou shalt not build the house,* &c.] Which is implied in the question in 2 Sam. vii. 5. *but thy son that shall come forth out of thy loins, he shall build the house unto my name;* which is expressed in 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13.

Ver. 20. *And the Lord hath performed his word that he spake,* &c.] To David, concerning his son's building the temple: *and I am risen up in the room of David my father, and sit on the throne of Israel, as the Lord promised;* succeeded him in the kingdom: *and have built an house for the name of the Lord God of Israel;* the temple he had now finished; and thus the promise to David was punctually fulfilled, that he should have a son that should succeed him in the throne, and build the house of the Lord.

Ver. 21. *And I have set there a place for the ark,* &c.] The most holy place: *wherein is the covenant of the Lord;* the two tables of stone, on which were the covenant of the Lord, as the Targum: *which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt;* as in ver. 9.

Ver. 22. *And Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord,* &c.] The altar of the burnt-offering in the court of the priests, where he prayed the following prayer; and which altar was typical of Christ, who is always to be in sight in prayer, and through whom all sacrifices of prayer and praise become acceptable to God. In 2 Chron. vi. 13. he is said to stand upon a scaffold of brass, five cubits long, five broad, and three high, which stood in the midst of the court; it was a sort of a pulpit, round, as a laver, for which the word is sometimes used, and on which he kneeled: *in the presence of all the congregation of Israel;* who stood in the great court before him, called the court of Israel: *and spread forth his hands toward heaven;* and hence it appears, that though Solomon stood before the altar, he did not lay hold on it with his hands, as the Heathens did when they prayed: for they say[y], that prayer alone does not appease the Deity, unless he that prays also lays hold on the altar with his hands; hence altars, at first, as we are told[z], were called

[v] Laconica, sive, l. 3. p. 178.
[w] Agreement of Customs between the East-Indians and Jews, art. 5. p. 35.
[x] Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 117. No. 496. So Sept.

[y] Macrob. Saturnal. l. 3. c. 2. Vid. Sperling. de Baptism. Ethnic. c. 6. p. 103.
[z] Varro Rer. Divin. l. 5. apud ib.

ansæ; and lifting up or spreading the hands towards heaven was a proper gesture with the Greeks and Romans[a].

Ver. 23. *And he said, Lord God of Israel,* &c.] Their covenant-God and Father, whereby he was distinguished from all the gods of the Gentiles: there is *no god like thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath*; none among the angels in heaven, nor among kings and civil magistrates on earth, who both are sometimes called *Elohim*, gods; but only in a figurative sense, and not to be compared with the one only true God, for the perfection of his nature, or the works of his hands: *who keepest covenant and mercy with thy servants that walk before thee with all their heart*; performs his promises, by which he both declares his mercy or goodness, and his faithfulness to such who walk before him in his ways, and according to his word, in the sincerity and uprightness of their hearts.

Ver. 24. *Who hast kept with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him,* &c.] Concerning a son, his successor, and the builder of the temple: *thou spakest also with thy mouth, and hast fulfilled* it *with thine hand, as* it is *this day*; the temple being now finished by him, see ver. 15.

Ver. 25. *Therefore now, Lord God of Israel, keep with thy servant David my father that thou promisedst him,* &c.] That as he had fulfilled one part of his promise respecting himself, his immediate successor, so that he would fulfil the other respecting his more remote offspring: *saying, there shall not fail thee a man in my sight, to sit on the throne of Israel*; one of David's posterity to inherit his throne and kingdom, but with this proviso: *so that thy children take heed to their way*; in what way they walk, and how they walk in it: *that they walk before me as thou hast walked before me*: meaning as David walked, see Psal. cxxxii. 11, 12.

Ver. 26. *And now, O God of Israel, let thy word, I pray thee, be verified,* &c.] Truly made good, and punctually performed: *which thou spakest unto thy servant David my father*; the same request in other words, repeated to shew his ardent and vehement desire to have it fulfilled.

Ver. 27. *But will God indeed dwell on the earth?* &c.] Is it true? can any credit be given to it? who could ever have thought it, that so great and glorious a Being, who inhabits eternity, dwells in the highest heavens, should ever condescend to dwell on earth? such was the amazing condescension of Christ, the son of God, to tabernacle in human nature with men on earth, to which Solomon perhaps might have respect; his temple being the figure of his body, in which the Godhead dwells, John ii. 19. Col. ii. 9. see John. i. 14. *behold, the heaven, and the heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee*; not only the visible heavens, but the third heaven, where the throne of God is, and is the habitation of angels and saints; though there God makes the most glorious displays of himself, yet he is so immense and infinite, that he is not to be comprehended and circumscribed in any place whatever: *how much less this house that I have builded?* though temples built for idols contain them, and are large enough, yet Solomon had no notion, when he built his temple, though it was for the name of God, that he was restrained to it, but dwelt everywhere, filling heaven and earth with his presence.

Ver. 28. *Yet have thou respect to the prayer of thy servant, and to his supplication, O Lord my God,* &c.] Meaning himself, who, though a king, acknowledged himself, and esteemed it an honour to be the servant of the Lord, and who was also an humble suppliant of his, and desired his prayers and supplications might be attended to: *to hearken unto the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prayeth before thee this day*; the particulars of which follow.

Ver. 29. *That thine eyes may be open towards this house night and day,* &c.] That is, to the people that pray in it, as they are to his righteous ones, Psal. xxxiii. 15. even *towards the place of which thou hast said, my name shall be there*: there should be some displays of his presence, power, and providence, of his goodness, grace, and mercy: *that thou mayest hearken unto the prayer which thy servant shall make towards this place*: not only to what he should make in it, but to what he should make in his own house, with his face directed towards this, as would be, and was the practice of good people in after-times, yea, even when the temple lay in ruins; see Dan. vi. 10. figuring the respect gracious souls have to Christ by faith in their prayers, in whom the Godhead dwells bodily, see Jon. ii. 4. and it is observable, according to a Jewish canon[b], one at a distance, in another land, was not only to turn his face to the land of Israel, but direct his heart to Jerusalem, and the temple, and the holy of holies; and if in the land, to Jerusalem, &c. and if in Jerusalem, not only to the temple, and holy of holies, but if behind the mercy-seat, he was to turn his face to it; which was a symbol of Christ, the propitiatory and throne of grace, to be looked unto by faith, Rom. iii. 25. 1 John ii. 2. Heb. iv. 16.

Ver. 30. *And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray towards this place,* &c.] Not only he desires his prayers might be heard, but those of the people of Israel, then, and at all times in succeeding ages, whenever they should look towards the temple, and to him that was typified by it; to whose blood, righteousness, sacrifice and mediation, the acceptance of prayers with God is to be ascribed: *and hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place*; for though he condescended to take up his residence in the temple, yet his more proper and more glorious dwelling was in heaven, and from whence, notwithstanding the distance of it, he could hear the prayers of his people, and does: *and when thou hearest, forgive*; manifest and apply pardoning grace and mercy on account of sins confessed, and repented of; or remove calamities and distresses on account of sin, which sometimes is meant, and frequently in this prayer, by the forgiveness of sin.

Ver. 31. *If any man trespass against his neighbour,* &c.] By being unfaithful in a trust committed to him,

[a] Homer. Iliad. 3. ver. 275. & 6. ver. 301. Vid. Barth. Animadv. ad Claudian. in Rufin. l. 2. ver. 203.

[b] Schulchan Aruch, par. 1. c. 94. sect. 1.

or the like: *and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear;* he denying that ever any thing was committed to his trust, and there being no witnesses of it, the judge obliges him to take an oath he never had any: *and the oath come before thine altar in this house;* where it was taken, as in the presence of God, and as appealing to him: hence in corrupt times they came to swear by the altar, Matt. xxiii. 20. and so the Heathens used to take their oaths in the temples of their gods, and at their altars, as the instances of Callicrates[c] and Hannibal[d] shew, and others Grotius refers to; yea, they also laid hold on the altar, at least touched it when they swore[e], to give the greater sanction to the oath.

Ver. 32. *Then hear thou in heaven,* &c.] When the injured person makes supplication to have justice done him: *and do, and judge thy servants;* contending with one another, the one affirming, the other denying: *condemning the wicked, by bringing his way upon his head;* inflicting upon him the punishment imprecated by him in his oath: *and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness;* by making it appear that his cause is just.

Ver. 33. *When thy people Israel shall be smitten down before the enemy,* &c.] Beaten and routed, many slain, and others carried captive; which had been their case, and might be again, and was, though now a time of peace: *because they have sinned against thee;* which always was the reason of their being given up into the hands of their enemies: *and shall turn again to thee;* to thy worship, as the Targum, having fallen into idolatry, which was generally the case when they fell before their enemies: *and confess thy name;* own him to be the true God, acknowledge his justice in their punishment, confess their sin, repent of it, and give him glory: *and pray and make supplication unto thee in this house;* not the captives, unless it should be rendered, as it may, *toward this house*[f]; but those that escaped, or their brethren that went not out to battle, who should pray for them here.

Ver. 34. *Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel,* &c.] It being not personal, but public sins, which would be the cause of such a calamity: *and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers;* as had been often their case in the time of the judges.

Ver. 35. *When heaven is shut up,* &c.] As it may be said to be when the air is quite serene, and not a cloud in it: *and there is no rain;* in its season, neither the former nor the latter, as it was in the times of Elijah: *because they have sinned against thee;* want of rain was threatened in case of sin, and was always the effect of it, Lev. xxvi. 19, 20. Deut. xxviii. 23, 24. *if they pray towards this place;* in any part of the country where they were; for it sometimes rained on one city, and not on another, Amos. iv. 7. *and confess thy name;* own his power and his providence, and the justness of his dealings with them: *and turn from their sin, when thou afflictest them;* their affliction being made useful, to bring them to a sense of their sin, and to repentance for it, and reformation from it; or, *when thou hearest* or *answerest them*[g]; so the Targum, receivest their prayer; thus the goodness of God leads to repentance.

Ver. 36. *Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy servants, and of thy people Israel,* &c.] By removing the judgment of drought upon them: *that thou teach them the good way wherein they should walk;* the way of worship and duty prescribed by the Lord which was good in itself, and good for them, good things being enjoyed by them that walk therein; and this the Lord sometimes teaches by afflictions, as well as by his word; but whenever he does it, it is by his spirit, and then afflictions are blessings, Psal. xciv. 12. see 2 Chron. vi. 27. where the same phrase is differently rendered: *and give rain upon thy land which thou hast given to thy people for an inheritance;* as he did at the prayer of Elijah, James v. 18.

Ver. 37. *If there be in the land famine,* &c.] Through want of rain, or any other cause, as there had been a three-years' famine in the time of David, and it is supposed it might be again, though Canaan was a land flowing with milk and honey: *if there be pestilence;* as there had been, for David's numbering the people: *blasting;* or blights, occasioned by the east-wind: *mildew;* a kind of clammy dew, which falling on plants, corn, &c. corrupts and destroys them, see Amos iv. 9. *locust,* or *if there be caterpillar;* creatures very pernicious to the fruits of the earth, and cause a scarcity of them, see Joel i. 4. *if their enemy besiege them in the land of their cities;* so that they cannot go out to gather the increase of the earth, or till their land: *whatsoever plague, whatsoever sickness* there be; whatever stroke from the hand of God, or what judgment or calamity soever befalls.

Ver. 38. *What prayer and supplication soever,* &c.] On account of any of the above things, or any other: *be made by any man,* or *by all thy people Israel;* by a private man, for such an one might go to the temple and pray by himself, see Luke xviii. 10, 11. or by the public congregation: *which shall know every man the plague of his own heart;* be sensible of his sin as the cause of his distress, and own it, though ever so privately committed, which none knows but God and his own heart; and which may be only an heart-sin, not actually committed; as all sin is originally in the heart, and springs from it, that is the source of all wickedness; it may respect the corruption of nature, in-dwelling sin, which truly deserves this name, and which every good man is led to observe, confess, and bewail, Psal. li. 4, 5. In 2 Chron. vi. 29. it is, *shall know his own sore and his own grief;* what particularly affects him, and gives him pain and sorrow, as every man best knows his own affliction and trouble, and so can best represent his own case to the Lord: *and spread forth his hands towards this house;* pray with his face towards it, and his hands spread out, a prayer-gesture, and what was now used by Solomon, ver. 22.

Ver. 39. *Then hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place,* &c.] Which was more properly so than this Solomon had built, and the Lord had taken possession of: *and forgive;* remove the calamity and distress, be it what it may: *and do, and give to every man according to his*

[c] Cornel. Nep. Vit. Dion. l. 10. c. 8.
[d] Ib. Hannibal. l. 23. c. 2.
[e] Vid. Lydii Dissert. de Jurament. c. 4. sect. 7.
[f] So Pool and Patrick.
[g] כי תענם cum exaudieris eos, Vatablus.

ways, whose heart thou knowest: that his prayer is cordial and sincere, his confession and repentance genuine, and that he is truly sensible of his sin, and sorry for it, and is pure in his intentions and resolutions, through divine grace, to depart from it for the future: *(for thou, even thou only knowest the hearts of all the children of men:)* he knows all men, the hearts of them all, what is in them, what comes out of them, and is according to them; omniscience belongs only to God; it is his prerogative to know the heart and search the reins, see Jer. xvii. 9, 10.

Ver. 40. *That they may fear thee*, &c.] For his goodness-sake in hearing their prayer, removing their affliction, and bestowing his blessings on them, particularly in forgiving their sins, see Psal. cxxx. 4. Hos. iii. 5. *all the days that they live in the land which thou gavest unto our fathers*: not only for the present, whilst the mercy is fresh, but all the days of their lives; to which they were the more obliged by the good land they possessed as a divine gift, and which they held by the tenure of their obedience, Isa. i. 19.

Ver. 41. *Moreover, concerning a stranger that* is *not of thy people Israel*, &c.] One of another country, not belonging to any of the tribes of Israel, yet having some knowledge of, and disposition to, the true worship of God: *but cometh out of a far country for thy name's sake*; as the Ethiopian eunuch did, to pray to him, worship him, and offer such sacrifices as were allowed a Gentile to do, Lev. xxii. 18. led thereunto by the fame of him, as follows.

Ver. 42. *(For they shall hear of thy great name*, &c.] Of his great name, Jehovah; of him as the eternal, immutable, and self-existent Being; of the perfections of his nature, as displayed in his mighty works: *and of thy strong hand, and of thy stretched-out arm:)* which had done formerly such mighty works in Egypt, at the Red sea, in the wilderness, in the land of Canaan, in the times of David, and still under the reign of Solomon, and even in future ages, besides the works of creation and providence in general: *when he shall come and pray towards this house*; not being admitted into it, only into a court, which in after-times was called the court of the Gentiles, see Acts xxi. 19.

Ver. 43. *Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place*, &c.] The prayer of the stranger: *and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee for*; which were consistent with the will of God and his glory, and for the good of the stranger; this is more absolutely and unconditionally expressed than the requests for the Israelites; it is not desired that he would do by them according to their ways, and if they turned from their sins, or knew the plague of their hearts; the reason of which is supposed to be, because the Israelites knew the will of God, when the strangers did not; and therefore it is desired that, notwithstanding their ignorance, and their non-compliance with the divine will, through that, they might be heard and answered: *that all people of the earth may know thy name, to fear thee, as do thy people Israel*; might know him to be a God, hearing and answering prayer, forgiving sin, and bestowing favours, which might lead them to fear him and his goodness, as Israel did: *and that they may know that this house, which I have builded, is called by thy name*; that he dwelt in it, granted his presence, heard and received the supplications of men, answered their requests, and accepted of their sacrifices here. Solomon seems to have had knowledge of the calling of the Gentiles, and to desire it.

Ver. 44. *If thy people go out to battle against their enemy*, &c.] In a foreign country, threatening to invade them, or having trespassed on their borders, or some way or other infringed on their liberties and privileges, and so given them just occasion to go to war with them: *whithersoever thou shalt send them*; this case supposes their asking counsel of God, or having a direction and commission from him by a prophet, or some other way, to engage in war with the enemy: *and shall pray unto the Lord toward the city which thou hast chosen, and* toward *the house I have built for thy name*; for, notwithstanding the justness of their cause, and having a warrant from God to go to war, yet they were to pray to him for success when at a distance, even in a foreign land, and about to engage the enemy; and this they were to do, turning their faces towards the city of Jerusalem, and the temple there; declaring thereby that their dependence was upon the Lord that dwelt there, and their expectation of victory was only from him.

Ver. 45. *Then hear thou in heaven their prayer and their supplication*, &c.] For success: *and maintain their cause*; do them justice, and avenge their injuries, as the Targum; let it appear that their cause is right, by giving them victory.

Ver. 46. *If they sin against thee*, &c.] The same persons when they were gone forth to battle, not observing the divine commands as they should: *for there is no man that sinneth not*; such are the depravity of human nature, the treachery of the heart, and the temptations of Satan, of which Solomon had early notice, and was afterwards still more confirmed in the truth of, Eccl. vii. 20. *and thou be angry with them*; for their sins, and resent their conduct: so as to *deliver them to the enemy, so that they carry them away captive unto the land of the enemy, far or near*; as into Assyria or Babylon, whither they were carried.

Ver. 47. *Yet if they shall bethink themselves in the land whither they were carried captives*, &c.] Or, *return to their heart**; remember their sins, the cause of their captivity, and reflect upon them: *and repent of them, and make supplication unto thee in the land of them that carried them captives*; though and while they are in such a state: *saying, we have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness*; which phrases include all their sins, with all the aggravated circumstances of them, and their sense of them, and contrition for them.

Ver. 48. *And so return unto thee, with all their heart, and with all their soul*, &c.] In the most sincere and cordial manner, with great ingenuity and uprightness; the Targum is, "return unto thy worship;" relinquishing false worship they had given into, and serve the Lord in the best manner they could: *in the land of their enemies, which led them away captive*; and so at a distance from that temple, and the service of it, which

* והשיבו אל לבם & reversi fuerint ad cor suum, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus.

they could not attend: *and pray unto thee toward their land, which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name*; that is, turning their faces when they prayed towards the land of Israel, the city of Jerusalem, and the temple in it; this they could do in a foreign land; see Dan. vi. 10.

Ver. 49. *Then hear thou their prayers, and their supplication, in heaven thy dwelling-place*, &c.] For their deliverance out of captivity: *and maintain their cause*; plead it, and do them justice, avenge their injuries, and deliver them.

Ver. 50. *And forgive thy people that have sinned against thee, and all their transgressions wherein they have transgressed against thee*, &c.] By returning them to their own land; by which it would appear that the Lord had forgiven their trespasses, as well as by what follows: *and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them*: for it is in the power of God to work upon the affections of men, and dispose their minds to use his people well, and to pity them under their distresses, as the Chaldeans did the Jews in Babylon, Psal. cvi. 46.

Ver. 51. *For they be thy people, and thine inheritance*, &c.] Whom the Lord had chosen above all people, to be a special people to him, and to be his portion and possession; see Deut. vii. 6. and xxxii. 9. *which thou broughtest forth out of Egypt, from the midst of the furnace of iron*; hard and cruel bondage in Egypt: see the note on Deut. iv. 20.

Ver. 52. *That thine eyes may be open to the supplication of thy servant*, &c.] That is, attentive to it, meaning himself and his present supplication; or any other he should hereafter put up in this place: *and unto the supplication of thy people Israel, to hearken unto them in all that they call unto thee*: at any time, and upon any account; so far as may be agreeable to his will, make for his glory, and their good; see Deut. iv. 7.

Ver. 53. *For thou didst separate them from among all people of the earth* to be *thine inheritance*, &c.] By his choice of them in his own mind, by the redemption of them out of Egypt, by the peculiar laws he gave them, and by the special blessings he conferred upon them: *as thou spakest by the hand of Moses thy servant, when thou broughtest our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord our God*; it was he that spake this to Moses, and by him to the people, Exod. xix. 5, 6. and it was he that did it, namely, separate them from all nations, to be his people and peculiar treasure: in this and the two preceding verses Solomon makes use of arguments taken from what the people of Israel were to the Lord, and he had done for them, to engage him to hearken to their supplications, and here ends his long prayer; in 2 Chron. vi. some things are added at the close of it, and some omitted.

Ver. 54. *And it was so, that, when Solomon had made an end of praying all this prayer and supplication unto the Lord*, &c.] In which he was a type of Christ, praying and interceding for his people before the golden altar, Rev. viii. 3, 4. *he arose from before the altar of the Lord*; the altar of burnt-offering, over-against which he was: *from kneeling on his knees*; upon the brasen scaffold; see 2 Chron. vi. 13. in which posture he was during this long prayer: *with his hands spread up to heaven*; which gesture he had used in his prayer, and now continued in blessing the people.

Ver. 55. *And he stood and blessed all the congregation of Israel with a loud voice*, &c.] Turning himself from the altar, and his face to the people, giving them his benediction, not only as the father of his people, but as preacher in Jerusalem, closing it with a word of exhortation to them: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 56. *Blessed be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people Israel, according to all that he promised*, &c.] A land of rest, and rest in the land from all enemies; see Deut. xii. 9, 10. *there hath not failed one word of all his good promises, which he promised by the hand of Moses his servant*; so Joshua observed a little before his death, ch. xxiii. 14. to which Solomon seems to have respect; and who lived to see a greater accomplishment of the gracious promises of God, and his faithfulness therein, both in the times of his father David, and his own.

Ver. 57. *The Lord our God be with us as he was with our fathers*, &c.] Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and those that came out of Egypt, and especially that entered into the land of Canaan under Joshua, and subdued it; as the Lord had been with them to guide and direct them, protect and defend them, succeed and prosper them, so Solomon desires he might be with them: nothing is more desirable than the presence of God; Solomon could not have prayed for a greater blessing for himself and his people; the Targum is, "let the Word of the Lord our God be for our help, as "he was for the help of our fathers:" *let him not leave us, nor forsake us*: this was no doubt a prayer of faith, founded upon a divine promise, Josh. i. 5.

Ver. 58. *That he may incline our hearts unto him*, &c.] By his spirit, to love, fear, and serve him; to attend to his worship, word, and ordinances: *to walk in all his ways*: he has prescribed and directed to: *and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers*; all his laws, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

Ver. 59. *And let these my words, wherewith I have made supplication before the Lord*, &c.] At this time: *be nigh unto the Lord our God day and night*; be continually remembered and regarded by him, that so gracious answers might always be returned to those who supplicated in this place: *that he maintain the cause of his servant*; of himself and his successors in the throne, that they may continue to possess it in peace, to the glory of God, and the good of the people: *and the cause of his people Israel at all times*; that their rights and privileges might be continued, and they supported in them; and both his cause and theirs be regarded: *as the matter shall require*; as they should stand in need of assistance, direction, and protection.

Ver. 60. *That all the people of the earth may know that the Lord is God*, &c.] By chastising the people of Israel when they sinned; by hearing and answering their prayers when they prayed unto him; by forgiving their sins, and delivering them out of their troubles; by maintaining their cause, and protecting them in the enjoyment of their blessings: and that there is *none else*; no God besides him; all being else fictitious deities, or nominal ones; he only is the one living and true God.

Ver. 61. *Let your heart therefore be perfect with the Lord your God*, &c.] Sincere in their love to him, united in their worship of him, and constant in their obedience to him: *to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day*: as they did that day, neither king nor people having as yet fallen into idolatry, but shewing by their then present appearance a zeal for God, his house, and worship.

Ver. 62. *And the king and all Israel with him offered sacrifice before the Lord.*] For burnt-offerings, which having been laid upon the altar, as soon as the king had done praying to God, and blessing the people, and exhorting them, fire came down from heaven, and consumed them; which shewed the Lord's acceptance of the sacrifices, and was another confirmation, besides the cloud, of the Lord's well-pleasedness with the temple, and of his taking possession of it to reside in it; upon which the people bowed and worshipped, and praised the Lord for his goodness and mercy, 2 Chron. vii. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 63. *And Solomon offered a sacrifice of peace-offerings, which he offered unto the Lord*, &c.] Part of which belonged to the offerer, and with those Solomon feasted the people all the days of the feast of the dedication, if not of tabernacles also; for the number was exceeding large, as follows: 22,000 *oxen, and* 120,000 *sheep*: which, as suggested, might be the number for all the 14 days; nor need it seem incredible, since, as Josephus[b] says, at a passover celebrated in the times of Cestius the Roman governor, at the evening of the passover, in 2 hours time 256,500 lambs were slain; however, this was a very munificent sacrifice of Solomon's, in which he greatly exceeded the Heathens, whose highest number of sacrifices were hecatombs, or by hundreds, but his by thousands: *so the king and all the children of Israel dedicated the house of the Lord*: devoted it to divine and religious worship by these sacrifices: hence in imitation of this sprung the dedication of temples with the Heathens; the first of which among the Romans was that in the capitol at Rome[c] by Romulus; the rites and ceremonies used therein by them may be read in Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, and others[d].

Ver. 64. *The same day did the king hallow the middle of the court that was before the house of the Lord*, &c.] The court of the priests that was before the holy place, adjoining to it, in which was the altar of burnt-offering; this, or, however, the middle part of it, he sanctified for present use, to offer sacrifices on, for a reason hereafter given: *for there he offered burnt-offerings and meat-offerings, and the fat of the peace-offerings*: which was the reason why the middle of the great court was for this time set apart for this service.

Ver. 65. *And at that time Solomon held a feast, and all Israel with him*, &c.] Partaking of the parts of the peace-offerings which belonged to him, and were offered by way of thanksgiving on the occasion, together with whatsoever he might as a liberal prince provide for this entertainment: for it was for *a great congregation, from the entering in of Hamath unto the river of Egypt*: consisting of a number of people, gathered together from Hamath, which was on the northern border of the land of Israel, to the river of Egypt; either the Nile, or Rhinocolura, a branch of it, which lay on the southern border of the land: and this was kept *before the Lord*: as in his presence, with thankfulness to him, and with a view to his glory: *seven days and seven days, even fourteen days*; seven days for the dedication of the house, and seven days for the feast of tabernacles, as the Targum; which agrees with 2 Chron. vii. 9. the feast of dedication was first, and began perhaps on the 7th day of the month, as the feast of tabernacles did on the 15th: within this time, namely, on the 10th, was a fast-day, the day of atonement; which was either observed between the two feasts, or was omitted, which is not likely; or they did not eat and drink until the evening of that day. The Septuagint version, according to the Vatican copy, reads *seven days* only once; see 2 Chron. vii. 8.

Ver. 66. *On the eighth day he sent the people away*, &c.] That is, of the feast of tabernacles, the 8th from the 1st of that, which was a solemn day, and fell on the 22d of the month; at the close of which the dismission was made, or they had leave to go, but they did not until the 23d, according to 2 Chron. vii. 10. *and they blessed the king*: returned him thanks for his care, and charge, and pains, in building the temple; for his prayers for them, and the feast he had now made, and wished all health and happiness to him: *and went unto their tents joyful and glad of heart*; or to their cities, as the Targum, to their several habitations; being greatly delighted with what they had seen and heard, and partook of especially: *for all the goodness the Lord had done for David his servant, and for Israel his people*: in 2 Chron. vii. 10. it is added, *unto Solomon*: for David, in giving him such a son and successor, who according to promise had built the house of the Lord; and for Solomon, in raising him up to such dignity, and enabling him to build such a temple for the worship of God and his glory; and for the people of Israel, in giving them such a king to rule over them, under whom they enjoyed so much peace and prosperity, and the full and free exercise of the true religion, with such accommodations, and in such a splendid manner as now.

CHAP. IX.

THIS chapter relates a second vision Solomon had at Gibeon, in which he received an answer to his prayer in the preceding chapter, ver. 1—9. the presents that passed between him and Hiram king of

[b] De Bello Jud. l. 6. c. 9. sect. 3.
[c] Vid. Liv. Hist. Decad. 1. l. 1. p. 8. & l. 5. p. 33.
[d] Vid. Hospinian. de Templis, l. 4. c. 2. p. 451. & Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 14.

Tyre, ver. 10—14. the places that Solomon built or repaired, ver. 15—19. the Canaanitish people that became bondmen to him, and the officers he had among the children of Israel, ver. 20—23. the removal of Pharaoh's daughter to the house built for her, ver. 24. Solomon's attention to religious services, ver. 25. and the navy of ships he employed, which brought him in great riches, ver. 26, 27, 28.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when Solomon had finished the building of the house of the Lord, &c.*] Which was done in 7 years, ch. vi. 38. *and the king's house;* his own palace, which was finished in 13 years, ch. vii. 1. *and all Solomon's desire which he was pleased to do;* all his other buildings, the house for Pharaoh's daughter, the house of the forest of Lebanon, and may include his vineyards, gardens, orchards, and pools of water, made for his pleasure, Eccl. ii. 4, 5, 6. in which he succeeded and prospered, 2 Chron. vii. 11.

Ver. 2. *That the Lord appeared to Solomon the second time, &c.*] Junius and Tremellius read this verse with the following, to the end of the 9th, in a parenthesis, and render this clause, *for the Lord had appeared, &c.* and Piscator translates it, *moreover the Lord appeared, &c.* as beginning a distinct narrative from the former; and indeed if the words are to be connected with the preceding, as in our version, this appearance must be 13 years after the building of the temple, which is not probable; but rather it was the night after the dedication of it, when an answer was returned to Solomon's prayer in the preceding chapter; for that it should be deferred 12 or 13 years is not reasonable to suppose; and this appearance was the second of the kind and manner: *as he had appeared unto him at Gibeon;* in a dream and a vision, and by night, ch. iii. 5. see 2 Chron. vii. 12.

Ver. 3. *And the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication that thou hast made before me, &c.*] With delight and pleasure, and had accepted it; meaning the prayer recorded in the preceding chapter: *I have hallowed this house which thou hast built;* by the cloud of glory filling it, and by fire descending from heaven, and consuming the sacrifices offered in it, 2 Chron. vii. 1. *to put my name there for ever;* there to grant his presence, so long as his pure worship should be continued in it; so the Targum adds, "and my Shechinah or divine Majesty shall "abide in it, if my will is done there continually:" *and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually;* his eyes of Providence should be upon it, to watch over it, and protect it, and his worshippers in it; and he should have a cordial regard to the sacrifices there offered, and to the persons of the offerers, so long as they offered them in a right way, and to right ends and purposes.

Ver. 4. *And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, &c.*] Who, though guilty of many sins and failings in life, yet was sincere and upright in the worship of God, never apostatized from it, or fell into idolatry, which is what is chiefly respected: *to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments;* observe all the laws of God, moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

Ver. 5. *Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, &c.*] In a succession in his posterity, until the coming of the Messiah: *as I promised unto David thy father, saying, there shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel;* not fail one of his posterity to sit upon it; see 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13. Psal. cxxxii. 11, 12.

Ver. 6. *But if you shall at all turn from following me, you or your children, &c.*] From my worship, as the Targum; either Solomon or his successors, or the people of Israel and their posterity; should they turn their backs on God and his worship, meaning not in a single instance, or in some small degree; but as in the original, *if in turning ye turn**, that is, utterly, and entirely, or wholly turn from him and his worship to other gods, as follows: *and will not keep my commandments and my statutes, which I have set before you, but go and serve other gods, and worship them;* neglecting the will and worship of God, go into idolatrous practices, as Solomon himself did.

Ver. 7. *Then will I cut off Israel out of the land I have given them, &c.*] Suffer them to be carried captive into other lands, as the ten tribes were into Assyria, and the two tribes to Babylon; which is called a plucking them up by the roots in 2 Chron. vii. 20. *and this house, which I have hallowed for my name, will I cast out of my sight;* as it was when burnt by Nebuchadnezzar: *and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people;* both for their sins and for their miseries; see Deut. xxviii. 37. Jer. xxiv. 9: in 2 Chron. vii. 20. the house or temple is said to be made a proverb of.

Ver. 8. *And at this house which is high, &c.*] The house of the most High, as some render it, and in high esteem, fame, and glory, as well as it was built on an high hill, and was itself 120 cubits high, 2 Chron. iii. 4. the Targum is, "and this house which was high shall "be destroyed:" *every one that passeth by it shall be astonished;* at the ruins of the temple, and of the city of Jerusalem, which had been so magnificent: *and shall hiss;* in scorn and derision of the people of Israel, rejoicing in their ruin: *and they shall say, why hath the Lord done thus unto this land, and to this house?* or suffered it to be done, to lie thus in waste and ruins; a land in which it had been said he delighted, and looked unto from one end of the year to the other, and a house he had taken up his dwelling in; surely something more than ordinary, they suggest, must be the cause of all this.

Ver. 9. *And they shall answer, &c.*] Who were left in the land when others were carried captive, as were some by Nebuchadnezzar, and who were capable of making the following answer: *because they forsook the Lord;* the worship of the Lord their God, as the Targum: *who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt;* which is observed as an aggravation of their sin: *and have taken hold upon other gods;* the gods of the people, as the Targum; of the Gentiles, who knew not the true God: *and have worshipped them, and served them;* even idols of gold and silver, wood and stone;

* אם שוב תשבון si avertendo aversi fueritis, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

an instance of judicial blindness they were left unto, who had been favoured with a revelation from God: *therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil;* their idolatry was the cause of it, than which nothing is more provoking to God.

Ver. 10. *And it came to pass at the end of twenty years,* &c.] From the time Solomon first began to build: *when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord, and the king's house;* the first was seven years in building, and the other thirteen; in all twenty.

Ver. 11. (Now *Hiram the king of Tyre had furnished Solomon with cedar-trees and fir-trees,* &c.] For the building of both his houses; see ch. v. 8, 10. *and with gold, according to all his desire):* which is not before mentioned, and accounts for it from whence Solomon had his gold; if he made no use, as some think he did not, of what his father left him; see ch. vii. 51. with which he covered several parts of the temple, and made several vessels in it. Hiram traded to Ophir, and had it from thence; and he could supply Solomon with it, and did, before he sent a navy thither: *that then Solomon gave Hiram 20 cities in the land of Galilee;* that is, by or near it, for they were not in the land of Canaan; for then Solomon could not have disposed of them, being allotted and belonging to one of the tribes of Israel, and part of the Lord's inheritance; but they were upon the borders, particularly on the borders of Asher, if Cabul in Josh. xix. 27, can be thought to be the same with these; though some think that Solomon did not give Hiram the possession of these cities, but the royalties and revenues of them, their produce until the debt was paid: but they rather seem to be a gratuity, and a full grant of them, and might be cities which David had conquered, and taken out of the hands of the ancient inhabitants of them; and so Solomon had a right to dispose of them, being left him by his father; for it is plain as yet they were not inhabited by Israelites; see 2 Chron. viii. 2. They are by a Jewish writer [f] said to be 22, very wrongly.

Ver. 12. *And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him,* &c.] For these cities, being in or near Galilee, were not far from Tyre: *and they pleased him not;* being either out of repair, as some think; see 2 Chron. viii. 2. or the ground barren, and unfruitful; which is not likely, being in a very fruitful country, as the tribes on which they bordered were: but they were not agreeable to him, they did not suit with the disposition of him and his people, who were given not to husbandry, but to merchandise; and the land about these would require a good deal of pains and labour to till, which they were not used to.

Ver. 13. *And he said,* &c.] By letter to him: *what cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother?* so he called him, being not only his neighbour, but his ally, in friendship and covenant with him; and this he said of them not by way of complaint, or contempt, as unworthy of his acceptance; for so munificent a prince as Solomon would never offer to a king to whom he was so much obliged any thing mean and contemptible; but as being unsuitable to him, however valuable they might be in themselves, or of advantage to others: *and he called them the land of Cabul unto this day;* or rather the words should be rendered impersonally, *they were called so;* for Hiram could not call them by this name to the times of the writer of this book; nor is there any reason to think he would give them any name at all, and much less a contemptible one, as this is thought to be, when he did not choose to accept of them. Some interpret [g] the word shut up, or unfruitful, sandy, dirty, clayey; so in the Talmud [h] it is said to be a sandy land, and called Cabul, because a man's foot was plunged in it up to his ankles, and is represented as unfruitful. Josephus [i] says, in the Phenician tongue it signifies *not pleasing,* which agrees with what Hiram says, ver. 12. Hillerus [k] interprets it *as nothing,* they being as nothing to Hiram, of no use to him, whatever they might be to others; and therefore he restored them to Solomon, 2 Chron. viii. 2. which seems to be the best sense of the word. They are the same with Decapolis, Matt. iv. 25. so called from 10 cities therein [l].

Ver. 14. *And Hiram sent to the king 120 talents of gold.*] Not after the cities had been given him, but before; and it may be rendered *had sent* [m], and is the sum of the gold he furnished him with for the temple, ver. 11. which, according to Brerewood [n], was 540,000 pounds of our money; and, according to another [o] writer, it amounted to 1,466,400 ducats of gold, taking a talent at 12,220 ducats.

Ver. 15. *And this is the reason of the levy which King Solomon raised,* &c.] Both of men to work, ch. v. 13. and of money to defray the expense: it was *for to build the house of the Lord;* the temple: *and his own house;* or palace: *and Millo;* which he repaired: see the note on 1 Sam. v. 9. *and the wall of Jerusalem;* which, as Abarbinel says, was a large building, there being three walls one within another: *and Hazor;* a city in the tribe of Naphtali, and which had been a royal city with the Canaanites; see Josh. xi. 1. and xix. 36. *and Megiddo;* which was in the tribe of Manasseh, Josh. xvii. 11. *and Gezer;* which was in the tribe of Ephraim, and formerly a royal city of the Canaanites, Josh. x. 33. and xvi. 3.

Ver. 16. *For Pharaoh king of Egypt had gone up, and taken Gezer, and burnt it with fire,* &c.] Egypt lay lower than Canaan, and therefore Pharaoh is said to go up to it; what moved him to it is not certain; whether he went of himself provoked, or was moved to it by Solomon, who had married his daughter; however, so he did, and took the place, and burnt it: *and slain the Canaanites that dwelt in the city;* for though it was given to the tribe of Ephraim, yet they could not drive the Canaanites out of it, who seem to have remained in it to this time; see Josh. xvi. 10. and Judg. i. 29. *and given it for a present unto his daughter, Solomon's wife;* not as a dowry with her, but as a present to her; perhaps some time after marriage.

[f] Gloss. in T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 54. 1.
[g] David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 58. 2.
[h] T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 54. 1.
[i] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 5. sect. 3.
[k] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 435.
[l] Vid. Castel. Lex. Heptaglot. col. 1669. & Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18.
[m] שלח miserat, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[n] De Ponderibus & Pretiis, Vet. Num. c. 5.
[o] Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 2. p. 574.

Ver. 17. *And Solomon built Gezer*, &c.] Rebuilt it, it having been burnt, at least great part of it, by Pharaoh when he took it: *and Beth-horon the nether*; and the upper also, 2 Chron. viii. 5. which belonged to the tribe of Ephraim, and were on the borders of it, between that and Benjamin, Josh. xvi. 3, 5, and xviii. 13, 14.

Ver. 18. *And Baalath*, &c.] A city in the tribe of Dan, Josh. xix. 44. *and Tadmor in the wilderness, in the land*; or Tamar, as in the Cetib, or Scriptural reading; for we go according to the marginal reading, and so Thamaro in Ptolemy[p]; and is thought by some to be the same with Tamar in Ezek. xlvii. 19. which Jerom there says is Palmyra. Tamar signifies a palm-tree, from whence this city had its name Palmyra, the situation of which place agrees with this; hence we read both in Ptolemy[q] and Pliny[r] of the Palmyrene deserts: the ruins of it are to be seen to this day, and of it this account is given: that it is enclosed on three sides with long ridges of mountains, which open towards the east gradually, to the distance of about an hour's riding; but to the south stretches a vast plain, beyond the reach of the eye:—the air is good, but the soil exceeding barren; nothing green to be seen therein, save some few palm-trees in the gardens, and here and there about the town; and from these trees, I conceive, says my author, it obtained its name both in Hebrew and in Latin:—it appears to have been of a large extent, by the space now taken up by the ruins; but there are no footsteps of any wall remaining, nor is it possible to judge of the ancient figure of the place. The present inhabitants, as they are poor, miserable, dirty people, so they have shut themselves up, to the number of about 30 or 40 families, in little huts made of dirt, within the walls of a spacious court, which enclosed a most magnificent Heathen temple[s]. Benjamin of Tudela says[t], it is situated in a wilderness, far from any habitable place, and is four days' journey from Baalath before mentioned; which place he takes to be the same with Baalbek, in the valley of Lebanon, built by Solomon for Pharaoh's daughter; which, according to the Arabic geographer[u], was situated at the foot of Mount Lebanon; and Tadmor seems to be in the land of Hamath-zobah, 2 Chron. viii. 3, 4.

Ver. 19. *And all the cities of store that Solomon had*, &c.] In which were his magazines of corn, arms, and ammunition; and these were built in Hamath, 2 Chron. viii. 4. *and cities for his chariots*: chariots of war, iron chariots, which were kept in times of peace, in case of necessity, of which Solomon had 1,400, ch. x. 26. *and cities for his horsemen*: of which he had 12,000, a standing cavalry: *and that which Solomon desired to build in Jerusalem*: besides the temple and his own palace before mentioned; see Eccl. ii. 4. *and in Lebanon*: the house of the forest of Lebanon, which Junius on 1 Kings vii. 2. thinks he built after he had taken Hamath-zobah, a royal city of Lebanon; see 2 Chron. viii. 3, 6. or fortresses on Mount Lebanon, which was the northern border of his kingdom: *and in all the land of his dominions*: where he might repair or fortify cities, or erect new forts for the safety of his kingdom; now for the doing of all this was the levy both of men and money raised, and of whom next follows.

Ver. 20. *And all the people that were left of the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites*, &c.] Who were not destroyed in the times of Joshua, or since, but dwelt in several cities of the land of Israel from the above times; see Judg. i. *which were not of the children of Israel*; not natives of the land of Israel, though they might be proselytes, at least some of them.

Ver. 21. *Their children that were left after them in the land*, &c.] The posterity of those left unsubdued in the times of Joshua: *whom the children of Israel also were not able utterly to destroy*; in after-times, though now it is thought by some it was not for want of power, but because they had made a covenant with them, as the Gibeonites did, and therefore they could not, because it would have been a breach of covenant to have destroyed them; see 2 Chron. viii. 8. *upon these did Solomon levy a tribute of bond-service unto this day*; not a tribute of money, which being poor they were not able to pay, but of service, and which being once laid on was continued, and even to the time of the writing of this book.

Ver. 22. *But of the children of Israel did Solomon make no bondmen*, &c.] For that was contrary to the law; they might be hired servants, but not bond-servants, Lev. xxv. 39, 40. *but they* were *men of war*; which he kept in pay, a standing army, maintained even in time of peace, in case of necessity, should an enemy attempt to invade or surprise them: *and his servants*: in his family and court, who had offices and employments there: *and his princes*; ministers of state, counsellors, governors of cities, *&c. and his captains*; officers in his army: *and rulers of his chariots and his horsemen*: war-chariots and troopers; see ver. 19.

Ver. 23. *These* were *the chief of the officers over Solomon's work*, &c.] In building the above houses and cities: *550 which bore rule over the people that wrought in the work*: in 2 Chron. viii. 10. they are said to be but 250; now it may be observed, as is by the Jewish writers, that there were three sorts of those rulers; the lowest rank and order of them consisted of 3,300, the next of 300, which were over the 3,300, and being numbered with them made 3,600, 2 Chron. ii. 18. and the highest rank of them were 250, and the middlemost and highest being joined together, as they are here, made 550. Abarbinel reconciles the places thus, the 250 were only over those that wrought in the temple; and the 550 here were those that were over such that were employed in the several parts of the kingdom.

Ver. 24. *But Pharaoh's daughter* ame *up out of the city of David*, &c.] Where he placed her when he first married her, until he had finished his buildings, ch. iii. 10. which being done he brought her from thence unto her house, which Solomon had built for her; the reason of which is given, not only because it was the house of David, but because it was holy by the ark being there for some time; and therefore he did not judge it proper that his wife, an Egyptian woman,

[p] Geograph. l. 5. c. 16.
[q] Ib. c. 15.
[r] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 26. & 6. 28.

[s] Halifax apud Philosophic. Transact. vol. 3. p. 504.
[t] Itinerar. p. 57, 58.
[u] Geograph. Nub. par. 5. clim. 3. p. 117.

and sometimes in her impurity, should dwell there; see 2 Chron. viii. 11. *then did he build Millo*; this being particularly repeated from ver. 15. and following upon what is said of Pharaoh's daughter, has led many Jewish writers to conclude her house was built at Millo; and indeed, without supposing this, it is hard to conceive why it should be observed here; the Targum on 2 Chron. viii. 11. calls her name Bithiah.

Ver. 25. *And three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord*, &c.] The brasen altar, the altar of burnt-offering, which stood in the court of the priests, and by whom he offered. The three times were the feasts of passover, pentecost, and tabernacles, as explained in 2 Chron. viii. 13. not that these were the only offerings, or these the only times he offered; for he offered all other sacrifices, and at all other times commanded in the law of Moses, as on sabbaths and new moons, as expressed in the above place: *and he burnt incense upon the altar that* was *before the Lord*: the altar of incense, which stood in the holy place, right against the most holy, in which was the ark, the symbol of the divine Presence; not that Solomon burnt incense in person, but by the priests, whom he furnished with incense; for no king might offer incense, as the case of Uzziah shews: *so he finished the house*; which respects not the building of it, that had been observed before, but the service of it; as he had provided all vessels and utensils for the furniture of it, and all things to be used in them; as sacrifices for the altar of burnt-offering, incense for the altar of incense, bread for the shew-bread table, and oil for the lamps; so he appointed the courses of the priests, Levites, and porters, to do their duty, who went through every part of service assigned them, and completed the whole; see 2 Chron. viii. 14.

Ver. 26. *And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber*, &c.] Which was one of the stations of the Israelites, near the wilderness of Sin, or Paran, Numb. xxxiii. 35. it signifies the back-bone of a man; and it is said [w] the ridge of rocks before this port were in that form, covered by the sea at high water, and sticking up with various points in a line when it was low. Josephus says [x] in his time it was called Berenice, which is placed by Mela [y] between the Heroopolitic bay, and the promontory Strobilus, or Pharan. It is thought probable [z] to be the same with that which is called by the Arabs Meenah-el-Dsahab, the port of gold, called Dizahab, Deut. i. 1. which stands upon the shore of the Arabic gulf, about two or three days' distance from Mount Sinai; though by others [a] thought to be the same the Arabs call Calzem, where was a great quantity of wood fit for building ships. It is further described, *which is beside Elath, on the shore of the Red sea, in the land of Edom*; and when Edom was subdued by David, this port fell into his hands, and so was in the possession of Solomon; and there being plenty of timber in the parts adjacent, and this being a port in the Red sea, Solomon pitched upon it as a proper place to build ships in. Elath, near to which it was, is the same the Elanitic bay had its name from; of which see the note on Deut. ii. 8. Trajan, the Roman emperor, formed a navy in the Red sea [b], that by it he might ravage and waste the borders of India; and here it seems Solomon's navy went; see ver. 28.

Ver. 27. *And Hiram sent in his navy his servants*, &c.] And, according to 2 Chron. viii. 18. ships also; but how he could send them from Tyre, which lay in the Mediterranean sea, to the above ports in the Red sea, without going a great way round, is not easy to conceive. Perhaps, as Gussetius conjectures [c], Hiram had a port in the Red sea for building and sending out ships, for the sake of his eastern navigation, and from thence he sent them to Solomon's ports in the same sea; but if what R. Japhet [d] observes is true, that the Red sea is mixed with the sea of Joppa by means of the river Rhinocurura, as is remarked by a learned man [e], and who approves of the observation, and thinks it does not deserve the censure Dr. Lightfoot [f] passes on it. If this, I say, can be supported, the difficulty is removed: so Abarbinel asserts [g], that a branch of the Nile flows into the Red sea: and another, passing through Alexandria, runs into the Mediterranean sea. This is the first navy of ships we read of; in the construction of which, as well as in the art of navigation, the Tyrians no doubt were greatly assisting to Solomon's servants, and which appears by what follows; and they are said [h] to be the first that made use of ships; and the invention of ships of burden, or merchant-ships, such as these were, is by Pliny [i] ascribed to Hippus the Tyrian: and the Tyrians were famous for merchandise, which they could not carry on with foreign nations without shipping; see Isa. xxiii. 8. the servants Hiram sent in Solomon's navy were *ship-men that had knowledge of the sea*; of sea-coasts and ports, of the manner of guiding and managing ships at sea, and of the whole art of navigation, so far as then known, for which the Tyrians were famous; see Ezek. xxvii. 3—9. *with the servants of Solomon*: to instruct and assist them in naval affairs, they not having been used thereunto.

Ver. 28. *And they came to Ophir*, &c.] About which place there are various opinions; some take it to be the little island of Zocatora, on the eastern coast of Africa, at a small distance from the straits of Babelmandel; others the island of Ceylon; others Sofala in Africa; some [k] Peru in America; Vatablus the island of Hispaniola in the West Indies, discovered by Columbus, and who thought [l] himself that he had found the land of Ophir, because of the quantity of gold in it; others the southern part of Arabia; but the most reasonable opinion is, says my author [m], that it is a rich country in Malacca, which is a peninsula in the true

[w] Harris's Voyages, vol. 1. B. 1. ch. 2. sect. 3. p. 377.
[x] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 4.
[y] De Situ Orbis, l. 3. c. 8.
[z] Clayton's Chronology, &c. p. 407.
[a] Vossius in Melam ut supra, p. 386.
[b] Eutrop. Rom. Hist. l. 8. Ruf. Fest. Breviar.
[c] Ebr. Comment. p. 629.
[d] In Aben Ezra in Jon. ii. 5.
[e] Texelii Phœnix, l. 3. c. 6. p. 243, 244.
[f] Miscellanies, c. 18. vol. 1. p. 1002, 1003.
[g] Apud Manasseh, Spes Israelis, sect. 2. p. 20.
[h] Prima ratem ventis credere docta Tyros, Catullus.
[i] Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56.
[k] Erasm. Schmid. de America, orat. ad Calc. Pindar. p. 261. So some Jewish writers say it is the new world, Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 10. 1.
[l] P. Martyr. Decad. 1. l. 1.
[m] Harris's Voyages, ut supra.

Red sea (that part of the ocean which divides Asia from Africa), known by the name of the *golden Chersonese*, and which agrees with Josephus [n]; and at 12 leagues from Malacca there is a very high mountain, which by the natives is called Ophir, and is reported to be, or to have been, very rich in gold, though at present only some tin-mines are worked there; and Kircher [o] says the word Ophir is a Coptic or Egyptian word, by which the ancient Egyptians used to call that India which contains the kingdoms of Malabar, Zeilan, the golden Chersonese, and the islands belonging to it, Sumatra, Molucca, Java, and other neighbouring golden islands. So Varrerius [p] thinks that all that coast in which are contained Pegu, Malaca, and Somatra, is Ophir; which places, besides gold, abound with elephants, apes, and parrots. In the island of Sumatra gold is now found, especially in Achin, in great plenty; in which is a mountain, called the *golden mountain*, near the mines [q]. Reland [r] takes Ophir to be the country round about a city called Oupara or Suphara, in the East Indies, where now stands Goa, the most famous mart in all India at this day for many of those things Solomon traded thither for. Though after all perhaps there was no such place originally as Ophir in India; only the gold brought from thence was like that of Ophir in Arabia, and therefore they called the place so from whence it was had; see Job xxii. 24. *and fetched from thence gold 420 talents, and brought it to King Solomon;* which according to Brerewood [s] amounted to 1,890,000 pounds of our money; and according to another writer [t] 5,132,400 ducats of gold. Abarbinel says a talent of gold was equal to 12,300 Venetian ducats; in 2 Chron. viii. 18. it is said, that 450 talents of gold were brought to Solomon; perhaps thirty might be expended in the voyage, or paid to Hiram's servants for their wages, as some Jewish writers observe; or in the bulk or ore it might be 450 talents, but when purified only 420, as Grotius remarks; either way removes the difficulty; though some think different voyages are respected here and there; of the gold of Ophir frequent mention is made in Scripture.

CHAP. X.

THIS chapter contains an account of the queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon to her great satisfaction, ver. 1—13. of Solomon's merchandise and riches, and the magnificence of his court, ver. 14—23. of the rich presents sent to him, and of the purchase of chariots and horses, and other things, he made, ver. 24—29.

Ver. 1. *And when the queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon,* &c.] Josephus [u] calls her a queen of Egypt and Ethiopia; but Sheba was in the southern part of Arabia Felix; her name with the Ethiopians is Maqueda [w], and with the Arabic geographer [x] Belcquis. Some [y] think that Sheba, or Saba, is not the name of a country, but of the queen herself; and that she is the same with Sabbe the sibyl mentioned by Pausanias [z]; but no doubt Sheba or Saba, the metropolis of Arabia Felix, as Philostorgius [a] calls it, is here meant; which Benjamin of Tudela says [b] is called the country of Al Yeman, or the south; and the name of Queen Teiman, given to this queen by an Arabic writer [c], seems to be the same as the queen of the south, agreeably to Matt. xii. 42. see the note there. The fame of Solomon's greatness and goodness, of his wealth and riches, and especially of his wisdom, had reached her ears; perhaps by means of the ambassadors of princes that had been at Solomon's court, and attended her's. According to an Ethiopic writer [d], it was by Tamerinus, a merchant of her's, she came to hear of him: particularly she heard of his fame *concerning the name of the Lord;* his knowledge of the true God, the favour he was in with him, the excellent wisdom he had received from him, and what he had done for his honour and glory: *she came to prove him with hard questions;* in things natural, civil, and divine; to try whether he had such a share of knowledge and wisdom it was said he had, she posed him with enigmas, riddles, dark and intricate sayings, to unravel and tell the meaning of. She might be an emblem of the Gentiles, seeking unto Christ, having heard of him, Isa. xi. 10. John xii. 20, 21. In Matt. xii. 42. she is said to come from the *uttermost parts of the earth;* wherefore some fetch her from Sumatra in the East Indies, where in an old map no other name is put but Sheba [e].

Ver. 2. *And she came to Jerusalem with a very great train,* &c.] With many of her courtiers and principal men, as well as with a large retinue of servants: *with camels that bare spices:* her country abounded both with camels and spices; see Isa. lx. 6. Jer. vi. 20. and the notes there, and as Pliny [f] observes, who says their spices used to be carried on camels, particularly frankincense, for which Sheba was famous, and is therefore called by him *regio thurifera*, the frankincense-country [g], being to be had nowhere else; and Strabo [h] speaks of *cinnamon, cassia,* and other spices here in such plenty, that the inhabitants burnt the wood of them for fuel; and Diodorus Siculus [i] represents this country as exceeding odoriferous, and as having besides the

[n] Ut supra.
[o] China Illustrat. cum Monument. p. 58. & Prodrom. Copt. c. 4. p. 119.
[p] Comment. de Ophyra.
[q] Dampier's Voyages, vol. 2. ch. 7.
[r] Dissert. de Ophir, sect. 6, 7.
[s] De Ponder. & Pret. c. 5.
[t] Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 572.
[u] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 2, 5.
[w] Ludolf. Ethiop. Hist. l. 2. c. 3.
[x] Clim. 1. par. 6.
[y] Vid. Coryli Dissert. de Reg. Austral. c. 1. sect. 1, 2.
[z] Phocica, sive, l. 10. p. 631.
[a] Hist. Eccl. l. 3. c. 4.
[b] Itinerar. p. 92.
[c] Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 54.
[d] Tellezius apud Ludolf. Ethiop. Hist. l. 2. c. 3.
[e] Dampier's Voyages, vol. 2. p. 139.
[f] Nat. Hist. l. 12. c. 14.
[g] Ibid. —— Molles sua thura Sabæi, Virg. Georg. l. 1. v. 57. & l. 2. v. 117. Thurilegos Arabes, Ovid. Fast. l. 4. Vid. Plaut. Trinum. Act. 4. Sc. 2. v. 89.
[h] Geograph. l. 16. p. 535.
[i] Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 132.

above spices, balsam, myrrh, calamus, costus, and others, in such abundance that they heated their ovens with them: *and very much gold;* see ver. 10. the gold of Sheba is spoken of in Psal. lxxii. 15. and Pliny [k] observes, that the Sabeans are exceeding rich, as in other things, so in gold; and Diodorus Siculus [l] and Strabo [m] speak of gold found here in large lumps, very pure, and of a fine colour: *and precious stones;* as crystals, emeralds, beryls, and chrysolites, mentioned by Diodorus [n] as in those parts; and a late traveller says [o], that Arabia Felix abounds with balsam, myrrh, cassia, manna, dates, gold, frankincense, and pearl: *and when she was come to Solomon;* unto his palace, and admitted into his presence: *she communed with him of all that was in her heart;* which she had in her mind to discourse with him about, and which she had laid up in her memory for that purpose; and some things which she had kept to herself, and had never imparted to any before, as some think; all which she had full liberty from Solomon to propound unto him.

Ver. 3. *And Solomon told her all her questions,* &c.] Answered them, told her the meaning of every thing she inquired about, expounded her riddles, solved her objections, and gave her satisfaction in all things she proposed unto him: *there was not any thing hid from the king, which he told her not;* there was not any thing, though ever so abstruse and difficult, but what he understood, and gave her a clear and plain solution of.

Ver. 4. *And when the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon's wisdom,* &c.] Which she perceived by his answers to things relative to all sorts of science, natural, civil, and divine: *and the house that he had built;* the singular for the plural, *house* for *houses;* the house of the Lord, his own house, that for Pharaoh's daughter, and the house of the forest of Lebanon; in all which there appeared not only surprising grandeur and magnificence, but exquisite art and skill; there was a great display of his wisdom in the form and contrivance of them. Josephus [p] says, what exceedingly surprised her, and raised her admiration, was the house of the forest of Lebanon.

Ver. 5. *And the meat of his table,* &c.] The various sorts of it, the different dishes, and the multitude of them; see ch. iv. 22, 23. *and the sitting of his servants;* at table, either with him, or at tables by themselves, yet in his presence; for these were his nobles and courtiers, who were placed in order, according to their rank and degree, which shewed wisdom: *and the attendance of his ministers;* or the *standing* [q] of those that waited, both at the king's table, and the tables of the lords, who each had their proper place and business assigned; so that the utmost decorum was observed, and no confusion or disorder to be seen: *and their apparel;* their several liveries, which were distinct according to the posts and offices in which they were, and which no doubt were rich and splendid, as well as various: *and his cup-bearers;* to serve him and his nobles with wine when called for; though the word signifies *liquors* [r], and may design the various sorts of wines, and other drinkables, used by him, of which there was great plenty: *and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord;* the steps which he had made to go up from his palace to the temple; which were so curiously devised, and so artificially wrought, that it gave the queen, among other things, a sensible proof of his great wisdom, as well as of his religion and piety. The Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and some others, render the words, *and the burnt-offerings which he offered in the house of the Lord;* and so Josephus [s] understood them; she was shewn the service of the house of the Lord, as much as could be admitted, and perhaps was told the meaning of it; all which she saw, both in his own house, and in the house of God, and greatly surprised her: so that *there was no more spirit in her;* she was quite astonished; like one in an ecstacy, she had no power for a time to speak, what she saw and heard so affected her.

Ver. 6. *And she said to the king,* &c.] When she was a little come to herself: *it was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts and of thy wisdom;* which she was ready to call in question when she first heard it; at least she thought it was greatly exaggerated, but now she found it was strictly true.

Ver. 7. *Howbeit I believed not the words, until I came, and mine eyes had seen it,* &c.] That is, she did not believe the whole of what was related to her; somewhat of it she credited, and supposed there was something grand and extraordinary in it, or she would never have taken such a journey; but she did not believe that all could be true; she thought things were too much magnified: *and, behold, the half was not told me;* of what she now saw and heard: *thy wisdom and prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard;* the inward endowments of his mind, and the outward magnificence of his court, exceeded the relation of them to her; they were beyond expression, they were so great that reporters could not hyperbolize upon them, nor even come up to them in their account of them, and in which yet men are apt to exceed.

Ver. 8. *Happy are thy men,* &c.] The men of Israel, that had a king over them so wise, so great, so good: *happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom;* who were now present, and to whom she pointed, and may respect not his nobles and courtiers only, but his menial servants, who had an opportunity of often hearing the wise sayings which dropped from his lips; and which no doubt were means of greatly improving their knowledge and understanding in things natural and divine.

Ver. 9. *Blessed be the Lord thy God,* &c.] Of whom she might have better notions than when she came out of her own country: *which delighted in thee, to set thee on the throne of Israel;* loved him with a love of complacency and delight, was Jedidiah, as he called him, beloved of the Lord, and therefore he chose him and preferred him to be king before his elder brother: *because the Lord loved Israel for ever;* to establish them

[k] Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.
[l] Ut supra, p. 132. l. 3. p. 181.
[m] Ut supra.
[n] Ut supra, p. 134. & l. 3. p. 181.
[o] Ovington's Voyage to Surat, p. 421.
[p] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 6. sect. 5.
[q] מעמד statum, Tigurine version, Vatablus, Junius & Tremellius; stationem, Piscator.
[r] משקיו & potum ejus, Tig. vers. so Abarbinel.
[s] Ut supra.

as a kingdom for ever as they were, so long as obedient to him; see 2 Chron. ix. 8. *therefore made he thee king, to do judgment and justice*; not merely for the sake of honour and glory, much less to indulge to pleasure and luxury, and still less to oppression and tyranny; but to administer justice and judgment to the people, which is the principal end of government; see Psal. lxxii. 1, 2.

Ver. 10. *And she gave the king* 120 *talents of gold*, &c.] The same sum that Hiram sent him, ch. ix. 14. see the note there; this fulfilled the prophecy, so far as it respected Solomon, Psal. lxxii. 15. *and of spices very great store, and precious stones*; see ver. 2. *there came no more such abundance of spices as these which the queen of Sheba gave to King Solomon*; that is, into Judea. Josephus reports[t], that some say that the balsamic plant, which Judea was afterwards so famous for, was brought by this queen, and a gift of her's to Solomon; and Diodorus Siculus[u] speaks of it as in Arabia, and not to be found in any other part of the world.

Ver. 11. *And the navy also of Hiram that brought gold from Ophir*, &c.] This perhaps was before Solomon was concerned with Hiram in navigation and merchandise; though in 2 Chron. ix. 10. both their servants are said to bring it; and it is here inserted perhaps to shew that Solomon had not his gold, at least all of it, from the queen of Sheba; but much from Hiram, who fetched it from Ophir: and as this was in India, as observed on ch. ix. 28. many writers make mention of gold in that part of the world, as Diodorus Siculus[w], Strabo[x], Dionysius[y], Curtius[z], Pliny[a], and others: and this navy also *brought in from Ophir great plenty of almug-trees*; or algum-trees, by transposition of letters, 2 Chron. ix. 10, 11. which some of the Jewish writers[b] take to be coral, which is not likely; others Brasil, rather ebony, which was peculiar to India, as both Solinus[c] and Virgil[d] say; Strabo[e] makes mention of strange trees in India: *and precious stones*; of which there is great variety and plenty in that country, as related by Dionysius[f], as diamonds, beryls, jaspers, topazes, and amethysts, and by Curtius[g], Solinus[h], and others.

Ver. 12. *And the king made of the almug-trees pillars for the house of the Lord, and for the king's house*, &c.] Or terraces, as in 2 Chron. ix. 11. causeways; and means the ascent or causeway he made from his own house to the temple; the pavement of which, as Jarchi interprets the word here, was made of the wood of these trees; or the supports of it, or rather the rails on each side, on which men might stay themselves as they passed along, as Ben Gersom; and since this ascent was admired by the queen of Sheba, it is particularly observed what wood it was made of, and from whence it came: *harps also, and psalteries for singers*; these musical instruments were made of the same wood; Josephus[i] says of amber, and that their number was 400,000: *there came no such almug-trees, nor were seen unto this day*; not in the land of Israel, neither before nor since, see 2 Chron. ix. 11.

Ver. 13. *And King Solomon gave unto the queen of Sheba all her desire, whatsoever she asked*, &c.] Some curious things she saw, and was desirous of, she asked for, and had them: *besides that which Solomon gave her of his royal bounty*; of his own good will and pleasure, without asking: *so she turned and went to her own country*; the country of Sheba in Arabia Felix: *she and her servants*; the train or retinue she brought with her, which was large, ver. 2.

Ver. 14. *Now the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was* 666 *talents of gold*.] From Ophir and Tarshish, and wherever he traded; which was of our money, according to Berewood[k], 2,997,000 pounds; or as another learned man[l], who makes it equal to 5,138,520 ducats of gold.

Ver. 15. *Besides that he had of the merchantmen, and of the traffic of the spice-merchants*, &c.] What they paid him as a duty or custom for the importation of their goods: *and of all the kings of Arabia*; who were subject to him, and paid him a yearly tribute, or at least made presents, see ch. iv. 21, 24. *and of the governors of the country*; who were viceroys or deputy-governors of countries conquered by his father, and who collected tribute from the people, and paid it to him.

Ver. 16. *And King Solomon made* 200 *targets of beaten gold*, &c.] Which were a larger sort of shields, which covered the whole body; and these were made of gold beaten with the hammer, or drawn into plates, being melted like wax; so the Pœni or Carthaginians made shields of gold[m]: 600 shekels *of gold went to one target*; which is to be understood not of the weight, but of the price or value of them, which amounted to 450 pounds of our money; so Brerewood[n].

Ver. 17. *And* he made 300 *shields of beaten gold*, &c.] Which were a lesser sort: *three pounds of gold went to one shield*; or 300 shekels, as in 2 Chron. ix. 16. a hundred shekels made one pound; so that these were but half the value of the former, and one of them was worth but 225 pounds: Eupolemus[o], an Heathen writer, makes mention of those golden shields Solomon made, and which were made for show, and not for war, as follows: *and the king put them in the house of the forest of Lebanon*; one part of which was made an armoury of, see Cant. iv. 4.

Ver. 18. *Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory*, &c.] To sit on and judge his people; and ivory being white, may denote the purity, justice, and equity with which he judged; the white throne in Rev. xx. 11. may be an allusion to this; the ivory he had from Tarshish, ver. 22. *and overlaid it with the best gold*; for the greater splendour and majesty of it; not

[t] Ut supra, sect. 6.
[u] Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 132.
[w] Ibid. l. 1. p. 121.
[x] Geograph. l. 15. p. 481.
[y] Perieg. v. 1144.
[z] Hist. l. 8. sect. 9.
[a] Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 19, 20.
[b] David de Pomis, Lexic. fol. 70. 3.
[c] Polyhistor. c. 64.
[d] Sola India nigrum fert ebenum. Georgic. l. 2. ver. 116, 117.
[e] Geograph. l. 15. p. 477.
[f] Perieget. ver. 1119, &c.
[g] Hist. l. 8. c. 9.
[h] Polyhistor. c. 65.
[i] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 3. sect. 8.
[k] De Ponder. & Pret. c. 5.
[l] Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 596.
[m] Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 35. 3.
[n] Ut supra.
[o] Apud Euseb. Præpar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34.

that he covered it all over, for then the ivory would not be seen, but interlined it, or studded it with it, whereby it appeared the more beautiful and magnificent. Such a throne of gold and ivory was decreed to Cæsar by the Romans[p].

Ver. 19. *The throne had six steps,* &c.] Up to the footstool of the throne, which was of gold, 2 Chron. ix. 18. and was high, that every one in court might see him, and the better hear the sentence he gave: *and the top of the throne* was *round behind;* had a semicircle at the top of it, like an alcove: *and* there were *stays on either side on the place of the seat;* or *hands*[q], such as the arms of a chair, to lean and rest upon: *and two lions stood beside the stays;* which were not only ornamental, and for support of the stays, but expressive of majesty, and of undaunted courage and resolution to do justice, and of the danger such expose themselves to, who oppose magistrates in the discharge of their office; and in which Solomon was a type of Christ, the lion of the tribe of Judah; and for the same reasons were the like portraits on the steps, as follows.

Ver. 20. *And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps,* &c.] There was a lion on each side of every step, a symbol of royal power, as before observed; so the Egyptians placed lions under the throne of Orus[r]: *there was not the like made in any kingdom;* for the matter and form of it, for its grandeur and magnificence; there was none at least at that time, whatever has been since; for this is the first throne of ivory we read of.

Ver. 21. *And all King Solomon's drinking-vessels* were *of gold,* &c.] Such quantities of it were brought to him from Ophir, and paid to him in tribute, and given him as presents: *and all the vessels of the forest of Lebanon* were *of pure gold;* not only what were used in his palace at Jerusalem, but in his country-house at some little distance: *none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon;* to make plate of; or silver plate was but little esteemed, and scarce any use of it made in Solomon's palace, if at all: though doubtless it was elsewhere, and especially silver as money.

Ver. 22. *For the king had at sea a navy of Tharshish, with the navy of Hiram,* &c.] Tharshish was not the place the navy went from, but whither it went to, as appears from 2 Chron. ix. 21. and xx. 36. and designs not Tarsus in Cilicia; nor Tartessus in Spain, or Gades, or which was however near it; though it appears from Strabo[s] and Mela[t] that the Phœnicians were acquainted with those parts, and were possessed of them; and particularly, according to Velleius Paterculus[u], the navy of Tyre traded thither before the days of Solomon; and Vitringa[w] is clear in it, that these were ships that traded to Tartessus, with the ships of Tyre; and it is more likely that that place is meant than Carthage, now called Tunis, in Africa; though the Targum here calls it the navy, the navy of Africa; but as Tharshish is sometimes used for the sea in general, here it may signify a particular sea, so called; and which Josephus[x] names the Tarsic sea, the same with the Indian sea; and points to the same country where Ophir was, which was washed by it, and to which the two fleets joined were bound. This is observed, to account for it how Solomon came by so much gold: *once in three years came the navy of Tharshish:* it returned in such a space of time; navigation not being improved as now, and sailing by coasts, and what with their stay abroad to vend and purchase goods, and to refit their ships, as well as sometimes contrary winds, they were so long in performing this voyage, which is now done in a few months: *bringing gold and silver;* so that silver was accounted of, and used for some purposes, though not for the king's plate: *ivory, and apes, and peacocks;* ivory is the elephant's tooth, as the word signifies; some of those are of an almost incredible bigness; some are said to be of 90, others of 125 pounds weight; Vartomannus[y] says, he saw in Sumatra, where some place Ophir, one that weighed 330 pounds; though, according to the Ethiopians[z], the ivory is from the horns; and so say[a] Pausanias and others, see Ezek. xxvii. 15. but it is commonly supposed to be of the two teeth in the upper jaw that stands out; and whether they are called horns or teeth, they are the same of which ivory is: of elephants there were large numbers in India, bigger and stronger than those in Africa; which latter were afraid of the former, as Diodorus Siculus[b], Curtius[c], and Pliny[d] relate; so Virgil[e] speaks of ivory as fetched from India; and Horace[f] also, which must be East India, for there are no ivory nor apes in the West Indies[g]: *apes* or *monkeys* were then, as now, brought from those parts. Strabo[h] reports, that when the Macedonians under Alexander were there, such a vast number of them came out of the woods, and placed themselves on the open hills, that they took them for an army of men set in battle-array to fight them. Vartomannus[i] speaks of monkeys in the country of Calecut, of a very small price: near Surat apes are in great esteem, nor will they suffer them to be killed on any account[k]. There are various sorts of apes, some more like to goats, others to dogs, others to lions, and some to other animals, as Philostorgius[l] relates; and who also says the *sphinx* is one sort of them, and which he describes on

[p] Appian. Alex. l. 2.

[q] ידות manus, V. L. Montanus, &c. αγκωνες brachiola, Sept. in 2 Chron. ix. 18.

[r] Hori Apoll. Hieroglyph. l. 1. c. 17.

[s] Geograph. l. 3. p. 104.

[t] De Situ Orbis, l. 2. c. 6.

[u] Hist. l. 1. in principio.

[w] Comment. in Jesaiam, c. 23. 1.

[x] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. sect. 2.

[y] Navigat. l. 6. c. 28.

[z] Ludolf. Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. c. 10.

[a] Eliac. 1. p. 308, 309. Vid. Plin. l. 8. c. 3. Ælian. Hist. Animal. l. 4. c. 31. & 7. 2. & 11. 37. & 14. 5. Varro apud Schindler. Lexic. Pentaglott. col. 1905.

[b] Bibliothec. l. 2. p. 121. So Polybius, Hist. l. 5.

[c] Hist. l. 8. c. 9.

[d] Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 9.

[e] India mittit ebur. Georgic. l. 1. ver. 57.

[f] ——— Non aurum & ebur Indicum. Carmin. l. 1. Ode 31. [illegible], Manetho. Apotelesm. ver. 297. & l. 4. ver. 149. Philo de Præmiis, p. 924.

[g] Manasseh Spes Israelis, sect. 2. p. 21. Ortel. Thesaur. Geograph. Varrerius de Ophyra.

[h] Geograph. l. 15. p. 480.

[i] Navigat. l. 5. c. 20.

[k] Ovington's Voyage to Surat, p. 360, 361, 396.

[l] Eccl. Hist. l. 3. c. 11.

his own sight of it as resembling mankind in many things, and as a very subtle animal; and so Solinus [m] reckons such among apes; but what come nearest in name and sound to the *kuphim* of Solomon here, are those Pliny [n] calls *cephi*, whose fore feet he says are like the hands of men, and their hinder feet like the feet and thighs of men; and Strabo [o] describes a creature found in Ethiopia, called by him *ceipus* or *cepus*, which has a face like a satyr, and the rest of it is between a dog and a bear. There is a creature called *cebus* by Aristotle [p], and is described as having a tail, and all the rest like a man; according to Ludolf [q], *cephus* is the *orang-outang* of the Indians. The word for *peacocks* should rather be rendered *parrots*, so Junius; which are well known to come from India [r], and from thence only, according to Pausanias [s]; Vartomannus [t] says, that at Calecut there are parrots of sundry colours, as green and purple, and others of mixed colours, and such a multitude of them, that men are appointed to keep them from the rice in the fields, as we keep crows from corn; and that they are of a small price, one is sold for two-pence, or half a souse; and the number of them may be accounted for, because the Brachmans, the priests, reckon them sacred, and therefore the Indians eat them not [u]. Curtius [w] designs these, when he says, in India are birds, which are taught to imitate man's voice; and Solinus [x] says, that India only produces the green parrot, that is, the East Indies, the West Indies not being then discovered; though some [y] think they were, and that it was thither Solomon's navy went: certain it is there are parrots of various colours in the West Indies, which P. Martyr of Angleria frequently makes mention of in his Decades. Huetius [z] derives the Hebrew word here used from חכה, which he says signifies to *join* or *adhere* to any thing, as these birds will cling to, and hang by their bills and nails on a branch of a tree, *&c.* so that they are not easily separated from it; the word is used in Deut. xxxiii. 3. and, according to some, in this sense. But, after all, if it should be insisted on, as it is by many, that *peacocks* are meant, these also are found in India. Alexander the great first saw them in this country, which so amazed him, that he threatened to punish those severely that should kill any of them [a]. Vartomannus [b] makes mention of them as in great numbers in some parts of India; and they are catched and sold at an easy rate at Surat [c], and make part both of their game, and of their grand entertainments [d]; Ælianus [e] often speaks of them as in India in great numbers, and in great esteem.

Ver. 23. *So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom.*] In which he was an eminent type of Christ; see Eph. iii. 8. Col. ii. 3.

Ver. 24. *And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom, which God had put in his heart.*] For it was all of God, a peculiar gift of his; by *all the earth* is meant the inhabitants of it, and only them, and those the more principal; who came from the several parts of it, hearing the fame of his wisdom, to know the truth of it, and to improve themselves by it.

Ver. 25. *And they brought every man his present*, &c.] To recommend them, and introduce them into his presence: *vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, and horses, and mules, a rate year by year*: every one brought according to the commodities of his country; and this they did yearly, out of great respect to him, and in veneration of him for his wisdom, and for the advantages they received by his wise counsels and instructions; besides, it was the custom of the eastern countries not to pay a visit, especially to great personages, without carrying a present.

Ver. 26. *And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen*, &c.] Both for war; for though it was a time of peace, he provided against the worst, lest an enemy should come upon him suddenly, and when unprepared: *and he had* 1,400 *chariots, and* 12,000 *horsemen*; of the latter see ch. iv. 26. *whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem*; some of the horsemen were quartered in the cities where the chariots were placed, and some of them in Jerusalem, to be near the king's person, and to be a guard to him on occasion. Josephus [f] says, half of them were in Jerusalem about the king, and the rest were dispersed through the king's villages.

Ver. 27. *And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones*, &c.] By the vast quantity he received from Tarshish; this is an hyperbolical expression: *and cedars made he* to be *as the sycamore-trees that are in the vale for abundance*: not by the growth of them, but by the importation of them from the dominion of Hiram; this is said in the same figurative way; of the sycamore-trees, Rauwolff says [g], they are what the Moors and Arabians calls *mumeitz*; which he describes to be as large and as high as white mulberry-trees, and having almost the same leaves, but rounder, and their fruit not unlike our figs, only sweeter, and no little seeds within, and not so good; and are therefore not esteemed, and are commonly sold to the poorer sort, and that they grow in all fields and grounds; of which see more in the note on Amos vii. 14.

Ver. 28. *And Solomon had horses brought out of Egypt*, &c.] To mount his horsemen with, and draw his chariots; which seems contrary to the command in Deut. xvii. 16. *and linen yarn; the king's merchants received the linen yarn at a price*; or rather linen itself; or linen garments, as Ben Gersom; linen being the staple commodity of Egypt, see Isa. xix. 9. but no mention is made of yarn in 2 Chron. ix. 28. and the word rendered *linen yarn* signifies a confluence or col-

m Polyhist. c. 40.
n Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 19.
o Ut supra, l. 17. p. 559.
p Hist. Animal. l. 2. c. 8, 9.
q Ethiop. Hist. l. 1. c. 10.
r Ælian. de Animal. l. 16. c. 2. Psittacus eois ales mihi missus ab Indis. Ovid. Amor. l. 2. Eleg. 6.
s Corinthiaca, sive, l. 2. p. 136.
t Ut supra.
u Ælian de Animal. l. 13. c. 18.
w Ut supra.

x Polyhistor. c. 65.
y Erasm. Schmid. de America Orat. ad Calc. Pindari, p. 261. Vatablus in loc. & in c. 9. 28. Hornius de Gent. Americ. l. 2. c. 6, 7, 8.
z De Navigat. Solomon. c. 7. sect. 6.
a Ælian. ut supra, & l. 5. c. 21. Curtii Hist. l. 9. c. 1.
b Navigat. l. 6. c. 7.
c Ovington's Voyage to Surat, p. 268, 269.
d Ibid. p. 399.
e De Animal. l. 11. c. 33. & l. 13, 18. & l. 16. c. 2.
f Antiqu. l. 8. c. 2. sect. 4.
g Travels, par. 1. c. 4. p. 57.

lection of waters and other things; and the words may be rendered, *as for the collection, the king's merchants received the collection at a price;* that is, the collection of horses, a large number of them got together for sale; these they took at a price set upon them [h], which is as follows.

Ver. 29. *And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for 600 shekels of silver,* &c.] Which, reckoning at two shillings and sixpence a shekel, amounted to 75 pounds; but a shekel was not worth more than two shillings and four-pence farthing: *and an horse for* 150; and this being the 4th part of the above sum, the Jews gather from hence that there were four horses in a chariot; the horses must be reckoned one with another, the whole collection of them, or otherwise no doubt but one horse was better than another; and it was a pretty large price to give for a horse in those times; which, taking a shekel at the lowest rate, must be upwards of 10 pounds; and which is too great a sum still for a custom or tribute to be paid for them, whether to Pharaoh or Solomon, as some understand it: *and so for all the kings of the Hittites;* perhaps the same with the kings of Arabia, ver. 15. *and for the kings of Syria;* those of Damascus, Zobah, &c. *did they bring them out by their means;* that is, by the means of Solomon's merchants, who bought them out of Egypt, and sold them to these kings.

CHAP. XI.

THIS chapter relates the false steps Solomon took, notwithstanding all his wisdom, in marrying strange wives, and worshipping other gods, ver. 1—8. upon which the Lord threatens him to rend the kingdom in his son's time, ver. 9—13. and he raised up adversaries against him, Hadad, Rezon, and Jeroboam, ver. 14—26. of which last an account is given, and of his being assured by Ahijah the prophet of his having 10 of the tribes of Israel given to him; which Solomon having notice of, sought to slay him, ver. 27—40. and the chapter is concluded with an account of Solomon's death and burial, ver. 41—43.

Ver. 1. *But King Solomon loved many strange women,* &c.] His love was a lustful and not a lawful one, and of women who were not only of foreign countries, but not his lawful wives, and these many: *together with the daughter of Pharaoh;* besides her, or as he loved her, and perhaps more; his sin was not that he loved her who was his lawful wife, but others with her; it is very probable she was a proselytess, and had no hand in turning him to idolatry, since we read not of any high place built for an Egyptian idol: *women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites;* all of the neighbouring nations. Some think he did this with political views, to get intelligence of the state of those countries, or to abate and extinguish their enmity; but it rather seems to be the fruit of lust or pride.

Ver. 2. *Of the nations concerning which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you,* &c.] That is, they should not intermarry with one another; this is to be understood of the last mentioned, the Hittites, who were one of the seven nations this law respected, Deut. vii. 1, 3. *for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods;* which is the reason given for the making the above law, and was sadly verified in Solomon: *Solomon clave unto these in love;* he not only took them, but kept them, and expressed a strong affection for them.

Ver. 3. *And he had* 700 *wives, princesses, and* 300 *concubines,* &c.] In all 1000, a prodigious number; though these might not be all for use, but for state, after the manner of the eastern monarchs; these were a far greater number than are alluded to in Cant. vi. 8. unless the virgins without number there, were such of these as were not defiled by him; but the number here seems plainly referred to in Eccl. vii. 28. *and his wives turned away his heart;* both from his duty to his God, and from attendance to his business as a king, especially the former, as follows.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass, when Solomon was old,* &c.] Toward the latter end of his reign, when he might be near 60 years of age; for Rehoboam his son and successor was 41 when he began to reign, ch. xiv. 21. which is observed either as an aggravation of the sin of Solomon, that in his old age, when by long experience he might have been thought to be still wiser, and less lustful: and yet *that his wives turned away his heart after other gods;* or as pointing at the advantage his wives took of his age: *and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father;* who, though guilty of many sins, never inclined to idolatry; his heart was always right in that point, and sincere in his worship, see Psal. xviii. 20—24.

Ver. 5. *And Solomon went after Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians,* &c.] Enticed by the Zidonian women, or woman, he had, ver. 1. According to the Phœnician histories [i], Solomon married a daughter of Hiram, king of Tyre and Zidon; so Clemens of Alexandria says [k], that Hiram gave his daughter to Solomon; Ashtoreth is Astarte, the same with the Venus of the Greeks, so Suidas [l]; and Lucian [m] expressly says, the Sidonians had a temple, said by them to belong to Astarte, which he takes to be the moon; and both Venus and Juno signify the same planet; see the note on Judg. ii. 13. *and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites;* the same with Molech, ver. 7. of which see the notes on Lev. xviii. 21. and on Amos i. 13. after this he was drawn by his Ammonitish wife, or wives, ver. 1. though the Jewish writers think he did not worship these idols, but suffered his wives to do it, and connived at it, which was his sin; so Ben Gersom and Abarbinel.

[h] Vid. Braunium de Vest. Sacerdot. Heb. l. 1. c. 8. sect. 9, 10, 11.
[i] Apud Tatian. contr. Græcos, p. 171.
[k] Stromat. l. 1. p. 322.
[l] In voce Ἀστάρτη.
[m] De Dea Syria.

Ver. 6. *And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] As idolatry is, nothing more provoking to him: *and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father:* for though he did not relinquish the worship of the true God, and the service of the temple, yet inasmuch as he worshipped other gods besides, or connived at the worship of them, he did not wholly, and constantly, and solely serve the Lord, as his father did.

Ver. 7. *Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab,* &c.] Of this idol, see the note on Jer. xlviii. 7. an high place for which he ordered to be built, or at least suffered it to be built, at the instigation of his Moabitish woman or women, ver. 1. this was built *in the hill that is before Jerusalem;* on the mount of Olives, as Jarchi, called from hence afterwards the mount of corruption, 2 Kings xxiii. 13. *and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon,* see ver. 5.

Ver. 8. *And likewise did he for all his strange wives,* &c.] That is, built high places for their idols, or suffered them to be built; for when he had done it for one, he could not refuse it to another, without greatly disobliging them; even for as many of them, *which burnt incense, and sacrificed unto their gods;* the gods of the countries from whence they came, and in the worship of which they had been brought up: this shews that the best and wisest of men, when left to themselves, may do the worst and most foolish of all things; as nothing can be more so than the worship of such wretched deities.

Ver. 9. *And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel,* &c.] Or from the fear of him, as the Targum, which must in a great measure be cast off, or he could not have given in to idolatry in any shape as he did; for it was for that the Lord was displeased, than which nothing is more provoking to him, as may be often observed: *which had appeared unto him twice;* once at Gibeon, and again after his prayer at the dedication of the temple, ch. iii. 5. and ix. 2. which is mentioned here as an aggravation of his sin, that he should fall into it, when the Lord had condescended to appear to him so graciously.

Ver. 10. *And had commanded him concerning this thing that he should not go after other gods,* &c.] Which is another aggravation of his sin, that it was against an express command of God, and was particularly given him, and he was warned to observe it, and threatened with evil should he break it: *but he kept not that which the Lord commanded:* see ch. ix. 5, 6, 7.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon,* &c.] Not in a vision, as before, but by a prophet; the Jews say [g], Ahijah the Shilonite, which is probable, see ver. 29. *forasmuch as this is done of thee, that thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes which I have commanded thee;* but broke them by his idolatry: *I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and I will give it to thy servant;* meaning Jeroboam, who was not only a subject, but in office under him, ver. 26, 28.

Ver. 12. *Notwithstanding in thy days I will not do it for David thy father's sake,* &c.] Not for the merits of David, but the promises made to him, 2 Sam. vii. 12, 13. but *I will rend it out of the hand of thy son;* and immediate successor, Rehoboam.

Ver. 13. *Howbeit, I will not rend away all the kingdom,* &c.] The whole kingdom of Israel: but *will give one tribe to thy son;* but it seems he had both Benjamin and Judah, and only 10 tribes were rent from him; the reason of this mode of expression may be, either because he gave him one of the tribes of Israel, besides that of Judah, which was his own tribe; or only the tribe of Judah is meant, the whole tribe of Benjamin not being his, since Beth-el, and some other places in that tribe, were in the possession of Jeroboam; or rather both these are called but one, because their inheritances lay together, and were mixed with one another; and particularly both had a share in the city of Jerusalem, and the kingdom always after the division went by the name of Judah only: and this tribe was given *for David my servant's sake;* because of the promise to him, that there should not want one of his seed to sit on his throne, ch. ix. 5. *and for Jerusalem's sake, whom I have chosen:* to have the house of his sanctuary and worship in, and therefore thought fit to have one rule there, that would have a regard to his service in it.

Ver. 14. *And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite,* &c.] Though he did not take his kingdom from him for his sin, he chastised him with the rod of men, as he said he would; suffering one, and then another, to rise up and disturb his peace in his old age, see 2 Sam. vii. 14. *he was of the king's seed in Edom;* of the blood-royal.

Ver. 15. *For it came to pass, when David was in Edom,* &c.] Fighting with the Edomites, and subduing them, and putting garrisons in the land, 2 Sam. viii. 14. *and Joab the captain of the host was gone up to bury the slain;* the Israelites that fell in battle, or whom the Edomites afterwards, through stratagem and surprise, fell upon in their garrisons and destroyed, and which caused Joab to go thither to bury them, and take vengeance on the Edomites for it; or these were the Edomites slain by David and Joab; and it has been always reckoned a piece of humanity to bury the dead of an enemy, and is to the honour of the conqueror, see Ezek. xxxix. 12, 13. or to suffer the enemy to bury them themselves: it is said [h], that Hercules was the first that brought up this practice, and that before they were left on the field, to be devoured by dogs; so they were in the times of the Trojan war, as appears by the writings of Homer; but burying them, in after-times, was used by the Romans [i] and Greeks; and Josephus [k] delivers it as a law of Moses to bury enemies, and not suffer any dead to lie without partaking of the earth, nor to pass by or overlook any unburied; but from whence he took it, or grounds it upon, is not very evident; this is the first mention of it; though the Targum is, "to strip the slain:" *after he had smitten every male in Edom;* as he thought, intending to root out the name of them; being enraged at their falling upon the garrisons, if that was the case.

Ver. 16. *For six months did Joab remain with all*

[g] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 55. Kimchi in loc.
[h] Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 27.

[i] Liv. Hist. l. 29. c. 21. Vid. Kirchman. Append. ad lib. de Funer. Roman. c. 3, 4, & 5.
[k] Antiqu. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 24. contr. Apion. l. 2. c. 29.

Israel, &c.] With the whole army: *until he had cut off every male in Edom*; as he supposed; for it was not fact, since after this they increased again, and became a powerful people, and had a king over them, and revolted from Judah, 2 Kings viii. 20, 21, 22.

Ver. 17. *That Hadad fled, &c.*] Whilst Joab was burying the slain: *he and certain Edomites of his father's servants with him*; who either was a king, and these some of his officers and courtiers; or however was of the royal family, and had an equipage, and these some of them: *to go into Egypt*; that was their view at first setting out, where they might hope for help, at least shelter: *Hadad being yet a little child*: whom his father's servants hid, whilst Joab was making the slaughter he did, and took the opportunity of fleeing with him whilst he was burying the dead.

Ver. 18. *And they arose out of Midian, &c.*] A country which lay in their way to Egypt, and where it seems they made some stay, and then departed: *and came to Paran*; near to which was a wilderness of the same name, in which the Israelites wandered when they came out of Egypt, and which lay between Edom and Egypt: *and they took men with them out of Paran*; either as guides and guards through the wilderness, or to make the better appearance before Pharaoh, and that they might meet with the better reception: *and they came to Egypt, unto Pharaoh king of Egypt*; and told their case, and informed him who Hadad was: who, pitying an unfortunate young prince, *gave him an house*; for him and his servants to dwell in: *and appointed him victuals*; a daily provision for him and his men: *and gave him land*; for his servants to cultivate, and from thence to raise a revenue for his support; the Jewish writers say he gave him cities to rule over; but as he was but a little child when he came, it can't be thought that was done, at least directly.

Ver. 19. *And Hadad found great favour in the sight of Pharaoh, &c.*] Perhaps for his comely personage, princely qualities, and good behaviour, as he grew up: *so that he gave him to wife the sister of his own wife, the sister of Tahpenes the queen*; it seems the kings of Egypt used to marry their favourites to great personages; see Gen. xli. 45.

Ver. 20. *And the sister of Tahpenes bore him Genubath his son, &c.*] Which signifies *stealth*, and the name might be given in memory of himself being carried away by stealth from his own land: *whom Tahpenes weaned in Pharaoh's house*; who was so fond of the child, that she took it, and weaned it for her in the king's palace: *and Genubath was in Pharaoh's household among the sons of Pharaoh*; brought up among them, as if he was one of them.

Ver. 21. *And when Hadad heard in Egypt that David slept with his fathers, &c.*] Was dead and buried, as the death of princes is soon known in other countries, and especially a king of such fame as David: *and that Joab the captain of the host was dead*; whose name might be terrible to Hadad, because of the slaughter of men he had made in his country: *Hadad said unto Pharaoh, let me depart, that I may go to mine own country*; with a view and an hope to recover it, now David and Joab were dead.

Ver. 22. *Then Pharaoh said unto him, but what hast thou lacked with me, &c.*] Either of an equipage suitable to his birth and marriage, or of provisions for his household, or of honour and respect, or of any favour from him: *that, behold, thou seekest to go into thine own country?* as if not well used where he was, or would be better provided for there: *and he answered, nothing*; he wanted nothing at all, had all he could wish for: *howbeit, let me go in any wise*; he had such an extreme desire to go, that he begged it might not be denied him on any account; whether he acquainted Pharaoh with his view in this request is not said, but it is probable he did, and it is certain Pharaoh gave him leave to go, see ver. 25.

Ver. 23. *And God stirred him up another adversary, &c.*] One from the north, as the other was from the south: *Rezon, the son of Eliadah, which fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah*; when David fought with him; and this man seeing the battle go against his master, and that he was like to be worsted, deserted him and fled, see 2 Sam. viii. 3.

Ver. 24. *And he gathered men unto him, &c.*] Perhaps some of the scattered forces of his master: *and became captain over a band, when David slew them* of Zobah; some that escaped enlisted under this man, and lived by plunder the remainder of David's reign, and so in the reign of Solomon unto his old age, when his heart was turned away from God to idols, by his wives: *and they went to Damascus, and dwelt therein, and reigned in Damascus*; Rezon and his men went thither, not in David's time, for he put a garrison there, 2 Sam. viii. 6. but towards the close of Solomon's days, and when Hadad set up in Edom, which gave him the hint to do the same at Damascus, of which he became king, and was the founder of that kingdom; after him there was a long race of kings there.

Ver. 25. *And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, &c.*] Not all the days of his life, see ch. v. 4. but all his days, from his first going into idolatry, to the end of his life: *beside the mischief that Hadad did*; and which, whatever it was, was not done till this time; for either, when he got leave from Pharaoh to go into his country, he lay hid there, waiting an opportunity to seize upon it; or by means of Pharaoh he got himself to be king of it, through the permission of Solomon, paying a tribute to him; but when Solomon was grown old, he revolted and refused to pay it, and rebelled against him, and gave him much trouble: *and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria*; not Hadad, but Rezon; he had an aversion to them, was a thorn in their side, and gave them much trouble, as well as had them in contempt, and bid them defiance, having made himself not only master of Damascus, but of all Syria.

Ver. 26. *And Jeroboam the son of Nebat, &c.*] According to some Jewish writers[r], this was Sheba the son of Bichri; but, as Kimchi observes, he was of the tribe of Benjamin, this of Ephraim; and besides, his head was cut off, and thrown over the wall to Joab, 2 Sam. xx. 1, 22. *an Ephrathite of Zereda*: some where in the tribe of Ephraim, but nowhere else

[r] Shalshalet Hakabala, p. 11.

mentioned. There was a famous Jewish doctor, before the times of Christ, of this place, as it seems, who was called Jose ben Joezer, a man of Zereda[*]: *Solomon's servant*: not only his subject, but one that had been advanced by him to an office, and served under him, ver. 28. *whose mother's name was Zeruah, a widow woman*; who very probably was supported by this her son, an industrious and ingenious man: *even he lifted up his hand against the king*: either against Solomon, by reproaching and reproving him for some things he did; or rather against Rehoboam his son, which was very ungrateful.

Ver. 27. *And this was the cause that he lifted up his hand against the king*, &c.] The occasion of it, his being advanced to some posts under Solomon, which elated him, and what passed betweeen him and the prophet Ahijah, after related: *Solomon built Millo, and repaired the breaches of the city of David his father*: in the oversight of which, it is supposed by the Jews, he employed this man, who reproached him for doing these works; building an house in Millo for Pharaoh's daughter, and stopping up the passage to the city of David, and the people's access thither upon occasion.

Ver. 28. *And the man Jeroboam was a mighty man of valour*, &c.] A man of great strength of body, and fortitude of mind: *and Solomon seeing the young man that he was industrious*; in what he was set about in the above buildings and repairs: *he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph*; the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, to be a prince or a deputy-governor of them; or rather to collect the king's tax from them, or the revenues of that part of the country, see Prov. xxii. 29.

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem*, &c.] Either to enter upon his new office: or having been with Solomon to pay in the revenues, and to make up his accounts with him, was going back to the country to do the duty of his office: *that the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him in the way*; not accidentally, but purposely was in the way to meet him, and converse with him; this prophet was of the city of Shiloh, and where was now his abode, see ch. xiv. 2. *and he had clad himself with a new garment*; not Jeroboam, but the prophet, and that by the direction of the Lord, for the following purpose: *and they two were alone in the field*: it is possible Jeroboam might have some servants with him; but Ahijah desiring some private conversation with him, he sent them onwards, or bid them stay at some distance; who yet might be capable of observing what was done, though not of hearing what was said; or otherwise how should Solomon come to the knowledge of it? ver. 40.

Ver. 30. *And Ahijah caught the new garment that was on him*, &c.] This looks as if it was Jeroboam's garment, having got a new one to appear before the king in; though the sense may be this, that the prophet took hold of his own garment that was upon himself: *and rent it in 12 pieces*; as symbolical of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Ver. 31. *And he said to Jeroboam, take thee ten pieces*, &c.] Of the twelve, an emblem of the ten tribes he was to have: *for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon*; that is, out of his family: *and will give ten tribes unto thee*: to rule over.

Ver. 32. *But he shall have one tribe for my servan David's sake*, &c.] See the note on ver. 13.

Ver. 33. *Because that they have forsaken me*, &c.] My worship, as the Targum; both Solomon and the children of Israel following his example; which is not to be wondered at, considering how prone they always were to idolatry: *and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon*: of which deities see the references in the notes on ver. 5, 7. *and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and* to keep *my statutes and my judgments, as* did *David his father*: the several laws of God relating to religious worship especially, which David was a strict observer of; and therefore Solomon, having such a pattern before him, was the more blameworthy.

Ver. 34. *Howbeit, I will not take the kingdom out of his hand*, &c.] Not any part of it, ver. 12. *but I will make him prince all the days of his life*; that is, he shall continue to hold the government of all the tribes so long as he lives: *for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments and my statutes*; see ver. 12. or was *well pleased with*, as the Targum; for keeping the commands of God from right principles, and with right views, is well pleasing to him.

Ver. 35. *But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand*, &c.] All but the tribes of Judah and Benjamin: *and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes*; signified by ten pieces of the rent garment he had given him, ver. 31.

Ver. 36. *And unto his son will I give one tribe*, &c.] Judah and Benjamin reckoned as one; see the explanation of this on ver. 13. *that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there*; or a kingdom, as the Targum; or an illustrious prince, a successor, shining in royal majesty and glory, to guide and direct, cheer and comfort, the people of Israel; be an honour to David's family, and a means of continuing the pure worship of God in the temple at Jerusalem; see 2 Sam. xxi. 17. Psal. cxxxii. 17.

Ver. 37. *And I will take thee*, &c.] From the low estate in which he was, to be king: *and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth*: he being ambitious of the kingdom, and having already formed in his mind some designs upon it: *and shalt be king over Israel*: the ten tribes.

Ver. 38. *And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee*, &c.] And be obedient thereunto: *and wilt walk in my ways*: directed to in the law of Moses: *and do* that is *right in my sight, to keep my statutes, and my commandments*: those particularly respecting divine worship: *as David my servant did*: who very diligently and constantly attended to the ordinances of religion: *that I will be with thee*; to guide and direct, protect and defend, prosper and succeed: *and build thee a sure house, as I built for David*; continue the succession of the kingdom in his posterity: *and will give Israel unto thee*; to rule over them.

* Pirke Abot, c. 1. sect. 4.

Ver. 39. *And I will for this afflict the seed of David*, &c.] For the idolatry Solomon had been guilty of, and connived at: *but not for ever*; for when the ten tribes were carried captive, the kingdom of Judah flourished under Hezekiah, Josiah, &c. and though the tribe of Judah was carried captive, yet it returned after 70 years captivity, and had rulers over it of the seed of David; and especially to the Messiah has God given the throne of his father David, of whose kingdom there will be no end, Luke i. 32, 33. and Jarchi's note on the text is, "for in the days of the Messiah the kingdom "shall return to it," the seed of David; and Abarbinel says, of a truth, at the coming of our Messiah, this prophecy will be fulfilled; but the true Messiah is come already, in whom it is fulfilled; see Kimchi and Abendana, who refer to Ezek. xxxvii. 19, 24.

Ver. 40. *Solomon sought therefore to kill Jeroboam*, &c.] Which is another instance of his folly, to seek to defeat the counsel of God, when he himself was assured by the Lord the kingdom should be rent, and given to his servant, ver. 11. and especially if he was informed of what passed between Ahijah and Jeroboam, as it should seem by this he was; either through Ahijah's making no secret of it, or through Jeroboam not being able to keep his own counsel, or through the report of the servants what they saw done, ver. 29. which Solomon would easily understand: *and Jeroboam arose and fled into Egypt*; the common sanctuary of persons in distress in those days: *unto Shishak king of Egypt*; either the father-in-law or the brother-in-law of Solomon, or one of another family, on whom the kingdom devolved; and who might not have any good respect for Solomon, and therefore Jeroboam thought himself safe with him: this is the only king of Egypt, in Scripture, that is called by his own name, and not Pharaoh; he is generally supposed to be the same with the Sesostris of Herodotus[t], and the Vexoris or Vexosis of Justin[u]; and the rather he may be meant, since, according to Herodotus[w], he was the only king of Egypt that ruled over the Ethiopians: and Strabo says[x] he was the first that subdued Ethiopia and the country of the Troglodytes; also Diodorus Siculus affirms[y], that he fought with the Ethiopians dwelling to the south, and obliged them to pay tribute; out of which countries Shishak brought many with him in his expedition against Jerusalem, 2 Chron. xii. 2, 3. *and was in Egypt until the death of Solomon*; not daring to return till that time, and then he did.

Ver. 41. *And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the acts of Solomon?*] Either written by himself, as Kimchi suggests, though not in being; or by some chronologer or historiographer employed by him in writing the most memorable things that happened in his reign; or by several prophets, as in 2 Chron. ix. 29. out of which the inspired writer of this book took what he was directed to by the Lord to be transmitted to future ages.

Ver. 42. *And the time that Solomon reigned in Jerusalem, over all Israel, was 40 years.*] The same says Eupolemus[z], an Heathen writer, who makes him to live but 52 years; which is the common tradition of the Jews, who suppose he was but 12 years of age when he began to reign; which is to be confuted from the age of his son Rehoboam, see ch. xiv. 21. Josephus[a], on the other hand, makes him to live to too great an age, who says that he reigned 80 years, and lived 94.

Ver. 43. *And Solomon slept with his fathers*, &c.] Died as they did: *and was buried in the city of David his father*; not in Beth-lehem, but Zion, ch. ii. 10. *and Rehoboam his son reigned in his stead*; of whom more in the following chapter. Though nothing is said of Solomon's repentance, there is no doubt but he was a good man, repented of his sins, and was saved; as may be concluded from the commendations of him after his death, 2 Chron. xi. 17. from the promise of God that he made, that his mercy should not depart from him, though he chastised him, 2 Sam. vii. 14, 15. from his being an inspired writer, who were all holy men, 2 Pet. i. 20. and especially from his writing the book of Ecclesiastes after his fall, which contains a full acknowledgment of all his evils, a recantation of them, and repentance for them. Abulpharagius[b], an Arabic writer, rashly asserts that he died without repentance.

CHAP. XII.

THIS chapter relates Rehoboam's going to Shechem to be made king, and Jeroboam's return from Egypt, ver. 1, 2. the people's request to Rehoboam to be eased of their taxes, as the condition of making him king, ver. 3, 4. his answer to them, after three days, having had the advice both of the old and young men, which latter he followed, and gave in a rough answer, ver. 5—15. upon which ten tribes revolted from him, and two abode by him, ver. 16—20. wherefore he meditated a war against the ten tribes, but was forbid by the Lord to engage in it, ver. 21—24. and Jeroboam, in order to establish his kingdom, and preserve the people from a revolt to the house of David, because of the temple-worship at Jerusalem, devised a scheme of idolatrous worship in his own territories, ver. 25—33.

Ver. 1. *And Rehoboam went to Shechem*, &c.] After the death and interment of his father: *for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king*; as was pretended, though in reality it was to seek occasion against him, and make Jeroboam king; it is very probable they knew of the prophecy of Ahijah, and therefore would not go to Jerusalem, but to Shechem, a city in the

[t] Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 102.
[u] E Trogo, l. 1. c. 1.
[w] Ut supra, c. 110.
[x] Geograph. l. 16. p. 529.
[y] Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 50.
[z] Apud Euseb. Praepar. Evangel. l. 9. c. 34.
[a] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 7. sect. 8.
[b] Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 55.

tribe of Ephraim, of which Jeroboam was, and where he had sowed the seeds of sedition when ruler there; and this place they chose, partly because they could more freely speak what they had in their minds, and partly for the safety of Jeroboam they had sent for on this occasion; so that Rehoboam went thither not of choice, but of necessity. The Jews[c] observe that this place was very ominous; here Dinah was ravished, Joseph was sold, Abimelech exercised tyranny, and here now the kingdom was divided.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass, when Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who was yet in Egypt, heard* of it, *&c.*] Of the death of Solomon, and of the meeting of the Israelites at Shechem: (*for he was fled from the presence of King Solomon;* see ch. xi. 40. *and Jeroboam dwelt in Egypt;*) until the death of Solomon; some render the words, *Jeroboam returned out of Egypt*[d], which agrees with 2 Chron. x. 2. this he did on hearing the above news, and on being sent for by some of his friends, as follows.

Ver. 3. *That they sent and called him,* &c.] That is, the people of Israel, some of the principal of them, especially of the tribe of Ephraim, sent messengers to him, and gave him an invitation to come to them at Shechem; or, they had sent[e], as Kimchi interprets it, which was the reason of his returning from Egypt, at least one of them: *and Jeroboam, and all the congregation of Israel, came;* the chief men of them, the heads of the people; these, with Jeroboam at the head of them, who was come out of Egypt, came to Shechem, where Rehoboam was, and they had appointed to meet him: *and spake unto Rehoboam;* one in the name of them all, perhaps Jeroboam: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 4. *Thy father made our yoke grievous,* &c.] Laid heavy taxes upon them, for the finishing of his buildings, for the maintenance of his household, for keeping such a large number of horses and chariots, and for the salaries of his officers, and for the support of his magnificent court; though they had very little reason to complain, since this was for the honour and grandeur of their nation, and they enjoyed their liberty, and lived in peace, plenty, and safety, all his days; and such an abundance of riches was brought unto them by him, that silver was as the stones of the street; though perhaps the taxes might be increased in the latter part of his life, for the support of his vast number of wives, and of their idolatrous worship, and for the defence of himself and kingdom against the attempts of Hadad and Rezon; but, as most interpreters observe, what they had most reason to complain of, they take no notice of, even the idolatry he had set up among them: *now therefore make thou the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter;* that is, ease them of their taxes, or lessen them: *and we will serve thee;* acknowledge him as their king, give him homage, and yield obedience to him.

Ver. 5. *And he said unto them, depart yet for three days, then come again to me,* &c.] Suggesting that he would consider of their proposal, and inquire into the merits of it, and as things should appear to him he would give them an answer in three days' time; which at first sight may seem a point of prudence in him, to take time for deliberation and counsel in this affair, but in his case and circumstance it was very imprudent; for he might easily see there was discontent among the people, and a faction forming against him, and, by taking time to himself, he gave them time to take their measures, and hasten and ripen them for a revolt; for, by giving them such an answer, they might plainly perceive he was not inclined to give them satisfaction; it would have been the most advisable in him to have promised them at once that he would make them easy: *and the people departed;* to their quarters, and there remained to the third day.

Ver. 6. *And King Rehoboam consulted with the old men that stood before Solomon his father, while he yet lived,* &c.] Which was very prudently done; for as these were men in years, and had been his father's counsellors, from whom, no doubt, they had learnt much wisdom, being often in cabinet-council with him, they were capable of giving him the best advice: *and said, how do you advise, that I may answer this people?* what answer would you advise me to give to them, and in what manner?

Ver. 7. *And they spake unto him, saying,* &c.] They gave their advice as follows: *if thou wilt be servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them;* condescend to them, behave in an humble manner towards them, for this day however, and gratify and oblige them; though indeed a king is but a servant to his people, and his administration of government a doing service to them; hence Antigonus[f], a king, mild, humble, and gentle, perceiving his son to behave in a fierce and violent manner towards his subjects, said to him, my son, dost thou not know that our glorious kingdom is a servitude? *and answer them, and speak good words unto them;* give them a soft answer, and speak kindly and gently to them, and make them fair promises, and give them reason to expect that their requests will be granted: *then they will be thy servants for ever;* such conduct would so win upon them, and make such an impression upon them, that they would for ever after entertain an high opinion of him, and be strongly affected and attached to him, and readily serve him.

Ver. 8. *But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him,* &c.] He did not rightly relish it, nor cordially receive it; it did not suit with his haughty temper, he could not brook it, to stoop to his people; he thought it a lessening of his dignity to do any thing that looked like courting their favour; and therefore determined not to take the advice given him by the old men, but to seek for other: *and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him;* the sons of nobles, with whom he had his education, and who were his companions from his youth upwards, and who were now officers in his court, and of his privy-council, being his favourites, and those he consulted on this occasion; and though they are called young men, as they were in comparison of the old men, yet since they were cotemporary with Rehoboam, who was now 41 years of age, they must be about 40, or not much under, and at an age to be wiser than they appeared to be.

[c] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 102. 1.
[d] וישב־בםצרים reversus est de Ægypto, V. L. Ex Egypto, ב pro מ, Vatablus.

[e] So Pagninus, Montanus.
[f] Apud Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 2. c. 20.

Ver. 9. *And he said unto them, what counsel give ye, that we may answer this people, saying*, &c.] See ver. 4. and the note there.

Ver. 10. *And the young men that were grown up with him, spake unto him, saying*, &c.] Gave him the following advice: *thus shalt thou speak unto this people that spake unto thee, saying*; as is said, ver. 4. *thus shalt thou say unto them, my little* finger *shall be thicker than my father's loins*; or, *is thicker*[g]; signifying that he had more strength and power than his father had, and that he would make them know it, and they should feel the weight of it, and instead of lessening he would increase their taxes; for also hereby was intimated, that his glory, grandeur, and magnificence, was greater than his father's, especially when he first came to the kingdom, and therefore required the same taxes, or greater, to support it; and perhaps reference may be had to the difference of their age, Solomon being a child, or a very young man, when he came to the throne; whereas Rehoboam was upwards of 40 years of age, and capable of judging what was fit to be done, and not to be talked to and treated after this manner, nor to receive the kingdom upon a condition of the people's prescribing.

Ver. 11. *And now, whereas my father did lade you with a heavy yoke*, &c.] Which was putting words into his mouth, owning the charge and accusation brought against his father, as he did, ver. 14. which was very unbecoming, if true; unless this is said according to the sense of the people: *I will add to your yoke*; make it heavier, lay more taxes on them: *my father hath chastised you with whips*; which was putting a lie into his mouth, and which he uttered, ver. 14. for no instance of severity exercised on the people in general can be given during the whole reign of Solomon: *but I will chastise you with scorpions*; treat them more roughly, and with greater rigour: whips may mean smaller ones, these horsewhips, as in the Targum; which gave an acute pain, like the sting of scorpions, or made a wound like one. Ben Gersom says, these were rods with thorns on them, which pierced and gave much pain. Weemse[h] thinks these are alluded to by thorns in the sides, Numb. xxxiii. 55. Judg. ii. 3. for whipping with them was about the sides, and not along the back. Abarbinel calls them iron thorns, rods that had iron prongs or rowels to them, which tore the flesh extremely. Isidore[i] says, a rod that is smooth is called a rod, but, if knotty and prickled, it is rightly called a scorpion, because it makes a wound in the body arched or crooked. Pliny[k] ascribes the invention of this sort of scorpions to the Cretians.

Ver. 12. *So Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam the third day*, &c.] Jeroboam came to him at the head of the people, being the head of the faction, and designed for their king: *as the king had appointed, saying, come to me again the third day*; see ver. 5.

Ver. 13. *And the king answered the people roughly*, &c.] In a blustering manner, gave them hard words and severe menaces, being worked up to such a spirit by his young counsellors: *and forsook the old men's counsel that they gave him*: to give them good words and kind promises.

Ver. 14. *And spake to them after the counsel of the young men*, &c.] And in the very language in which they gave it: *saying, my father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke; my father* also *chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions*, see the note on ver. 11.

Ver. 15. *Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people*, &c.] To lessen their taxes, and ease them of their burdens, as they desired: *for the cause was from the Lord*; it was according to his will and appointment; the defection of the people was willed by the Lord, and various things in Providence turned up to alienate their minds from Rehoboam, and dispose them to a revolt from him in favour of Jeroboam; and the Lord suffered the counsellors of Rehoboam to give him the advice they did, and gave him up to the folly of his own heart to take it: *that he might perform his saying, which the Lord spake to Ahijah the Shilonite unto Jeroboam the son of Nebat*: see ch. xi. 29—39.

Ver. 16. *So when all Israel saw that the king hearkened not unto them*, &c.] To grant their requests: *the people answered the king, saying, what portion have we in David?* or in his posterity, which are not of our tribes, nor are we obliged to have a king of that family; nor can we expect any benefit or advantage from thence, as may be easily concluded from the rough answer of Rehoboam: *neither* have we *inheritance in the son of Jesse*: so they called David by way of contempt; which was great ingratitude, when he had done such great things for them, and he and his son Solomon had raised them to the pitch of wealth and glory they now enjoyed; these were seditious expressions, and seem to be borrowed from a seditious person in the times of David, 2 Sam. xx. 1. *to your tents, O Israel*; signifying it was high time to depart from Rehoboam, and to have nothing to say to him, or do with him, but retire to their habitations, to consider whom to set as king over them: *now see to thine own house, David*: thou son or grandson of David; not his own house and family, and mind his domestic affairs, nor the house of the sanctuary in his tribe, as many of the Jewish writers interpret it; but rather the tribe of Judah, of which he was, and would have him consider to what a narrow compass his kingdom would be brought, who was just now blustering and boasting of his grandeur as a king: *so Israel departed unto their tents*; to their cities, as the Targum, and their habitations there, without recognizing Rehoboam as their king, or swearing allegiance, or giving homage to him as such.

Ver. 17. *But as for the children of Israel which dwelt in the cities of Judah*, &c.] Either such Israelites of the ten tribes that had before dwelt, or now upon this removed, for the sake of worship, to dwell in the tribe of Judah; or else that part of Israel, the tribe of Judah, which dwelt in the cities belonging to it: *Rehoboam reigned over them*; they owned him to be their king, and submitted to his government.

Ver. 18. *Then King Rehoboam sent Adoram, who was over the tribute*, &c.] There was one of this name in this office in the time of David, 2 Sam. xx. 24. this is the same with Adoniram, as Jarchi thinks, see ch. iv.

[g] עבה grossior est, V. L. Pagninus; densior est, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[h] Christian Synagogue, paragraph. 6. diatrib. 2. p. 190.

[i] Origin. l. 5. c. 27. p. 39.

[k] Nat. Hist. l. 7. c. 56.

6. him he sent either to collect the tribute of the Ephraimites, to shew his authority; or rather to call the people back to have some further discourse with them, and endeavour to soften things, and bring them to a compliance, so Josephus [l]; but it was too late, and he employed a very improper person; the heavy taxes were their complaint, and a tax-gatherer, and especially one that was at the head of the tribute, must be of all men the most disagreeable to them; this is another instance of the folly and false steps of Rehoboam: *and all Israel stoned him with stones, that he died;* the populace fell upon him at once, and stoned him to death; and which, though contrary to law and justice, was approved of and applauded by their principal men and all the people; so irritated and provoked were they by Rehoboam's answer to them. Hottinger [m] says, this man was buried in Shechem, which is very probable; but it is not expressed here, as he suggests it is; however, a grave-stone, found A. D. 1480, in Spain, with this inscription, is not genuine, "this is the grave of "Adoniram, a servant of King Solomon, who came to "collect tribute, and died such a day:" *therefore King Rehoboam made speed to get him up to his chariot, to flee to Jerusalem;* from Shechem, fearing they would treat him in the same manner in their rage and fury; his courage was now cooled, and his haughty and hectoring spirit was now brought down, and he was glad to make use of his chariot for flight; this is the first time we read of a king of Israel riding in a chariot; though before of Sisera, a Canaanitish captain, and that only in a chariot of war.

Ver. 19. *So Israel rebelled against the house of David unto this day.*] In which the writer of this book lived, and so continued until their captivity by the king of Assyria. Their revolt is called a rebellion; for though it was according to the purpose and will of God, yet the people had no command or order from God for it, and was done without consulting him, and was a rejection of their lawful prince.

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass, when all Israel heard that Jeroboam was come again,* &c.] Out of Egypt; the chief men knew of it before, for he had headed them in their approach and address to Rehoboam; but the people in common had not, and especially those of the several tribes besides that of Ephraim: *that they sent and called him unto the congregation, and made him king over all Israel:* they sent for him from his tent or house, which probably was in Shechem, and gave him an invitation to come to their assembly, met together to deliberate about a king; when they unanimously chose him to be king over Israel, that is, over the ten tribes, and inaugurated him into his office: *there was none that followed the house of David but the tribe of Judah only:* in which Benjamin was included, as appears from the following verse; that being joined to it, and mixed with it, and both having a part in Jerusalem, and so ever after the kingdom was denominated the kingdom of Judah.

Ver. 21. *And when Rehoboam was come to Jerusalem,* &c.] From Shechem, which was 40 miles [n] from Jerusalem: *he assembled all the house of Judah, with the tribe of Benjamin, an hundred and fourscore thousand chosen men, which were warriors, to fight against the house of Israel, to bring the kingdom again to Rehoboam the son of Solomon;* which not only shews courage reassumed by Rehoboam, now got safe home, but the hearty attachment of Judah and Benjamin to him, who raised presently so numerous an army in his favour; and had it not been that the Lord was against their going to battle with Israel, in all probability they might have gained their point, Jeroboam being scarcely settled in his kingdom, and having no forces raised.

Ver. 22. *But the word of God came unto Shemaiah the man of God,* &c.] A prophet in those days, see 2 Chron. xii. 15. and the word that came to him, as in the Targum, is called the word of prophecy: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 23. *Speak unto Rehoboam the son of Solomon king of Judah,* &c.] He is called king before, but of what tribe or tribes is not expressly said, only it is implied in ver. 17. and he is only acknowledged king of Judah by the Lord himself: *and unto all the house of Judah and Benjamin;* which made but one house, as before but one tribe, ch. xi. 36. *and to the remnant of the people;* of the other tribes that might dwell among them at Jerusalem, and especially Simeon, whose inheritance was within the tribe of Judah, Josh. xix. 1. *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 24. *Thus saith the Lord,* &c.] A common preface the prophets used when they spoke in the name of the Lord: *ye shall not go up, nor fight against your brethren the children of Israel;* and that because they were their brethren; though that is not the only reason, another follows: *return every man to his house, for this thing is from me;* it was according to the will of God, as Josephus rightly says [o]; it was by his ordination and appointment, though Jeroboam and the people sinned in the way and manner in which they brought it about; and therefore to fight against Israel, in order to regain the kingdom, would be fighting against God, and so to no purpose: *they hearkened therefore to the word of the Lord, and returned to depart according to the word of the Lord;* they knew Shemaiah was a prophet of the Lord, and they believed the message he brought came from him, and therefore hearkened and were obedient to it; and with the consent of Rehoboam were disbanded, and returned to their habitations, being satisfied with, and submissive to, the will of God, both king and people.

Ver. 25. *Then Jeroboam built Shechem in Mount Ephraim, and dwelt therein,* &c.] Not that this city had lain in ruins from the times of Abimelech, Judg. ix. 45. for then it would not have been a proper place for the convention of the people, ver. 1. but he repaired the walls of it, and fortified it, and built a palace in it for his residence: *and went out from thence, and built Penuel;* a place on the other side Jordan, the tower of which was beaten down by Gideon, Judg. viii. 17. and might be now rebuilt, or at least the city was repaired by him, and anew fortified, perhaps for the

[l] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 8. sect. 3.
[m] Prefat. ad Cipp. Hebr. p. 4. Vid. Walton. in Bibl. Polyglott. Prolegom. 3. sect. 35. p. 22.
[n] Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 1007.
[o] Ut supra.

better security of his dominions on that side Jordan; though Fortunatus Scacchus [p] is of opinion that this was an altar, the same as at Carmel, ch. xviii. 30. which Jeroboam built, and called by this name in testimony of the common religion of the Israelites and Jews.

Ver. 26. *And Jeroboam said in his heart*, &c.] As he was musing about the state of his kingdom and the affairs of it: *now shall the kingdom return to the house of David*: such were his fears, unless some method could be taken to prevent it, particularly with respect to religion, which was what his thoughts were employed about.

Ver. 27. *If this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem*, &c.] In the temple there, three times in the year, which all the males were obliged to, besides other times, when they had occasion to offer sacrifice, which they might do nowhere else: *then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah*; being drawn by the magnificence of the temple, the beauty and order of worship in it, the holiness of the place, and the grandeur of the royal court, and the persuasions of the priests and prophets of the Lord, both to keep to the service of the Lord, and to obey their lawful sovereign; and besides, they might be in fear they should be taken up and punished as traitors, and therefore would choose to submit to Rehoboam, that they might have the liberty of sacrificing without fear; Jeroboam seems conscious himself that Rehoboam was their liege lord and lawful king: *and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah*: his fears ran so high, that he should not only lose his kingdom, but his life, unless some step was taken to make an alteration in religious worship.

Ver. 28. *Whereupon the king took counsel*, &c.] Of some of his principal men, that had as little religion as himself, and were only concerned for the civil state; and the result of their consultation was as follows: *and made two calves of gold*: in imitation of that which was made by Aaron, and encouraged by his example and success; and having been in Egypt some time, he might have learned the calf or ox worship there, and might take his pattern from thence, and have two as they had; the one they called Apis, which was worshipped at Memphis, and another called Mnevis, worshipped at Hierapolis, as many learned men have observed; these were she-calves, according to the Septuagint and Josephus [q]: *and said unto them*: not his counsellors, but the people of the land: *it is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem*; pretending he sought their ease, by contriving a method to prevent their long fatiguing journeys, to go up with their sacrifices, first-fruits, *&c.* and the Jews [r] say the first-fruits ceased from going up to Jerusalem on the 23d of Sivan, which answers to part of May and part of June, on which day they kept a fast on that account: *behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt*: using the same words Aaron did on a like occasion; not that he thought these were really gods, and had divinity in them; nor could he hope or expect that the people would believe they had; but that these were representations of the true God, who had brought them out of Egypt; and that it might as well be supposed that God would cause his Shechinah to dwell in them as between the cherubim over the ark.

Ver. 29. *And he set the one in Beth-el*, &c.] In the southern part of the land, on the border of Ephraim and Benjamin; and the rather he chose this place, because its name signifies the house of God, and had been a sacred place, where Jacob more than once enjoyed the divine Presence: *and the other put he in Dan*: in the northern part of the land, for the convenience of the inhabitants of those parts; and the rather, since it had been a place resorted to in former times, because of the teraphim of Micah there.

Ver. 30. *And this thing became a sin*, &c.] The cause and occasion of the sin of idolatry; it led them by degrees to leave off the worship of God, and to worship these calves as gods: *for the people went to worship before the one, even unto Dan*: which was the furthest off, such was their great zeal for idolatrous worship; or they went thither before that at Beth-el was set up; and even they at Beth-el would go as far as Dan to worship, such was their veneration for both the calves. Abarbinel is of opinion that these calves were not made by Jeroboam for idolatrous uses, only the altar after mentioned; and that he never worshipped before them, nor sacrificed to them, nor even built the altar before them; but that these were set up as signs, and in memory of his kingdom, like the pillars in Solomon's temple; that he chose the calf or ox as emblems of his family, the family of Joseph, Deut. xxxiii. 17. two to represent Ephraim and Manasseh; golden ones, to denote the majesty and perpetuity of his kingdom; and he set these, the one at Beth-el, at the entrance of it, and the other at Dan, at the further borders of it; and that he did not call those gods, but the only true God, as he that brought Israel out of Egypt; only signified by that expression, that he was everywhere, there as well as at Jerusalem; but that the Israelites, who were taken with sensible objects, on visiting these out of curiosity, it became a snare to them, and they fell into the worship of them; just as Gideon's ephod, and Moses's brasen serpent, were unto them.

Ver. 31. *And he made an house of high places*, &c.] Or *altars* [s], built a temple at Dan, and set up several altars in it for sacrifice, both for burnt-offerings, and for incense, as at Jerusalem: *and made priests of the lowest of the people*: this clause seems not so well rendered; for this would have been very unpopular, and brought his new form of worship into contempt, to make the dregs of the people priests, which was not only a very sacred office, but of great honour; it was usual in some nations for kings to be priests also [t], and Jeroboam himself exercised this office, ver. 33. and xiii. 1. and therefore would never put the meanest of the people into it, but rather those of higher rank: the words may be literally rendered, *from the extremities or*

[p] Elæochrism. Myrothec. l. 2. c. 58. col. 593.
[q] Ut supra, sect. 4.
[r] Schulchan Arach, par. 1. c. 580. sect. 2.
[s] במות altarium, Vatablus.
[t] Rex Anius, &c. Virgil. l. 3. Vid. Servium in ib.

ends of the people[s]; meaning not merely from the extremest parts of his country, but rather out of the whole of the people; out of all sorts of them, out of any of them, without any distinction of tribe: for so it follows, *which were not of the sons of Levi*: and as by this means he enriched himself, by taking the cities that belonged to the priests and Levites, which they were obliged to leave, and from whence he drove them, 2 Chron. xi. 14. so he pleased the people by laying open the priesthood common to them, and freeing them from the payment of tithes, and the like.

Ver. 32. *And Jeroboam ordained a feast in the 8th month, on the 15th day of the month, like unto the feast that is in Judah*, &c.] The feast of tabernacles, which was on the 15th day of the 7th month; this was done chiefly for the sake of an alteration; though Abarbinel thinks, because the fruits of the land were not so soon-ripe nor so soon gathered, in the northern parts of the land, as nearer Jerusalem, he judged this month the fittest for the feast of in-gathering the fruits; and he might hope to get more people to come to his feast, when all were gathered in: *and he offered upon the altar (so he did in Beth-el), sacrificing unto the calves that he had made*; this he did by his priests, or rather he himself did it, see ch. xiii. 4. this shews that Jeroboam made these calves for worship, and did sacrifice to them, at least as representations of God. Abarbinel, to make this agree with his hypothesis, gives this sense of the clause, that he did not sacrifice to the calves, but to God, because of them, that his kingdom, which they were a sign of, might be continued; and there being but one calf in a place, he could not be said to sacrifice to them both, but to God, because of both; or else he thinks this must be done after the people had turned aside to them, and not when Jeroboam made them. The clause in the parenthesis, *so he did in Beth-el*, intimates that he did the same in Beth-el as in Dan, of which what is said before is spoken; that is, that he made an house of high places in Beth-el also, made priests out of all the people, such as were not of the tribe of Levi, appointed the feast of the 15th day of the 8th month to be observed there also, and he himself offered on the altar there: *and he placed in Beth-el the priests of the high places which he had made*; to officiate there.

Ver. 33. *So he offered upon the altar which he had made in Beth-el the 15th day of the 8th month*, &c.] As he had done in Dan: even *in the month which he had devised of his own heart*; the feast of tabernacles was of God's appointing, but the time of keeping he had devised himself, changing it from the 7th month, or Tisri, which answers to our September and October, to the 8th month, or Marchesvan, which answers to part of October and part of November: *and ordained a feast unto the children of Israel*; to be observed by them as the feast of tabernacles was by the priests of Judah and Benjamin: *and he offered upon the altar, and burnt incense*; which none but the priests should do; perhaps the reason why the same resentment was not shewn as to Uzziah was, because this was not at the altar of the Lord: whether he burnt incense after the manner of the Jewish priests, or as the priests of Egypt did to the sun, where he had been for some time, is not certain; the former burnt incense only twice a day, morning and evening, the latter three times; at sun-rising they burnt rosin, about noon myrrh, and about sun-setting *kyphi*, which was a compound of 16 sorts[w].

CHAP. XIII.

IN this chapter is an account of a man of God being sent to exclaim against Jeroboam's altar, and threaten its destruction, of which he gave a sign, which was accomplished, and with it the withering of the king's hand, which was healed upon the prophet's prayer for him, ver. 1—7. who would have entertained him at his house, but he refused the offer, and departed, ver. 8—10. but an old prophet in Beth-el hearing of him, rode after him, and fetched him back to eat bread with him, through a lie he told him, ver. 11—19. upon which the word came to the old prophet, threatening the man of God with death for disobeying his command, and which was accordingly executed by a lion that met him in the way, and slew him, ver. 20—24. of which the old prophet being informed, went and took up his carcass, and buried it in his own sepulchre, where he charged his sons to bury him also when dead, believing that all the man of God had said would be fulfilled, ver. 25—32. and the chapter is closed with observing the continuance of Jeroboam in his idolatry, ver. 33, 34.

Ver. 1. *And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah*, &c.] Whom Josephus[x] calls Jadon, perhaps the same with Iddo, who is by the Jewish writers[y] generally thought to be this man of God, and which may seem to be countenanced by 2 Chron. ix. 29. but cannot be, because this man was quickly slain, whereas Iddo lived after Rehoboam, and wrote his acts, first and last, nay, after Abijah his son, 2 Chron. xii. 15. and xiii. 22. and for the same reason Shemaiah can't be the man of God, ch. xii. 22. though Tertullian[z] calls him Sameas, and designs Shemaiah: but, whoever he was, he came *by the word of the Lord to Beth-el*: that is, by his command: *and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense*; at the time he came, see ch. xii. 33.

Ver. 2. *And he cried against the altar in the word of the Lord*, &c.] By his order and command: *and said, O altar, altar*; addressing himself not to Jeroboam, but the altar, thereby reproving his stupidity, the altar being as ready to hear as he; and because that was what moved the indignation of the Lord; and the

[s] מקצות העם de extremitatibus populi, Vatablus, Piscator.
[w] Plutarch de Iside & Osiride.
[x] Ut supra.

[y] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 11. 1. Jarch & Kimchi in loc.
[z] De Jejuniis, c. 16.

word is repeated, to shew the vehemency of the prophet's spirit, and his zeal against it; though the Jews commonly say it respects both altars, that at Dan, as well as this at Beth-el: *thus saith the Lord, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name*; who was not born until 300 years after this, according to the Jewish writers[a]: but it is generally reckoned to be more, even 350 or 360 years; this is a clear proof of the prescience, predetermination, and providence of God with respect to future events, contingent ones, such as depend upon the will of men; for what more so than giving a name to a child? *upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee*; all which was fulfilled by Josiah, 2 Kings xxiii. 15, 16, 20. it may be read, *the bones of a man*, which the Jews understand of Jeroboam; but may only signify that, instead of the bones of beasts, which were burnt on it, the bones of men should be burnt, and even of the priests themselves; a glaring proof this of the truth of prophecy, and of divine revelation.

Ver. 3. *And he gave a sign the same day, saying, this is the sign which the Lord hath spoken*, &c.] As a confirmation of the truth of what the prophet had said, and for the proof of his being a true prophet of the Lord: *behold, the altar shall be rent*, of itself, by an invisible hand, by the power of God: *and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out*; signifying it should be entirely demolished, not only shaken but destroyed, so as not to be capable of retaining the ashes on it; this was an emblem of the utter abolition of idolatry here in future times.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass, when King Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, who had cried against the altar in Beth-el*, &c.] He was highly provoked: so *that he put forth his hand from the altar*; on which he was burning incense: *saying, lay hold on him*; he put forth his hand, and either shook it at the prophet, threatening what he would do to him; or as beckoning to the people to seize him, and which he also expressed: *and his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him*; he could not move it one way nor another, but it remained in the same position, the nerves and muscles being shrunk; which was a further confirmation of the prophet's mission from God, being one of those concerning whom he says, *do my prophets no harm*, and a fresh token of the certain performance of what he had said.

Ver. 5. *The altar also was rent*, &c.] Split into two parts perhaps, and one fell one way, and the other another: *and the ashes poured out from the altar*; the ashes of the burnt-offering, these were spilled on the ground; all which was done without any outward force, or any visible means thereof: *according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the Lord*; by his direction and order.

Ver. 6. *And the king answered and said unto the man of God*, &c.] In another tone than when he bid the people lay hold on him; not in a haughty, but humble manner; not as threatening, but supplicating: *entreat now the face of the Lord thy God*; he does not say *my God*, for he had apostatized from him, and served other gods, but *thy God*, whose prophet he was, and who had an interest in him, as clearly appeared by what he had said and done by him: *and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again*; not that the anger of God might be turned away from him, and he enjoy the divine favour, and have an application of pardoning grace made to him, only to have this outward mercy, this temporal favour restored to him, the use of his hand: *and the man of God besought the Lord*; not rendering evil for evil; but being of a forgiving spirit, though the king had stretched out his hand against him, he lifted up his hands to heaven for him: *and the king's hand was restored again, and became as it was before*; which was another instance of divine power, and a further proof of the prophet's divine mission; from whence it might be concluded, that what he had prophesied of would be fulfilled, and was an instance also of divine goodness to the king, which should have led him to repentance, but did not.

Ver. 7. *And the king said unto the man of God, come home with me, and refresh thyself*, &c.] By eating a meal with him, after such a journey he had taken, and delivered his prophecies, and put up his prayers for the king: *and I will give thee a reward*; for his prayers, by means of which his hand was restored to him; but takes no notice of the Lord, the author of this miraculous cure, nor expresses the least degree of thankfulness and gratitude to him.

Ver. 8. *And the man of God said unto the king*, &c.] In answer to his civility to him, to assure him it was not out of contempt to him, or ill will to him, or slight of his favour, but in obedience to the will of God: *if thou wilt give half of thine house*; of the riches in it, and even of his kingdom: *I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place*; this idolatrous place; the reason follows.

Ver. 9. *For so it was charged me by the word of the Lord*, &c.] The command of the Lord, by which he came to Beth-el, and cried against the altar there, ver. 1, 2. *saying, eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest*; signifying that no communion was to be had with idolaters, nor any example to be set and followed; but the way to them, and to their idolatry, was to be shunned and avoided.

Ver. 10. *So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Beth-el.*] Neither ate nor drank with the king, though that is not expressed; nor did he go back the same way he came; but in each particular observed the divine command, and was obedient to it.

Ver. 11. *Now there dwelt an old prophet in Beth-el*, &c.] The Targum is, a false prophet, so Josephus[b]; it is hard to say what he was, a good man or a bad man; if a good man, he was guilty of many things which are not in his favour, as dwelling in such an idolatrous place, suffering his sons to attend idolatrous worship, and telling the man of God a premeditated lie; and yet there are several things which seem contrary to his being a bad man, and of an ill character, since he is called an old prophet, did not attend idolatrous worship, shewed great respect to the man of

[a] Pirke Eliezer, c. 17.

[b] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 9. sect. 1.

God, had the word of God sent unto him concerning him, believed that what he had prophesied should come to pass, buried the man of God in his own grave, and desired his sons to bury him with him. In some copies his name is said to be Micah, as Kimchi observes, and other Jewish writers[c] say the same; though some take him to be Amaziah the priest of Beth-el, and others Gersom the son of Moses[d], but without any foundation; though he now dwelt at Beth-el, he was originally of Samaria, 2 Kings xxiii. 18. *and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Beth-el;* that the altar was rent, and the ashes poured out, as he had said, and that Jeroboam's hand withered, and was restored upon his prayer to God: *the words which he had spoken unto the king;* that one should be born of the family of David, Josiah by name, that should offer the idolatrous priests, and burn the bones of men upon that altar, and that that should be rent, and its ashes poured forth, which was done: *them they told also their father;* gave him a particular account of his actions and words.

Ver. 12. *And their father said unto them, what way went he?* &c.] Having a strong inclination to see him, and converse with him: *for his sons had seen what way the man of God went which came from Judah;* they took notice of it; and, as the Targum, they shewed it to their father.

Ver. 13. *And he said unto his sons, saddle me the ass,* &c.] Which he used to ride on; intimating he had a mind to ride after him, and overtake him, as he might reasonably think he might, since the man of God was on foot: *so they saddled him the ass, and he rode thereon;* after the man of God, taking the way his sons directed.

Ver. 14. *And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak,* &c.] To shelter him from the heat, and being faint, hungry, and thirsty; so the ancients of old made use of oaks for a covering, before houses were invented[e]; thus Abraham pitched his tent in the plain, or under the oak, of Mamre, Gen. xiii. 18. *and he said unto him,* art *thou the man of God that camest from Judah?* which he might guess at from his habit, and from the description his sons had given of him: *and he said, I* am; owned himself to be the person he inquired after.

Ver. 15. *Then said he unto him, come home with me, and eat bread.*] In which invitation no doubt he was hearty, and might have no ill design in it, only to have some conversation with him, as being a good man, and a prophet of the Lord, especially upon the subject of his prophecies at Beth-el.

Ver. 16. *And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee,* &c.] Into the city, and into his house in it, being such an idolatrous place, and especially being forbidden of God: *neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place;* he was resolute and determined to abide by the commandment of the Lord, though there is reason to believe that he was now both hungry and thirsty.

Ver. 17. *For it was said to me by the word of the Lord,* &c.] By the angel that was sent to him, who gave him his message and instructions; which he was persuaded came from the Lord himself, and therefore looked upon himself under obligation to regard them as such: *thou shalt eat no bread,* &c. the same that he observed to the king, ver. 9.

Ver. 18. *And he said unto him,* &c.] That is, the old prophet said to the man of God: *I am a prophet also as thou* art; meaning, that he was a prophet of the true God, and not of any idol-deity; that he not only believed in him, and was a worshipper of him, but had revelations from him, and of the same things this man of God had, and that he believed that what he had prophesied of would certainly come to pass: *and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord;* was sent and dispatched by the order of the Lord with the following message: *saying, bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water;* and so be refreshed, and be fit to proceed on in his journey: but *he lied unto him;* no messenger nor message being sent to him by the Lord, but was wholly a device and stratagem of his own to persuade the man of God to return with him, that he might have his company and conversation.

Ver. 19. *So he went back with him,* &c.] In which he sinned; for as he had most certainly the command of God not to eat and drink in that place, he ought to have had the countermand from the Lord, and not trusted to another person. There are some things indeed which may be said in his favour, and be an apology for him, as that this man was an ancient prophet of the Lord, as he appeared to him; and that though he was forbid to eat and drink with idolaters, yet he thought he might with a prophet of the Lord, and especially as he affirmed he had the direction of an angel of the Lord for it; nor could he conceive that the prophet had any interest to serve by it, but rather it might be chargeable and burdensome to him; and he might think the Lord, out of compassion on him, had countermanded his former orders, and the circumstances he was in might the more incline him to listen to these plausible pretences; but, after all, he ought to have taken no directions but from the Lord himself; in this he failed: *and did eat bread in his house, and drink water;* contrary to the express command of God.

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass, as they sat at the table,* &c.] The old prophet, with his sons, and the man of God; the Arabic version adds, *and did eat,* there being a pause in the Hebrew text, as if something was wanting, and to be understood and supplied: *that the word of the Lord came unto the prophet that brought him back;* that is, to the old prophet, who was the means of bringing back the man of God; the word did not come to him who had transgressed the command of the Lord, but to him who was the occasion of it; though Abarbinel is of opinion that the word came to the latter, and so some versions, both ancient and modern, render the clause, *to the prophet whom he had brought back*[f], and which is countenanced by what is said, ver. 26. *according to the word of the Lord which he spoke unto him;* but the former sense best agrees with what follows.

[c] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 104. 1.
[d] Shalshalet Hakabala, ut supra. Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 19. 2.
[e] Suidas in voce Ιοβαιο[..].
[f] Syr. Ar. Junius & Tremellius.

Ver. 21. *And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah*, &c.] His mind being greatly affected with the word brought to him, partly on his own account, who, by a lie his conscience must accuse him of, had been the means of seducing the man of God, and partly on his account, who was threatened with death for complying with him: *saying, thus saith the Lord:* being obliged to deliver, in the name of the Lord, what was said unto him: *forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord;* the order that came out of his mouth, as follows: *and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee;* not to eat nor drink in Beth-el.

Ver. 22. *But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which* the Lord *did say to thee, eat no bread, nor drink no water*, &c.] Which command he observed when first there, though invited by the king; and yet, after he had got out of the place, was prevailed upon to return and transgress the command: *thy carcass shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers;* signifying that he should die before he came to the land of Judah, and he should be buried in another place, and which was verified.

Ver. 23. *And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk*, &c.] That is, had finished the meal; for he had begun to eat and drink before the word came, which came while they were eating and drinking; and it seems this did not hinder their proceeding to make an end of their meal, which one would have thought would have spoiled their appetite: *that he saddled for him the ass*, to wit, *for the prophet whom he had brought back:* he ordered his sons to get it ready for him, that he might not walk on foot as he had; though it does not appear that either he or any of his servants accompanied him, but the contrary.

Ver. 24. *And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him*, &c.] Perhaps not far from Beth-el; and this lion might come out of the same wood the she-bears did, that devoured the children that mocked the prophet, as Bishop Patrick conjectures, 2 Kings ii. 23, 24. *and his carcass was cast in the way;* in the high road, where it seems the lion seized him, and he fell: *and the ass stood by it;* disregarded and unhurt by the lion, though the prophet was pulled off of the back of him: *the lion also stood by the carcass;* not offering to tear it in pieces and devour it, but rather, as if he was the guard of it, to keep off all others from meddling with it; these circumstances are very surprising, and shew the thing to be of God; for when the lion had done what he had a commission to do, which was to kill the prophet, he was to do no more.

Ver. 25. *And, behold, men passed by*, &c.] Travellers on the road; nor did the lion offer to seize on them, nor desert the carcass upon their approach: *and saw the carcass cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcass;* as before described: *and they came and told it in the city where the old prophet dwelt;* which was Beth-el, by which means he came to have knowledge of it.

Ver. 26. *And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard* thereof, &c.] The old prophet, that had deceived him, by telling him a lie: *he said, it is the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the Lord;* but not a syllable does he say of his own sin in deceiving him; though one would think his own conscience must smite him for it: *therefore the Lord hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake unto him;* and that by himself, ver. 21, 22.

Ver. 27. *And he spake to his sons, saying, saddle me the ass*, &c.] For it seems he had more than one, for he had sent away the man of God with one before: *and they saddled* him; the ass he commonly rode on.

Ver. 28. *And he went and found his carcass cast in the way, and the ass and the lion standing by the carcass*, &c.] As before described: *the lion had not eaten the carcass, nor torn the ass;* both which were very marvellous; as also that the ass should stand so quietly, and without fear, by the carcass along with the lion, and not run away; but here both stayed till the prophet came to take care of the carcass, which shews the singular providence of God in this affair; and that though he chastised the man of God with a temporal judgment for his offence, yet he was dear to him, and even his carcass precious in his sight.

Ver. 29. *And the prophet took up the carcass of the man of God*, &c.] The lion perhaps made off as soon as he came, or, if he stayed, the prophet was not afraid of him, seeing he did not attempt to devour the carcass, nor touch the ass, nor do any hurt to those that passed by: *and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back;* to his own city: *and the old prophet came to the city to mourn, and to bury him;* to perform the funeral rites, according to the custom of the place.

Ver. 30. *And he laid his carcass in his own grave*, &c.] Which he had prepared for himself; for, as he came from Samaria, it could not be the sepulchre of his fathers; and this was shewing all the respect, and doing all the honour to him, he well could: *and they mourned over him;* the prophet and his sons: saying, *alas, my brother;* which was an usual form of lamentation at funerals in after-times, see Jer. xxii. 18.

Ver. 31. *And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, saying*, &c.] He gave them the following charge: *when I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God* is *buried;* as it was his own, it might be reasonably thought they would bury him in it without such a charge; but, lest they should not, he gives it: *lay my bones beside his bones;* his view in this was, that when Josiah came to burn the bones of the priests, he would spare the bones of this man of God; and so his, lying by them, and mingled with them, would be spared also, and so it proved, 2 Kings xxiii. 18.

Ver. 32. *For the saying which he cried by the word of the Lord against the altar in Beth-el*, &c.] That the priests should be offered on it, and men's bones be burnt upon it; for as for its being rent, and the ashes of it poured out, that had been done already: *and against all the houses of the high places which are in Samaria, shall surely come to pass;* by which it appears that there were temples, and high places, and altars built in other parts of the kingdom besides Dan and Beth-el, of the destruction of which the man of God prophesied, though not before mentioned; all which the old prophet gave credit to, and firmly believed

would be accomplished. The kingdom of Israel, in after-times, had the name of Samaria, from the chief city of it, Isa. vii. 9. here spoken of by anticipation, for as yet it was not in being, see ch. xvi. 24. and either it has its name here by way of prophecy, or else given by the writer of this book, as what it went by in his time.

Ver. 33. *After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way*, &c.] From the idolatrous practices he had set on foot, and was establishing; though he had seen his altar rent, and the ashes poured out as the man of God predicted, his own hand withered, and that restored again upon the prayer of the prophet; and though he had heard of the death he died for his disobedience to the command of God, and the several marvellous things that attended it; these were so far from reforming him, that he seemed to be the more hardened thereby: *but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places*, and officiated there, and indeed those of the tribe of Levi would not serve there, and therefore were expelled their cities; see 2 Chron. xi. 14.

Ver. 34. *And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam*, &c.] All the above things were sins in themselves, as building high places, and putting priests in them, whoever would; but the sense is, that these were the causes of punishment, or of evil things being inflicted on Jeroboam's family: sin is put for the punishment of sin, as it often is: *even to cut it off, and to destroy it from off the face of the earth*; so that it become utterly extinct; and the next thing we hear of is the sickness and death of his son.

CHAP. XIV.

THIS chapter relates the sickness of Jeroboam's son, the application of his wife, at his instance, to the prophet Ahijah, in the child's favour, ver. 1—6. the prophecy of the prophet concerning the ruin of Jeroboam's house, and the death of the child, which came to pass, ver. 7—18. an account of the years of Jeroboam's reign, and also of Rehoboam's, ver. 19—21. and of the evil things done and suffered by the latter in his kingdom, and the calamities that came upon him for it, ver. 22—28. and the conclusion of his reign, ver. 29, 30, 31.

Ver. 1. *At that time Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, fell sick.*] Being smitten of God with some disease, as a punishment of Jeroboam's sin; how long this was after the above things were done cannot be said.

Ver. 2. *And Jeroboam said to his wife*, &c.] Who she was is not known: *arise, I pray thee, and disguise thyself*; put off her royal apparel, and clothe herself like a common person, mimic the dress and language of a country-woman: *that thou be not known to be the wife of Jeroboam*; by any that should see her on the road, or at the city she was to go to, or by the prophet to whom she would be sent: *and get thee to Shiloh*; which, according to Bunting[z], was 24 miles from Tirzah, where Jeroboam now lived, see ver. 17. *behold, there is Ahijah the prophet*; called from thence the Shilonite, ch. xi. 29. *which told me that I should be king over this people*; and this coming to pass, proved him to be a true prophet, and to be credited in what he should say concerning their child. Jeroboam desired his wife to go on this errand, because he did not care it should be known that he applied to any of the prophets of the Lord; nor did he choose it should be known whose child was inquired about, which another must have told, whereas his wife could speak of it as her own; and she was the fittest person to give an account of the child's illness, and would ask the most proper and pertinent questions, and bring him back a faithful report; and he would have her be disguised, lest the prophet, who bore no good will to him because of his apostacy, should refuse to give any answer at all, or else give a very rough and disagreeable one.

Ver. 3. *And take with thee ten loaves, and cracknels, and a cruse of honey, and go to him*, &c.] It being usual to carry a present to a prophet when he was inquired of on any account, see 1 Sam. ix. 7. and this being a plain present, and of such things as the country afforded, she might be taken for a plain countrywoman, and not for such a personage as she was: the ten loaves could not be large for a woman to carry, most probably made of wheat; the cracknels, according to the Greek version in Drusius, were for the prophet's children; they very likely were spiced, or were sweetened with honey, and might be somewhat like our simnels; they seem to have their name in Hebrew from having points and pricks in them for the sake of ornament; such as Plautus[a] calls *scribilitæ*, because, as Turnebus[b] says, they were marked and pricked, and seemed as if they were written: *he shall tell thee what shall become of the child*; whether it should live or die, for that was all he wanted to know; he did not desire to know what should be done to the child for its recovery, nor to request the prophet's prayers for it.

Ver. 4. *And Jeroboam's wife did so, and went to Shiloh, and came to the house of Ahijah*, &c.] Disguised herself, and took this long journey, and found the prophet's house; which she did partly in obedience to her husband, and partly from affection to her child: *but Ahijah could not see*; her or any body else that came into the room to him: *for his eyes were set by reason of his age*; or *stood* fixed and immovable, as the eyes of blind men are; or the nerves and muscles of his eyes stood within the holes thereof, so that he could not see objects.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord said unto Ahijah*, &c.] Either in a dream, or by an impulse upon his mind, before Jeroboam's wife came in: *behold, the wife of Jeroboam*

[z] Travels, &c. p. 161.
[a] Prolog. Poenulo, ver. 43.
[b] Adversar. l. 33. c. 10.

cometh to ask a thing of thee for her son, for he is sick; to know whether he will recover or no: *thus and thus shalt thou say unto her;* as after expressed in some following verses: *for it shall be, when she cometh in, that she shall feign herself another woman;* to the people that let her in, and introduce her to the prophet, and to the prophet himself; pretend herself to be a country-woman come to ask a question of the prophet concerning her son that was ill of a disease.

Ver. 6. *And it was so, when Ahijah heard the sound of her feet, as she came in at the door,* &c.] Of the room where the prophet was: *that he said, come in, thou wife of Jeroboam, why feignest thou thyself to be another?* which must greatly surprise and confound her, as well as lay open to her the folly of her and her husband to imagine that she could be secreted from God, and a prophet of his; or that a prophet could tell her what was future, and yet not know her that was present; and this might serve to assure her, and so her husband, that what the prophet after delivered would certainly come to pass: *for I am sent to thee with heavy* tidings; or hard things, such as would be very disagreeable to her and her husband.

Ver. 7. *Go tell Jeroboam,* &c.] Thy husband: *thus saith the Lord God of Israel:* so he continued to be, though they had revolted from him: *forasmuch as I exalted thee from among the people:* the common people, from a low estate in which he was: *and made thee prince over my people Israel;* so they were when he made them king over them; and there were some among them still that loved the Lord, served and feared him, of which the prophet himself, now speaking, was an instance.

Ver. 8. *And rent the kingdom away from the house of David, and gave it thee,* &c.] Even 10 parts out of 12: *and yet thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that only which was right in mine eyes;* who never was guilty of idolatry, but always constantly and cordially attended the pure worship of God, and was careful to do every thing in that according to the will of God, whatever else he might be deficient in.

Ver. 9. *But hast done evil above all that were before thee,* &c.] Not only above David, but above Saul, who never gave into idolatry, yea, even above Solomon, who, though he connived at idolatry, and might be guilty of it in some instances, yet did not attempt to draw his people into it; and if this was the latter end of Jeroboam's reign, which is probable, Rehoboam and Abijam might be both dead; and though they were blameworthy in some things, yet not so bad as Jeroboam; though perhaps this may respect only such who had been kings of Israel before him: *for thou hast gone and made thee other gods, and molten images, to provoke me to anger;* the two calves of gold; for however he might colour things over, and pretend he did not look upon these as gods, but as representations of God, and that he did not worship them, but God by them, yet the Lord considered it as idolatry, than which nothing is more provoking to him: *and hast cast me behind thy back;* as unworthy of his regard; or my worship, as the Targum, which he neglected, and shewed no concern for.

Ver. 10. *Therefore, behold, I will bring evil upon the house of Jeroboam,* &c.] Calamities, destruction, and ruin: *and will cut off from Jeroboam him that pisseth against the wall;* not leave a dog of his, or rather a male, see 1 Sam. xxv. 22. *and him that is shut up and left in Israel;* in garrisons or in prisons, in cities or in fields, or in whatsoever situation or circumstances they may be. Some interpret it of wealth and substance; it signifies an entire destruction it may be of men and goods, see Deut. xxxii. 36. *and will take away the remnant of the house of Jeroboam, as a man taketh away dung, till it be all gone;* signifying that Jeroboam's family was as loathsome and abominable to the Lord as dung is to men; and that he would make as clean a riddance of them as men do of dung when they sweep it out, and will not leave the least scrap behind.

Ver. 11. *Him that dieth of Jeroboam in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat,* &c.] The meaning is, that they should have no burial: *for the Lord hath spoken it;* and therefore shall be fulfilled, for what he hath said he will do, Numb. xxiii. 19.

Ver. 12. *Arise thou therefore, get thee to thine own house,* &c.] With all haste, as soon as she could: *and when thy feet enter the city;* the city of Tirzah, very probably the king's palace stood at the entry of it, see ver. 17. *the child shall die;* this is an answer to the question she was to ask, and at the same time a token of the sure and certain fulfilment of all the prophet had spoken in the name of the Lord.

Ver. 13. *And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him,* &c.] Give him an honourable interment, and follow him to the grave with lamentation, because he was the heir-apparent to the throne, and an hopeful prince, of whom they had raised expectations; that when he came to the throne things would take a different turn, especially in matters of religion, and they might fear, he being removed, things would grow worse instead of better: *for he only of Jeroboam shall come to the grave;* or be buried, the rest should be devoured by dogs or fowls: *because in him there is found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel in the house of Jeroboam;* the principles of grace were implanted, and seeds of piety and religion sown in his heart; and there appeared a disposition of mind, and desires in him to the name of God, and the remembrance of it; or to his pure worship and service; it might be discerned that he had a dislike of idolatry, and a desire to have true religion restored. The Jews say[k] that this good thing in him was, that he was the means of removing the watch or guards that were placed in the way to hinder the Israelites from going up to the feasts of the Lord.

Ver. 14. *Moreover the Lord shall raise up a king over Israel,* &c.] Baasha is meant, ch. xv. 29. *who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam that day;* immediately, as soon as on the throne, he should destroy his whole family, as he did, ch. xv. 29. *but what? even now;* shall it be that day? yes; even at that very time, and which will be very quickly from this time: for as it

[k] T. Bab. Moed Katon, fol. 28. 2.

may be supposed this was said at the latter end of Jeroboam's reign, and his son and successor reigned but two years ere this prophecy was accomplished. The Targum is, "who shall cut off the house of Jeroboam, him that is living to-day, and shall be from "henceforward."

Ver. 15. *And the Lord shall smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water,* &c.] Either by the wind or by the stream; and may signify the fluctuating and uncertain condition Israel should be in in future reigns, through intestine wars, and the translation of the kingdom into different families; so that there was continually disquietude and uneasiness, and no settled peace and tranquillity: *and he shall root up Israel out of this good land he gave to their fathers:* which was brought about, first by Tiglath-pileser, and then by Shalmaneser, kings of Assyria, that carried them captives from hence: *and shall scatter them beyond the river;* the river Euphrates, as the Targum: or, as others, the river Gozan, 2 Kings xvii. 6. *because they have made their groves, provoking the Lord to anger:* in which groves they placed idols, and worshipped them, which was highly provoking to the Lord, and the cause of their dispersion.

Ver. 16. *And he shall give Israel up,* &c.] Into the hands of their enemies: *because of the sins of Jeroboam, who did sin, and who made Israel to sin:* by his devices and stratagems, by his example and edicts, and by the methods he took to prevent Israel from worshipping in the manner and place he directed to.

Ver. 17. *And Jeroboam's wife arose, and departed,* &c.] Upon this speech of the prophet's to her: *and came to Tirzah;* where Jeroboam now had his court, and where their son now was; it was a royal city in the time of the Canaanites, and is commonly placed in the tribe of Manasseh, and was a very pleasant one, as its name signifies, to which there is an allusion, Cant. vi. 4. see the note on Josh. xii. 24. *and when she came to the threshold of the door, the child died;* just as she was about to step over the threshold of the royal palace, which seems to have been at the entering of the city of Tirzah, ver. 12.

Ver. 18. *And they buried him,* &c.] In an honourable manner, suitable to his rank and pedigree: *and all Israel mourned for him, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by the hand of his servant Ahijah the prophet,* ver. 13.

Ver. 19. *And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he warred,* &c.] As he did with Rehoboam, ver. 30. and with Abijam his son, who was an over-match for him, see 2 Chron. xiii. *and how he reigned;* over the people of Israel, whether wisely, and justly, and in clemency, or not: *behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel;* not in that canonical book of Scripture, so called, for in that there is very little account of the reign of Jeroboam; but in the annals and diaries of the kings of Israel, written by persons appointed for that purpose, and out of which it is generally thought that inspired writers, by divine direction, took what was thought proper to be transmitted to future times. So with the Romans, from their very beginning to the times of Mutius, all the events of every year were committed to writing by the order of the Pontifex Maximus, and lay open to be read by the people in common; and these, as Tully[l] says, were what are called annals.

Ver. 20. *And the days which Jeroboam reigned were 22 years,* &c.] So that he outlived Rehoboam five years, and lived to the second year of the reign of his grandson Asa: *and he slept with his fathers;* or died as they did: *and Nadab his son reigned in his stead;* who perhaps was younger than Abijah, whose sickness and death are before related.

Ver. 21. *And Rehoboam the son of Solomon reigned in Judah,* &c.] Over the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, when Jeroboam reigned over the other ten: *Rehoboam was 41 years old when he began to reign;* being born one year before his father Solomon began to reign, and so it might have been expected he would have begun his reign more wisely than he did: *and he reigned 17 years in Jerusalem;* not half so long as his father and grandfather, being neither so wise nor so good a prince as either of them: *the city which the Lord did choose out of all the tribes of Israel, to put his name there;* to have a temple built for him, and his worship carried on in it; which was an aggravation of the sin of Rehoboam, that he should reign in such a place, and yet be guilty of the crimes he was; the three first years he reigned well, but afterwards forsook the law of the Lord, 2 Chron. xi. 17. and xii. 1. *and his mother's name was Naamah an Ammonitess;* and which is observed again, ver. 31. she being the instrument of drawing him into idolatry, which it is very probable she practised in the days of Solomon, ch. xi. 5, 7.

Ver. 22. *And Judah did evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] At the end of three years, from the beginning of the reign of Rehoboam: *and they provoked him to jealousy, with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done;* that is, with their idolatries; for they were the sins which moved the Lord to jealousy, and provoked the eyes of his glory; in which they had outdone not the ten tribes, but their fathers, in the times of Moses, Joshua, and the judges, and of their kings before their separation, Saul, David, and Solomon.

Ver. 23. *For they also built them high places,* &c.] Which, though allowed of, or at least connived at, before the temple was built, and when the tabernacle was unfixed, yet afterwards unlawful; and the tribe of Judah could have no excuse for them, who had the temple in their tribe: *and images;* contrary to the express command of God, Exod. xx. 4. *and groves on every high hill, and under every green tree;* that is, set up idols, and temples for idols, amidst groves of trees, and under all green trees; as was the custom of the Heathens, who sacrificed on the heights of hills and tops of mountains, as was particularly the custom of the Persians, as both Herodotus[m] and Xenophon[n] relate; and with the Getæ, a people in Thrace, was a mountain they reckoned sacred[o].

Ver. 24. *And there were also Sodomites in the land,* &c.] Such as were addicted to unnatural lusts between

[l] De Oratore, l. 2. c. 24.
[m] Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 131.
[n] Cyropædia, l. 8. c. 45.
[o] Strabo Geograph. l. 7. p. 206.

men and men, which the men of Sodom were guilty of, from whence they had their name: Jarchi interprets the word adultery, and some versions render it whoremongers; and filthy actions of this nature, both by men and women, usually attended idolatrous practices among the Heathens; in their temples and groves such wickednesses were privately perpetrated: and *they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the Lord cast out before the children of Israel*; the Canaanites, of whose uncleannesses, incests, and bestialities, see Lev. xviii.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass in the fifth year of King Rehoboam*, &c.] Two years after he and his people fell into the above wicked practices: that *Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem*; of whom see ch. xi. 40. this was suffered as a chastisement from the Lord for their abominations.

Ver. 26. *And he took away the treasures of the house of the Lord*, &c.] Which perhaps Jeroboam had informed him of, and for the sake of which he came, as well as to make a diversion in favour of Jeroboam, who had contracted an intimacy with him when in Egypt; and who might have no regard for Rehoboam, who was not a son of Pharaoh's daughter, and so no relation to him: these were the treasures which David had left to his son Solomon, and had dedicated for the temple, even gold, silver, and vessels, which he put among the treasures of the house of the Lord, and perhaps added to them, ch. vii. 51. *and the treasures of the king's house*; the riches, gold, silver, and jewels, whatever of worth and value he had in his chests and cabinets: *he even took away all*; that he could find and come at; for that there were some left is plain from ch. xv. 18. *and he took away all the shields of gold which Solomon had made*; and which were put in the house of the forest of Lebanon, ch. x. 16, 17.

Ver. 27. *And King Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields*, &c.] For the king of Egypt had so stripped him of his gold, that he was not able to replace golden ones: *and committed them into the hands of the chief of the guard*; or *runners*[r], that went before the king, or attended him as his life-guard when he went abroad: *which kept the door of the king's house*; which kept guard night and day in their turns.

Ver. 28. *And it was so, when the king went into the house of the Lord*, &c.] The temple; for though he had fallen into idolatry, he had not wholly forsaken the worship of God in the temple, and perhaps by the late humbling providence he might be stirred up to attend there more frequently: *that the guard bare them*; before him, partly for pomp and grandeur, and partly to keep in awe such as were inclined to mutiny and sedition: *and brought them back into the guard-chamber*; when the king returned, the place where the guard lodged and slept by turns.

Ver. 29. *Now the rest of the acts of Rehoboam, and all that he did*, &c.] In the course of his reign, that was memorable: are *they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?* who had annalists or historiographers to write for them, as the kings of Israel had, ver. 19. in the writing of which, especially with respect to genealogies, Shemaiah the prophet, and Iddo the seer, were concerned, 2 Chron. xii. 15.

Ver. 30. *And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all* their *days*.] For though Rehoboam did not enter into an offensive war, and attack the children of Israel, being dissuaded from it by Shemaiah the prophet in the name of the Lord, yet he might maintain a defensive war; and though there were no pitched battles between them as afterwards, in his son's time, yet there might be skirmishes and bickerings on the borders of their countries.

Ver. 31. *And Rehoboam slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David*, &c.] Where David and Solomon were buried, ch. ii. 10. and xi. 43. *and his mother's name* was *Naamah an Ammonitess*; which is repeated, that it might be observed as what was the leading step to his idolatry, and the means of his continuing in it: *and Abijam his son reigned in his stead*; of whom there is a further account in the following chapter.

CHAP. XV.

IN this chapter we have a short history of the reign of Abijam, ver. 1—8. and of Asa, ver. 9—24. both kings of Judah; and of the reigns of Nadab the son of Jeroboam, and of Baasha, who destroyed his family, both kings of Israel, ver. 25—34.

Ver. 1. *Now in the 18th year of King Jeroboam the son of Nebat reigned Abijam over Judah*.] That is, began to reign; and by this it appears that Rehoboam was in the 18th year of his reign when he died, for he and Jeroboam began their reign at the same time.

Ver. 2. *Three years reigned he in Jerusalem*, &c.] And three only; his reign was short, and indeed not three full years, only one whole year and part of two others; for Asa his son began to reign in the 20th of Jeroboam, ver. 9. so that he reigned part of his 18th, his whole 19th, and part of his 20th: *and his mother's name was Maachah the daughter of Abishalom*; called Absalom, 2 Chron. xi. 20, 21. generally supposed by the Jews to be Absalom the son of David, and which may seem not improbable, since his other two wives were of his father's family, 2 Chron. xi. 18. Josephus says[s] she was the daughter of Tamar the daughter of Absalom, and so his granddaughter; and which may account for her being called Michaiah the daughter of Uriel of Gibeah, 2 Chron. xiii. 2. since the difference between Maachah and Michaiah is not very great; and Uriel might be the name of Tamar's husband; though it is most likely that both father and daughter had two names; she seems to be mentioned here, to observe that she was the cause and means of her son's disagreeable walk, as follows, see ver. 13.

Ver. 3. *And he walked in all the sins of his father*,

[r] הרצים cursorum, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

[s] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 10. sect. 1.

which he had done before him, &c.] Having such bad examples as both parents to copy after; it chiefly respects idolatrous practices, see ch. xiv. 23. *and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God;* he did profess the true God, and worshipped him, but not wholly, and only, and sincerely; he worshipped other gods besides him: and so his heart was not *as the heart of David his father;* who was a sole and sincere worshipper of God, never departed from him and his service.

Ver. 4. *Nevertheless, for David's sake did the Lord his God give him a lamp in Jerusalem*, &c.] A kingdom there, as the Targum, splendid and glorious, to be continued in his posterity: *to set up his son after him;* in it: *and to establish Jerusalem;* to continue that in which the temple was, for the sake of which, and the worship of God in it, there was a succession of David's posterity on the throne of Judah.

Ver. 5. *Because David did* that which was *right in the eyes of the Lord*, &c.] With respect to worship: *and turned not aside from any* thing *that he commanded him all the days of his life;* especially in matters of religion, nor even in his moral walk and conversation, deliberately, studiously, and with design: *save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite;* the killing of him, and other sins which led on to it, and were in connexion with it; Abarbinel thinks, because the affair of Bathsheba is not mentioned, that was not reckoned to David as a sin; but no doubt it was, and is included here.

Ver. 6. *And there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.*] Not the days of Rehoboam, though that was true, and is observed, ch. xiv. 30. but all the days of Abijam, before he came to the throne, and in which, when a young man, he was concerned, and which still continued between him and Jeroboam: though some think he is called by his father's name, as Rehoboam is called David, ch. xii. 16.

Ver. 7. *Now the rest of the acts of Abijam, and all that he did*, are *they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?* &c.] Which seem to be written by Iddo the prophet, see 2 Chron. xiii. 22. *and there was war between Abijam and Jeroboam;* and a famous pitched battle between them we read of in 2 Chron. xiii. 3, 17.

Ver. 8. *And Abijam slept with his fathers*, &c.] That is, died as they did: *and they buried him in the city of David*, in the sepulchre of his royal ancestors, David, Solomon, and Rehoboam: *and Asa his son reigned in his stead;* who perhaps was the eldest of his 22 sons, 2 Chron. xiii. 21.

Ver. 9. *And in the 20th year of Jeroboam king of Israel reigned Asa over Judah.*] How this is to be accounted for see the note on ver. 2.

Ver. 10. *And 41 years reigned he in Jerusalem*, &c.] Being a good king, had the blessing of a long reign, and reached, and even exceeded, the years of the reigns of David and Solomon: *and his mother's name was Maachah, the daughter of Abishalom;* that is the name of his grandmother, see ver. 2. she is called his mother, not because she brought him forth, but because she brought him up; and this is observed to his commendation, that though he was educated by an idolatrous woman, yet was not corrupted by her as his father was.

Ver. 11. *And Asa did* that which was *right in the eyes of the Lord, as* did *David his father.*] In his personal walk and conversation, in his government of the nation, and especially in the matters of his God, and of religion, he made David his pattern and example to copy after.

Ver. 12. *And he took away the Sodomites out of the land*, &c.] Which were in the times of Rehoboam, ch. xiv. 24. and continued in his father's reign; those he took away, either by driving them out of the land, or by putting them to death according to the law of God, Lev. xx. 13. even as many of them as he had knowledge of, for some remained, see ch. xxii. 46. *and removed all the idols that his fathers had made;* or suffered to be made, as Solomon, Rehoboam, and Abijam, see ch. xi. 7. and xiv. 23. and xv. 3.

Ver. 13. *And also Maachah his mother, even her he removed from* being *queen*, &c.] From the kingdom, as the Targum; from having any share in the government, as she might have had during his minority, his mother being dead, as some conjecture: and not only took away her power and authority, but all the ensigns of it, and perhaps forbid her the court: or he removed her from the queen, his own wife, that she might not be corrupted by her; or rather it was from presiding over the rites of the idol next mentioned, and the worshipping of it: *because she had made an idol in a grove;* which had its name from horror and trembling; either because it was of a terrible aspect, or injected horror into its worshippers, or brought terrible calamities and judgments upon them: according to some Jewish writers[r], it was a Priapus, of an obscene figure; and so others[s], who suppose she presided over the sacred rites of this impure deity, the same with Baal-peor; and the Heathens used to place Priapus in their gardens[t], to fright away birds, see the note on Jer. xlix. 16. others take it to be Pan, from whence the word Panic, used for any great fright: *and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron;* and cast the ashes of it into it, that none might have any profit by it, the gold and silver on it, and in indignation to it, see Exod. xxxii. 20.

Ver. 14. *But the high places were not removed*, &c.] That is, such as had been used for the worship of God, before the temple was built, which yet now should have been removed, since sacrifice was now only to be offered there; but he might think they were still lawful, or the people had such an opinion of them, that it was difficult and dangerous to attempt to remove them; otherwise high places for idolatry were removed by him, 2 Chron. xiv. 3, 5. *nevertheless, Asa's heart was perfect all his days;* he was sincere in the worship of God, and did every thing to the best of his knowledge and capacity for restoring true religion, and destroying idolatry.

Ver. 15. *And he brought in the things which his father had dedicated*, &c.] The spoils he had taken in war from Jeroboam, and which he had devoted to religious

[r] T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 44. 1.
[s] Vid. D. Herbert de Cherbury de Relig. Gent. c. 4. p. 34. Lyram in loc.

[t] —— custos es pauperis horti, Virgil. Bucol. Ecl. 7. ver. 34. & Georgic. l. 4. ver. 110. —— furum aviumque maxima formido, Horat. Sermon. l. 1. ode 8.

uses, but lived not to perform his vows, which his son now did for him; so that it seems, notwithstanding the sins he fell into, he had some regard to God and his worship, see 2 Chron. xiii. 19. *and the things which himself had dedicated:* out of the spoils taken from the Ethiopians, 2 Chron. xiv. 13, 14. these he brought *into the house of the Lord, silver, and gold, and vessels;* of various sorts.

Ver. 16. *And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.*] That is, as long as they lived together; for Baasha died many years before Asa, and this must be reckoned from the time the war began between them. Baasha did not begin his reign until the third year of Asa, ver. 25. and in the first ten years of Asa's reign the land was quiet and free from war, 2 Chron. xiv. 1. of which there must be seven in the reign of Baasha, who is here made mention of out of course, for Nadab reigned before him, ver. 25, 26, 27. the reason of which Abarbinel thinks is, that the historian, having given an account of the good deeds of Asa, relates his failings before he proceeds to the other part of his history.

Ver. 17. *And Baasha king of Israel went up against Judah, &c.*] Which, in 2 Chron. xvi. 1. is said to be in the 36th year of Asa's reign, or rather of his kingdom; for it can never mean the year of his reign, for Baasha was dead many years before that, since his reign began in the third of Asa, and he reigned but twenty-four years, and therefore must die in the 27th of Asa; but it is to be understood of the kingdom of Judah, when it was divided from Israel; from that time to this were 36 years, 17 under Rehoboam, 3 under Abijam, so that this year must be the 16th of Asa; thus it is calculated in the Jewish chronology [v], and which is followed by many of the best of our chronologers: *and built Ramah:* a city in the tribe of Benjamin, Josh. xviii. 25. but taken by the king of Israel, which he rebuilt or fortified: *that he might not suffer any to go out or come in to Asa king of Judah;* that his people might not go to and from Jerusalem, and worship at the temple there; this garrison lying on the borders of both kingdoms, he thought hereby to cut off all communication between them.

Ver. 18. *Then Asa took all the silver and the gold that were left in the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house, &c.*] What was left untaken away by Shishak king of Egypt, ch. xiv. 26. or what he had put there dedicated by his father and himself, ver. 15. and be they either, they were not to be taken, especially the treasures of the house of the Lord, and put to profane use, and particularly to such bad purposes as these were: *and delivered them into the hands of his servants;* to be disposed of as next directed: *and King Asa sent them to Benhadad the son of Tabrimon, the son of Hezion king of Syria, that dwelt at Damascus;* according to some chronologers [w], Hezion, the grandfather of this Benhadad, is the same with Rezon the first king of Damascus, ch. xi. 23, 24. who was succeeded by Tabrimon, and he by Benhadad: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 19. There is *a league between me and thee, and between my father and thy father, &c.*] For though Hezion, if he is the same with Rezon, was an adversary to Israel in the days of Solomon, ch. xi. 25. yet it seems his son was not, but was a confederate with the kings of Israel and Judah: *behold, I have sent unto thee a present of silver and gold;* taken out of the treasury of the temple and his own treasury: *come and break thy league with Baasha king of Israel, that he may depart from me;* it was sinful in him to take the money out of the temple, to which it was dedicated; it was more so to make use of it to bribe an Heathen to break his covenant and alliance with another, in order to serve him; in which he betrayed great distrust of the Lord, and of his power to help him; which was the more aggravated, when he had had such a wonderful appearance of God for him against the Ethiopians, see 2 Chron. xvi. 7, 8.

Ver. 20. *So Benhadad hearkened unto King Asa, and sent the captains of the hosts which he had against the cities of Israel, &c.*] He broke off his alliance with the king of Israel; and as he had a standing army, with proper officers, he sent them directly to take the cities of Israel: *and he smote Ijon, and Dan, and Abel-beth-maachah, and all Cinneroth, with all the land of Naphtali;* places which lay on the northern part of Israel, the nearest to Syria. Ijon some place in the tribe of Naphtali, others in Asher; it seems to be on the extreme border of the land northward, as Dan also was; hence the phrase from Dan to Beer-sheba, *i. e.* from north to south. Abel-beth-maachah is the same with Abel-maim, 2 Chron. xvi. 4. which perhaps is the same with that Abela, placed by Jerom [x] between Damascus and Paneas, supposed to be the Enhydra of Pliny [y]. Cinneroth is the same with Gennesaret, a fruitful country in Galilee, from which is a sea or lake of that name, mentioned in the New Testament, and was in the tribe of Naphtali, the land of which was seized upon at this time.

Ver. 21. *And it came to pass, when Baasha heard thereof, &c.*] What was doing in the northern part of his kingdom: *that he left off building of Ramah;* which was the thing designed to be answered by this diversion; *and dwelt in Tirzah;* in the tribe of Manasseh, nearer at hand, to observe and stop the motions of the Syrian king.

Ver. 22. *Then King Asa made a proclamation throughout all Judah, &c.*] Summoned men of all sorts, ranks, and degrees: *(none was exempted;)* the Jews [z] say, not so much as a new-married man, whom the law excused from war the first year, nor the disciples of the wise men: *and they took away the stones of Ramah, and the timber thereof, wherewith Baasha had builded;* or fortified the place; these the men of Judah, whom Asa summoned, carried off: *and King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin, and Mizpah;* which were both in the tribe of Benjamin, and which he fortified, Josh. xviii. 24, 26. See Jer. xli. 9.

Ver. 23. *The rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities which he built,*

[v] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 16.

[w] Usser. Annal. A. M. 3064. Marsham. Canon. Chron. Seculum 15. p. 346.

[x] De loc. Heb. fol. 87. K.

[y] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.

[z] Jarchi & Kimchi in loc.

are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? &c.] Some of which are to be met with in the canonical book of that name, 2 Chron. xiv. and xv. and xvi. and others in the annals of the kings, out of which the Scripture account was taken: *nevertheless, in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet;* seized with the gout, as the Jews say[a], and which was two years before his death, see 2 Chron. xvi. 12, 13.

Ver. 24. *And Asa slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father,* &c.] In a sepulchre there he himself had made, and in great pomp and solemnity, being laid on a bed filled with sweet odours and spices, prepared according to art, and which were burned for him, 2 Chron. xvi. 14. *and Jehoshaphat his son reigned in his stead;* a very pious and worthy prince.

Ver. 25. *And Nadab the son of Jeroboam began to reign over Israel in the second year of Asa king of Judah,* &c.] Before Baasha did: *and reigned over Israel two years,* not two whole years; for he began in the second of Asa, and in the third of that king's reign Baasha slew him, and reigned in his stead, ver. 28.

Ver. 26. *And he did evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] Committed idolatry, than which nothing is a greater evil in his sight: *and walked in the way of his father, and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin:* in making and worshipping of golden calves.

Ver. 27. *And Baasha the son of Ahijah, of the house of Issachar,* &c.] A man of that tribe; but who he was, or his father, is nowhere else said, very probably an officer in Nadab's army: *conspired against him;* laid a scheme to take away his life, and seize the kingdom: *and Baasha smote him at Gibbethon;* a city in the tribe of Dan, Josh. xix. 44. *which belongeth to the Philistines;* it was a city given to the Levites, Josh. xxi. 23. and they being driven from it by Jeroboam, the Philistines seized on it, or had heretofore made a conquest of it; and Nadab was desirous of getting it out of their hands, and therefore besieged it, as follows: *for Nadab and all Israel laid siege to Gibbethon;* and whilst he was besieging it, Baasha took the opportunity to slay him, where his carcass lay exposed to dogs, or fowls of the air, and had no burial, as Ahijah predicted, ch. xiv. 11, 13.

Ver. 28. *Even in the third year of Asa king of Judah did Baasha slay him, and reigned in his stead.*] Which seems to be his only or chief view in slaying him, to get possession of his kingdom.

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass, when he reigned, that he smote all the house of Jeroboam,* &c.] That he might have no rival, or any that could pretend any title to the crown: *he left not Jeroboam any that breathed, until he had destroyed him, according to the saying of the Lord, which he spake by his servant Ahijah the Shilonite;* not that his intention in destroying Jeroboam's family was to fulfil that prophecy, but so it was eventually; see ch. xiv. 10, 14.

Ver. 30. *Because of the sins of Jeroboam which he sinned, and which he made Israel sin, by his provocation wherewith he provoked the Lord God of Israel.*] Not that Baasha destroyed the family of Jeroboam because of his sins, which did so much mischief to Israel, and were so provoking to the Lord, from any dislike or hatred of them, for he walked in the same, ver. 34. but the Lord threatened this by his prophet, and suffered it to be done because of his abominations.

Ver. 31. *Now the rest of the acts of Nadab, and all that he did,* &c.] In his short reign, which yet were more than here related: *are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?* in which those of his father Jeroboam were written, ch. xiv. 19.

Ver. 32. *And there was war between Asa and Baasha king of Israel all their days.*] For being a wicked man, and an idolater, Asa had no respect for him, though he had slain the family of Jeroboam; nor had Baasha any regard to Judah, nor to the worship of God at Jerusalem, so that there was no good understanding between them, but frequent acts of hostility, see ver. 16.

Ver. 33. *In the third year of Asa king of Judah began Baasha the son of Ahijah to reign over all Israel in Tirzah,* &c.] Which is repeated, partly to observe that the whole kingdom submitted to him, though an usurper and murderer, and the place where he kept his court, as also the time of his reign, as follows: *24 years;* which were as long as both Jeroboam and his son reigned.

Ver. 34. *And he did evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] As Nadab did, whom he slew: *and walked in the way of Jeroboam;* whose family he destroyed: *and in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin;* in worshipping the golden calves; so that it was not out of dislike to idolatry, but out of malice and ambition, that he slew the family of Jeroboam.

CHAP. XVI.

THIS chapter contains a prophecy of the ruin of the family of Baasha, and an account of his death, ver. 1—7. and of his son's reigning in his stead two years, who was slain by Zimri one of his captains, ver. 8—14. and who reigned but seven days, ver. 15—20. and the people being divided between Tibni and Omri, the party for the latter prevailed, and he was made king, and reigned 12 years, ver. 21—28. and was succeeded by his son Ahab, a very wicked prince, ver. 29—33. and the chapter is concluded with the rebuilding of Jericho, ver. 34.

Ver. 1. *Then the word of the Lord came to Jehu the son of Hanani,* &c.] The seer that reproved Asa, 2 Chron. xvi. 7. so that this man was the son of a prophet then living, and was a young man; for we hear of him several years after reproving Jehoshaphat, 2 Chron. xix. 2. and as a writer of history, 2 Chron. xx. 34. the prophecy that came to him from the

[a] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 48. 2. So Clemens of Alexandria, Stromat. l. 1. p. 326.

Lord was *against Baasha;* king of Israel: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 2. *Forasmuch as I exalted thee out of the dust,* &c.] From a very low estate, and mean family: *and made thee prince over my people Israel;* as they were of right, and ought to have been; and though Baasha got the kingdom by treachery and murder, yet the translation of the kingdom to him was according to the appointment of God, and by his overruling providence; and even his act of killing Nadab was a fulfilment of a prophecy of his; and had he done it in obedience to the will of God, and in vengeance for his sin, would not have been blameworthy, since then he would have been an executioner of the justice of God: *and thou hast walked in the way of Jeroboam, and hast made my people Israel to sin, to provoke me to anger with their sins;* committing and encouraging the same idolatrous practices, so very provoking to God.

Ver. 3. *Behold, I will take away the posterity of Baasha, and the posterity of his house,* &c.] By death, there shall be none of his family remaining in any branch of it: *and I will make thy house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat;* execute the same judgment on it, and in the same manner, their sins being alike.

Ver. 4. *Him that dieth of Baasha in the city shall the dogs eat, and him that dieth of his in the fields shall the fowls of the air eat.*] They should not have burial, which is just the same that was threatened to and executed on Jeroboam's family, ch. xiv. 11.

Ver. 5. *Now the rest of the acts of Baasha, and what he did, and his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] As those of Jeroboam and Nadab were, ch. xiv. 19. and xv. 31.

Ver. 6. *So Baasha slept with his fathers,* &c.] Or died, not a violent, but natural, death: *and was buried in Tirzah;* where was the royal palace of the kings of Israel: *and Elah his son reigned in his stead;* yet but a short time.

Ver. 7. *And also by the hand of the prophet Jehu, the son of Hanani, came the word of the Lord against Baasha, and against his house,* &c.] Which is here repeated, as Abarbinel thinks, because in the former prophecy the threatening was on account not of his own sin, but because he made Israel to sin; but here it is because of his own evil works, as it follows: *even for all the evil that he did in the sight of the Lord, in provoking him to anger with the work of his hands, in being like the house of Jeroboam;* worshipping the golden calves as they did: *and because he killed him;* either Jeroboam; for, according to Dr. Lightfoot [b], he was alive this year; rather Nadab the son of Jeroboam, who it is certain was slain by Baasha; though it may refer, as Abarbinel thinks, to the whole house of Jeroboam; though it was agreeable to the will of God, yet was not done by Baasha with any regard to it, but to gratify his malice and ambition, and therefore punishable for it.

Ver. 8. *In the 26th year of Asa king of Judah began Elah the son of Baasha to reign over Israel in Tirzah, two years.*] Not complete, for he died in the 27th of Asa, ver. 10. he reigned just the time that Nadab the son of Jeroboam did, ch. xv. 25.

Ver. 9. *And his servant Zimri, captain of half his chariots,* &c.] His military chariots; there were two captains of them, and this was one of them; so the Targum, "one of the two masters or captains of the "chariots:" *conspired against him, as he was in Tirzah drinking himself drunk in the house of Arza, steward of his house in Tirzah;* who had the charge of his wine and other liquors, to which he was addicted beyond measure; and this was a fit opportunity for Zimri to fall upon him, and slay him, when he was drunk, and off his guard, and his army at the same time was besieging Gibbethon, ver. 15. so that there was a very great likeness in what befell the family of Baasha, to that of the family of Jeroboam; for as the son of the one, and of the other, reigned but two years, so they were both slain by their servants, and both at a time when Gibbethon was besieged; the Targum takes this Arza to be the temple of an idol so called, near the royal palace.

Ver. 10. *And Zimri went in and smote him, and killed him,* &c.] When in his drunken fit: and this was *in the 27th year of Asa;* when Elah had not reigned two full years: *and reigned in his stead;* that is, Zimri; his reign was short indeed, but seven days, ver. 15.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass when he began to reign, as soon as he sat on his throne,* &c.] Perhaps the very first day: *that he slew all the house of Baasha;* his whole family, all the children that he had, that there might be none to make pretensions to the throne: *he left him not one that pisseth against a wall, neither of his kinsfolks nor of his friends;* not any that might avenge the blood of his family, that might have a right or inclination to do it.

Ver. 12. *Thus did Zimri destroy all the house of Baasha, according to the word of the Lord, which he spoke against Baasha by Jehu the prophet.*] That not only his posterity, but all any way related to him, should be cut off; yea, it seems to have been carried further, even to all that were in any connexion with him in point of friendship, see ver. 3.

Ver. 13. *For all the sins of Baasha, and the sins of Elah his son,* &c.] By which it appears that the son trod in the steps of his father, and was therefore cut off: *by which they sinned, and by which they made Israel to sin, in provoking the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities;* their idols, which had nothing in them, and can't be of any service to their votaries; and to serve such, and neglect the worship of the true God, and draw others into the same iniquity, must be very provoking to the most High.

Ver. 14. *Now the rest of the acts of Elah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] See ver. 5.

Ver. 15. *In the 27th year of Asa king of Judah did Zimri reign seven days in Tirzah,* &c.] Until the army under Omri came and took the place, and destroyed him: *and the people were encamped against Gibbethon, which belongeth to the Philistines;* it was besieged in Nadab's time, but upon his death, by Baasha, the siege was raised; or however, if then taken, it was recovered by the Philistines, and now besieged again by the Israelites, see ch. xv. 27.

[b] Works, vol. 1. p. 79.

Ver. 16. *And the people that were encamped heard say, Zimri hath conspired, and hath also slain the king, &c.*] Tidings came to the army of what he had done, which was displeasing to them: *wherefore all Israel made Omri, the captain of the host, king over Israel that day in the camp*; that is, all Israel that were in the army proclaimed Omri, their general, king; just as the Roman army declared Vespasian, their general, emperor of Rome, and as several of the emperors were chosen.

Ver. 17. *And Omri went up from Gibbethon, and all Israel with him, &c.*] He, and the army under him, broke up the siege of that place, and marched to Tirzah; which, according to Bunting [c], were 36 miles distant from each other: *and they besieged Tirzah*; the royal city, in which Zimri was.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, that when Zimri saw that the city was taken, &c.*] That Omri, and the army with him, had got into it, being a place not much fortified, and Zimri not having force enough to defend it against such an army: *that he went into the palace of the king's house*; into the innermost and most splendid, as well as the strongest part of it: *and burnt the king's house over him with fire, and he died*; that he might not fall into the hands of his rival, who he might fear would use him ill, and that he might not enjoy the royal palace; though Kimchi thinks that Omri set fire to the palace, and burnt it over the head of Zimri, in which he perished; and this sense the text will bear.

Ver. 19. *For his sins which he sinned in doing evil in the sight of the Lord, &c.*] In the former part of his life, as well as now: *in walking in the way of Jeroboam, and in his sin which he did to make Israel sin*; worshipping the golden calves, which he might do whilst a captain of the chariots, and also since he usurped the crown, sacrificing to them by way of thanksgiving, for being in possession of the kingdom; and though his reign was so short, he might give plain and strong intimations that he should continue the worship of idols.

Ver. 20. *Now the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his treason that he wrought, are they not written in the book of the kings of Israel?*] What he did both before and after his usurpation, during the seven days he was king, and the manner of his conspiracy, and success in it.

Ver. 21. *Then were the people of Israel divided into two parts, &c.*] About the succession in the kingdom: *half the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king*; these were the friends of Zimri, or however such who did not like that the army should impose a king upon them; who this Tibni was is not said: *and half followed Omri*; the general of the army, perhaps the whole of that.

Ver. 22. *But the people that followed Omri prevailed against the people that followed Tibni the son of Ginath, &c.*] Very probably they had a battle, in which the latter were worsted: *so Tibni died*: in the battle: *and Omri reigned*; took possession of the throne, his rival being slain.

Ver. 23. *In the 31st year of Asa king of Judah began Omri to reign over Israel 12 years, &c.*] Which are to be reckoned not from the 31st of Asa; for Ahab the son of Omri began to reign in his 38th year, and so his reign would be but seven or eight years; but they are reckoned from the 27th of Asa, the beginning of it, when Elah was slain by Zimri, and he died, which to the end of the 38th of Asa make 12 years; for the division, according to the Jewish chronology [d], lasted four years; Jarchi says five [e]: and from the beginning of that his reign is reckoned, though he did not reign over all Israel, or completely, until the 31st of Asa, when Tibni died: *six years reigned he in Tirzah*: the royal city of the kings of Israel, from Jeroboam to this time, and the other six he reigned in Samaria, built by him, as in the next verse.

Ver. 24. *And he bought the hill of Samaria of Shemer, for two talents of silver, &c.*] A talent of silver, according to Brerewood [f], was of our money 375 pounds, so that this hill was purchased at 750 pounds: *and built on the hill, and called the name of the city which he built, after the name of Shemer, owner of the hill, Samaria*; its name from him was Shomeron, which is the Hebrew name for Samaria; which, according to Bunting [g], was six miles from Tirzah, and ever after the royal seat of the kings of Israel.

Ver. 25. *But Omri wrought evil in the eyes of the Lord, &c.*] Openly and publicly, as if it were in defiance of him: *and did worse than all that were before him*; taking no warning by the judgments inflicted on them, which aggravated his sins; and besides, he not only worshipped the calves, as the rest, and drew Israel by his example into the same, as they did, but he published edicts and decrees, obliging them to worship them, and forbidding them to go to Jerusalem, called *the statutes of Omri*, Mic. vi. 16.

Ver. 26. *For he walked in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, in his sin wherewith he made Israel to sin, &c.*] Worshipping the calves: *to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger with their vanities*; these, and whatsoever idols else were worshipped by him, see ver. 13.

Ver. 27. *Now the rest of the acts of Omri, which he did, and his might which he shewed, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] Where those of the preceding kings were written, see ch. xiv. 19. and xv. 31. and xvi. 5, 14, 20.

Ver. 28. *So Omri slept with his fathers, &c.*] Died a natural death: *and was buried in Samaria*; the city he had built, and now the royal seat and metropolis of the kingdom: *and Ahab his son reigned in his stead*; of whom much is said in the following history.

Ver. 29. *And in the 38th year of Asa king of Judah began Ahab the son of Omri to reign over Israel, &c.*] At the latter end of it, the same year his father died, see ver. 23. *and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria 22 years*: the same number of years Jeroboam did, ch. xiv. 20.

Ver. 30. *And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of the Lord, above all that were before him.*]

[c] Travels, &c. p. 162.
[d] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 17. p. 45.
[e] So Tzemach David, par. 1. fol. 11. 2.
[f] De Ponder. & Pret. c. 4.
[g] Ut supra, p. 162.

Adding other idols to the calves, and those more abominable than they; since the other kings pretended to worship God in them, but he worshipped other gods besides him, as the following verses shew.

Ver. 31. *And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sin of Jeroboam the son of Nebat,* &c.] To worship the golden calves he set up: *that he took to wife Jezebel the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians;* who is called Ithobalus and Itobalus king of the Tyrians, by Heathen historians[h]; and, by Theophilus of Antioch[i], Juthobalus, priest of Astarte; for Tyre and Zidon were under one king. This woman was not only of another nation, and an idolater, but a very filthy woman, and is made the emblem of the whore of Rome, Rev. ii. 20. *and went and served Baal, and worshipped him;* that is, went to Zidon and Tyre, and worshipped his wife's gods, which were either Jupiter Thalassius, the god of the Zidonians, or Hercules, whom the Tyrians worshipped.

Ver. 32. *And he reared up an altar for Baal in the house of Baal, which he had built in Samaria.*] That he might not go so far as Tyre or Zidon; and for his wife's convenience also he built a temple in Samaria for Baal, and erected an altar there to offer sacrifices upon it unto him; so open and daring was he in his idolatrous practices.

Ver. 33. *And Ahab made a grove,* &c.] About the temple of Baal, or elsewhere, in which he placed an idol, and where all manner of filthiness was secretly committed; or rather *Asherah*, rendered *grove*, is Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians, an image of which Ahab made: *and Ahab did more to provoke the Lord God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him;* his idolatries being more open and barefaced, and without any excuse, pretence, or colour, as well as more numerous.

Ver. 34. *And in his days did Hiel the Beth-elite build Jericho,* &c.] Which was forbidden by Joshua under an anathema; but this man, either ignorant of that adjuration of Joshua, or in contempt and defiance of it, and knowing it might please the king and queen, set about the rebuilding of it; and it being done by the leave and under the authority of Ahab, is mentioned together with his wicked actions: *he laid the foundation thereof in Abiram his first-born;* that is, his first-born died as soon as he laid the foundation of the city, but this did not deter him from going on with it: *and set up the gates thereof in his youngest son Segub;* all the rest of his children died as he was rebuilding the city, until only his youngest son was left, and he was taken off by death just as he had finished it, signified by setting up the gates of it: all which was *according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Joshua the son of Nun;* between 4 and 500 years ago. It was after this a place of great note, and so continued many hundreds of years; see the note on Josh. vi. 26. but is now, as Mr. Maundrell says[k], a poor nasty village of the Arabs.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter begins with a prophecy of Elijah, that there should be want of rain for some years to come, and he is directed to go first to the brook Cherith, where he should be fed by ravens, ver. 1—7. and afterwards he is sent to a widow at Zarephath, where he, she, and her son, were supported for a considerable time with a handful of meal, and a little oil in a cruse miraculously increased, ver. 8—16. whose son falling sick and dying, he restored to life, ver. 17—24.

Ver. 1. *And Elijah the Tishbite,* who was *of the inhabitants of Gilead,* &c.] Which belonged partly to the Reubenites and Gadites, and partly to the half-tribe of Manasseh on the other side Jordan, where this prophet dwelt; but why he is called the Tishbite is not easy to say; what Kimchi observes seems right, that he was at first of a city called Toshab, and afterwards dwelt at Gilead; which city perhaps is the same with Thisbe, in the tribe of Naphtali, the native place of Tobit, ch. i. 2. and, if so, is an instance of a prophet, even the prince of prophets, as Abarbinel calls him, coming out of Galilee, contrary to the suggestions of the Jews, John vii. 52. R. Elias Levita[l] observes, that after the affair of Gibeah an order was given to smite the inhabitants of Jabesh-gilead, Judg. xxi. and that as it is reasonable to suppose some might escape, he thinks Elijah was one of them; and that when this began to be inhabited again, they that returned were called the inhabitants of Gilead, of whom Elijah was, who lived in those times, being, as the Jews suppose, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the son of Aaron, see Judg. xx. 28. but that he should be Elijah, and live to the times of Ahab, is beyond belief. By Origen[m] he is said to be in Thesbon of Gilead; and by Epiphanius[n] to be of Thesbis, of the land of the Arabians, Gilead bordering upon it: the same *said unto Ahab;* who perhaps had been with him before, and reproved him for idolatry, warned him of the evil consequences of it, but to no purpose, and therefore now threatened in a very solemn manner: as *the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand;* he swears by the living God, in whose presence he was, and to whom he appeals as the omniscient God, whose minister and prophet he was, and in whose name he came and spoke, and to whom he prayed; for standing was a prayer-gesture, and sometimes put for it, see the note on Matt. vi. 5. and it was at the prayer of Elijah that rain was withheld, as follows, see Jam. v. 17. *there shall not be dew nor rain these years;* for some years to come, even three years and a half: *but according to my word;* in prayer, or as he should predict, in the name of the Lord.

Ver. 2. *And the word of the Lord came to him,* &c.]

[h] Menander apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 1, 2. & contr. Apion. l. 1. c. 21. Diodor. Sicul. apud Junium in loc.
[i] Ad Autolyc. l. 3. p. 132.
[k] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 81.
[l] In Tishbi, p. 275. Vid. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 11. 1. & David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 235. 4.
[m] Comment. in Matth. p. 224. Ed. Huet.
[n] De Prophet. Vit. c. 4.

The word of prophecy, as the Targum; this shews that by word, in the former verse, he means the word of the Lord by him: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 3. *Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward*, &c.] From the place where he was, being in danger from Ahab and Jezebel, provoked by his reproofs, threatenings, and prophecies: *and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan*; in some wood or cave near it, or among the reeds and rushes that grew on the banks of it; and Bochart[o] takes it to be the same with the river Kanah, on the borders of Ephraim, which has its name from reeds, Josh. xvi. 8. and xvii. 9. and Cherith by anticipation, from the prophet's being fed there; and Adrichomius[p] places this brook in the tribe of Ephraim; though Fuller[q] in the half-tribe of Manasseh, beyond Jordan; but Bunting says[r] it runs from Mount Ephraim between Beth-el and Jericho, eight miles from Jerusalem towards the north, and so, passing along towards the east, falls into Jordan.

Ver. 4. *And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook*, &c.] The water of that was to be his drink: *and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there*; whereby he should be provided with food to eat; by whom are meant not angels in the form of ravens, as some; nor, as others, Arabians, for there were none of that people near him; nor, as others, *merchants*, the word being sometimes used of them, for this was not a likely method for privacy; nor, as others, the inhabitants of a place called Oreb, or Orbo; so the Arabic version calls them Orabimi; but we read of no such place near Jordan; the Jews[s] speak of a city of this name near Beth-shean, from whence these Orebim came; and some of them[t] think they had their name from Oreb, in Judg. vii. 25. it seems better to interpret them of ravens, as we do, these creatures delighting to be in solitary places, in valleys, and by brooks; nor need it be any objection that they were unclean creatures by the law, since Elijah did not feed upon them, but was fed by them; and supposing any uncleanness by touch, the ceremonial law might be dispensed with in an extraordinary case, as it sometimes was; though it is very remarkable that such creatures should be employed in this way, which are birds of prey, seize on any thing they can, live on carrion, and neglect their own young, and yet feed a prophet of the Lord; which shews the power and providence of God in it. Something like this Jerom[u] relates, of a raven bringing a whole loaf of bread, and laying it before the saints, Paulus and Antonius.

Ver. 5. *So he went, and did according to the word of the Lord*, &c.] Took his journey eastward, and hid himself in the place directed to: *for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan*, see the note ver. 3.

Ver. 6. *And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening*, &c.] For his breakfast and supper, the two principal meals then in use; and as there were several employed, they could bring a sufficiency in a short time for each meal; and these provisions were ready prepared, the bread made and baked, and the flesh boiled, broiled, or roasted; from whence they had it need not be inquired after; the Jews say[w] they were fetched from Ahab's table, and others from Jehoshaphat's, and others, as probable as any, from the tables of the 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal: *and he drank of the brook*; at his meals.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass after a while*, &c.] Or *at the end of days*[x], perhaps a year, which sometimes is the sense of this phrase, see Exod. xiii. 10. Judg. xvii. 10. *that the brook dried up*; through the excessive heat, and for want of supplies from the springs and fountains with which it was fed, and for the following reason: *because there had been no rain in the land*; from the time Elijah prayed and prophesied; of this drought mention is made in profane history: Menander, a Phœnician writer, speaks[y] of a drought in the times of Ithobalus (the same with Eth-baal the father of Jezebel), which lasted a whole year, and upon prayer being made there were thunder, &c.

Ver. 8. *And the word of the Lord came unto him*, &c.] As before, after he had been a year at the brook, and that was dried up: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 9. *Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there*, &c.] This might be a trial of the prophet's faith, to be sent to dwell in a place belonging to the Zidonians, among whom Jezebel had an interest, being the daughter of their king, ch. xvi. 31. the place is so called, to distinguish it from another Zarephath, Obad. ver. 20. Kimchi interprets it, near to Zidon, yet not as belonging to it, but of the land of Israel; though it rather seems to be a Gentile city; it is called, in Luke iv. 26. Sarepta of Sidon; and also by Pliny[z]; according to Josephus[a], it was not far either from Sidon or Tyre, and lay between them; it was three quarters of a mile from Sidon; and so Mr. Maundrell[b] speaks of it as in the way from Sidon to Tyre, and which is now called Sarphan; of which he says, the place shewn us for this city consisted only of a few houses, on the tops of the mountains, within about half a mile of the sea; but it is more probable the principal part of the city stood below in the space between the hills and the sea, there being ruins still to be seen in that place of a considerable extent; and a traveller into those parts many years before him says[c], that he saw nothing of any building on the shore, but some small houses in the place where formerly the town of Sarepta did stand; and Bunting says[d], there are at this time but eight houses in all the town, though by the ruins it seems to have been in times past a very fair city; and another[e] observes, that it is about three miles from Berytus: *behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee*; not that this was declared to the woman, or that she

[o] Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 2. c. 13. col. 216.
[p] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 26.
[q] Pisgah-Sight, &c. B. 2. c. 3. p. 97.
[r] Travels, &c. p. 205.
[s] Bereshit Rabba, sect. 33. fol. 29. 1.
[t] T. Bab. Cholin. fol. 5. 1. Menasseh Ben Israel Conciliat. in Lev. quæst. 3.
[u] In Vita Paul. Erem. fol. 92. C.
[w] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 113. 1. Cholin, fol. 5. 1. Tanchuma apud Abarbinel in loc.

[x] מקץ ימים in, vel a, fine dierum, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.
[y] Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 2.
[z] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 19.
[a] Ut supra.
[b] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 48.
[c] Rauwolff's Travels, par. 3. ch. 22. p. 326.
[d] Ut supra.
[e] Baumgarten. Peregrinatio, l. 2. c. 9. p. 126.

had any orders from the Lord to support him; but that he had determined it in his mind, and would take care in his providence that he should be supplied by her: this was another trial of the prophet's faith, that he should be sent to a poor widow woman for his support, and she a Gentile; but he that had been so long fed by ravens, could have no reason to doubt of his being provided for in this way.

Ver. 10. *So he arose, and went to Zarephath*, &c.] Which, according to Bunting[f], was 100 miles from the brook Cherith: *and when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman* was *there gathering sticks*: perhaps out of an hedge just without the city; this shews her to be a poor woman, who had no other way of coming at fuel but this, and no servant to fetch it for her; the above writer tells us, that now before the gate of the city there is shewed a certain chapel, where they say Elias first spoke with the widow: *and he called to her, and said, fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink*; being thirsty through travelling, and supposing this to be the woman he was directed to, made trial of her this way; some render it, *in this vessel*[g], which he had with him, and made use of at the brook Cherith.

Ver. 11. *And as she was going to fetch it*, &c.] For she made no difficulty of granting his request, but immediately set out to fetch him some water from the city, or some spring hard by, or her own house; being very ready to do an hospitable act to a stranger, and especially to a good man, and a prophet, as she might perceive by his habit he was, as it seems by what follows: *and said, bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand*; to eat before he drank; this he said still further to try her whether she was the person that was to sustain him, as well as in order to lead on to more discourse with her.

Ver. 12. *And she said*, as *the Lord thy God liveth*, &c.] Which shews her to be a good woman, swearing by the living God, and him only, and that she took Elijah to be a good man, and a prophet of the Lord: *I have not a cake*, greater or less, not a morsel of bread in the house: *but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse*; these separate and unmixed, and not made into a cake, and dressed as she intended to do with them: *and, behold, I am gathering two sticks*; or a few, which would be sufficient to bake such a quantity as her meal and oil would make; she speaks by the figure *meiosis*, which expresses less than what is meant, as Ben Melech observes: *that I may go in and dress it for me, and my son, that we may eat it, and die*; having nothing more left, and no expectation of any elsewhere, and the famine strong in the land; so that she could look for nothing but death after this was eaten.

Ver. 13. *And Elijah said unto her, fear not*, &c.] That she and her son should die, it would not be the case: go and *do as thou hast said*: mix her meal and her oil, and make a cake thereof, and bake it: *but make thereof a little cake first, and bring* it *unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son*: which was not said from a selfish spirit of the prophet, but to try the faith of the woman; and besides, as Abarbinel observes, the prophet was not only hungry and thirsty through his journey, and so required to be served first, but it was for the sake of his sustenance, that the Lord would command a blessing on the meal and oil; wherefore, if she dressed it for herself and her son first, there would have been none left for the divine blessing to descend upon.

Ver. 14. *For thus saith the Lord God of Israel*, &c.] Whom the prophet perceived she had knowledge of, and faith in: *the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail*: that is, the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cruse, by an hypallage, or change of words: *until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth*: which was assuring her that rain would be sent, and that the Lord, who had the sole command of it, would send it; and that, until that time it should be sent, she would have no lack of provisions, and therefore need not scruple dressing for the prophet first.

Ver. 15. *And she went, and did according to the saying of Elijah*, &c.] Made a cake for him first, and brought it to him, which shewed great faith in the word of the Lord by him: *and she, and he, and her house, did eat*; many days, a year at least, if not two years, see ver. 7. the widow, the prophet, and her family, lived upon the meal and oil so long; we read but of one son, but she might have more.

Ver. 16. *And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah*.] There being a continual increase and supply of both, through the mighty power of God working a continued miracle; just as the loaves and fishes were increased while the disciples were eating, Matt. xiv. 19, 20.

Ver. 17. *And it came to pass after these things*, &c.] Not only after the conversation that passed between the prophet, and the widow, but after they had lived together many days, a year or years, upon the miraculous provision made for them: that *the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, fell sick*; that is, the son of the widow woman in whose house the prophet dwelt; the Jews say[h] this woman was the mother of Jonah, and that he was this son of her's: *and his sickness was so sore that there was no breath left in him*: it was a sickness unto death, it issued in it; for that he was really dead appears from all that follows.

Ver. 18. *And she said unto Elijah, what have I to do with thee, O thou man of God!* &c.] As if she should say, it would have been well for me if I had never seen thy face, or had any conversation with thee; this she said rashly, and in her passion and agony, being extremely affected with the death of her child, which made her forget and overlook all the benefits she had received through the prophet's being with her: *art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?* to punish her for her former sins, she was conscious she had been guilty of; for she supposed, that as it was by his prayer that the drought and famine were come upon the land, so it was in the same way that her son's death came, namely, through the prayer of the prophet.

[f] Ut supra, p. 303.

[g] לכלי in hoc vase, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[h] Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto her, give me thy son, and he took him out of her bosom,* &c.] Where she had laid him, mourning over him; from thence the prophet took him with her leave: *and carried him up into a loft, where he abode, and laid him upon his own bed*; an upper room, which was his bedchamber; hither he carried him, that he might be alone, and use the greater freedom both in his expressions and gestures.

Ver. 20. *And he cried unto the Lord,* &c.] Or prayed unto him, as the Targum, with great vehemence and importunity: *and said, O Lord, my God, hast thou also brought evil upon the widow, with whom I sojourn, by slaying her son?* he pleads his interest in the Lord, and makes use of it as an argument with him to hear his prayer; he observes the character and condition of the woman, a widow, such as the Lord has a compassionate regard for; and he urges the kindness of her to him, with whom he had sojourned so long; and seems to represent the case as an additional evil or affliction to him, as well as to the widow.

Ver. 21. *And he stretched himself upon the child three times,* &c.] Or *measured himself*[i] on it, or put himself into a posture in some respects equal to the child; putting his mouth on its mouth, his eyes on its eyes, his hands on its hands, as Elisha afterwards did in a like case, perhaps in imitation of him, 2 Kings iv. 34. thereby shewing his great affection to the child, and in order to increase it the more, and to make him the more fervent and importunate in his prayers for its life; and hereby signifying also that he would if he could infuse his breath and life into it, and warm it with his own heat: *and cried unto the Lord, and said, O Lord my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again*: which shews that the child was really dead; and a proof this that the soul dies not with the body, but exists in a separate state without it.

Ver. 22. *And the Lord heard the voice of Elijah,* &c.] In prayer, and answered it: *and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived*; this is the first instance of any one being raised from the dead; this Satan has imitated; hence the many fabulous stories with the Heathens of persons being raised to life after death[k].

Ver. 23. *And Elijah took the child, and brought him down out of the chamber into the house,* &c.] Being come to life, he took it off of the bed in his bedchamber, and brought it down to the lower part of the house, where the woman was: *and delivered him unto his mother: and Elijah said, see, thy son liveth*; which no doubt was to her great surprise, and was a wonderful instance of divine power and goodness, and to which the apostle may have respect, Heb. xi. 35. Bunting[l] says, the inhabitants of this place now take upon them to shew the chamber wherein the prophet Elias lived, when he raised the widow's child to life.

Ver. 24. *And the woman said to Elijah, now by this I know that thou art a man of God,* &c.] She took him to be one at his first coming to her; she was in a great measure confirmed in it by the miracle of the barrel of meal and cruse of oil; but upon the death of her son, which she was ready to impute to the prophet, she was staggered at it; but now, by his resurrection from the dead, was fully assured of it: *and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth*; she had known before that what he said concerning the meal and oil not failing was true; but now she was more and more convinced and assured that the God, whose prophet he was, was the true God, and that the religion he professed was the true religion, and he a true prophet, and that all his prophecies would be exactly fulfilled.

CHAP. XVIII.

In this chapter Elijah has an order from the Lord to shew himself to Ahab, who, going first, and meeting with a servant of his, Obadiah, charges him to tell his master where he was, that he might meet him, ver. 1—16. and, upon meeting him, desires that all Israel, and the prophets of Baal, might be convened, which was accordingly done, ver. 17—20. when he expostulated with the people of Israel for their idolatry, mocked and confounded the prophets of Baal, and gave the strongest proofs, to the conviction of the people, that Jehovah is the true God, ver. 21—39. on which all the prophets of Baal were slain, ver. 40. and rain in great abundance was given at the prayer of the prophet, ver. 41—46.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass* after *many days,* &c.] When two years and more were gone from the time the drought and famine began; or rather from the time of the prophet's departure to the brook Cherith, which might be six months after the famine began: *that the word of the Lord came to Elijah in the third year*; of his absence from Ahab: *saying, go shew thyself unto Ahab*; whom he had not seen so long, and who had been seeking for him, but to no purpose: *and I will send rain upon the earth*: the term of three years and six months being almost expired, see James v. 17.

Ver. 2. *And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab,* &c.] Which shewed his cheerful and ready obedience to the will of God, and his great courage and magnanimity, to face a king enraged against him, and that sought his life: *and* there was *a sore famine in Samaria*; the metropolis of the kingdom, where Ahab kept his court, and therefore must be sensible of it, and bore the greater indignation against the prophet who had foretold it.

Ver. 3. *And Ahab called Obadiah, which was the go-*

[i] ויתמדד & mensus est se, Pagninus, Montanus; admensus est, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[k] Vid. Huet. Alnetan. Quæst. l. 2. c. 12. sect. 20.

[l] Travels, &c. p. 203.

vernor of his house, &c.] Perhaps his steward: the Jews[m] take him to be Obadiah the prophet, who wrote the small prophecy that goes by his name: *(now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly:)* who, though he did not go up to Jerusalem to worship, which ceremonial service was dispensed with in him, yet he did not worship the calves, nor Baal, but served the Lord in a spiritual manner.

Ver. 4. *For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord*, &c.] Or slew them, as the Targum; put them to death some way or another; such as were brought up in the schools of the prophets, trained up in religious exercises, and instructed others therein: *that Obadiah took* 100 *prophets, and hid them by* 50 *in a cave*; 50 in one cave and 50 in another; for there were large caves in the land of Israel capable of holding such a number, and many more, see 1 Sam. xxii. 1. and xxiv. 3. *and fed them with bread and water*; which in this time of famine were very acceptable; though these may be put for all the necessaries of life.

Ver. 5. *And Ahab said unto Obadiah, go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks*, &c.] To observe in what condition they were, and the places adjoining to them, the meadows and valleys: *peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive*; particularly those which belonged to the king's stables, to find provisions for which it was found difficult: *that we lose not all the beasts*; many of them, doubtless, were lost through the drought already, and there was great danger of the rest, and so, in time, of there being none to procreate and preserve their species, and to prevent which Ahab proposed to take this method.

Ver. 6. *So they divided the land between them, to pass through it*, &c.] And one took one part, and the other the other part: *Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself*: Ahab not caring to trust any but Obadiah, who he knew was a faithful man, lest they should be bribed by those that had grass not to discover it.

Ver. 7. *And as Obadiah was in the way*, &c.] In his district, making his observations: *behold, Elijah met him*: where is not said; but he was, no doubt, upon the road from Zarephath to Samaria: *and he knew him* that is, Obadiah knew Elijah, having seen him at Ahab's court before he absconded: *and fell on his face, and said*, art *thou that my lord Elijah?* thus doing him honour and reverence both by words and gesture, as being an extraordinary prophet of the Lord.

Ver. 8. *And he answered him, I* am, *&c.*] He did not desire to be concealed, his orders were to shew and make himself known to Ahab, and Obadiah was one of his domestic servants: *go tell thy lord, behold, Elijah* is here; in such a place, ready to face him at any time. Elijah, by calling Ahab the lord of Obadiah, as he tacitly reproves him for calling him lord, shews reverence to Ahab as a king, and yet that he was fearless of him, as he was the prophet and ambassador of the Lord of hosts to him.

Ver. 9. *And he said, what have I sinned*, &c.] Or in what have I offended God or his prophet, that revenge should be taken on me in this way: *that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab to slay me?* for that he supposed would be the consequence of it, as he argues and more plainly expresses his sense in the following words.

Ver. 10. *As the Lord thy God liveth*, &c.] Which is the form of an oath he thought fit to make, to ascertain the truth of what he was about to say: *there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee*; which is either an hyperbolical expression, signifying he had sought for him in many places, and in every place he could think of; or it must be understood either of the ten tribes, which were as so many nations and kingdoms as they had been; or were more in the times of the Canaanites; or of the nations round about, that were in alliance with or tributary to the king of Israel: *and when they said*, he is *not* there, *he took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not*; which he might exact of his own subjects, but could not of other nations, unless they were free to it of themselves; or he might take it of their ambassadors or merchants that came into his land, of whom he inquired, and adjured them to tell him the truth.

Ver. 11. *And now thou sayest, go tell thy lord, behold, Elijah* is here.] Which, if I should not be able to make good, would be of fatal consequence to me; and that it is plain he feared, by what he next says.

Ver. 12. *And it shall come to pass*, as soon as *I am gone from thee, that the spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not*, &c.] This he supposed might possibly, and very probably, be the case, since such raptures might have been already, and known to Obadiah, as there were afterwards, see 2 Kings ii. 16. Ezek. iii. 12, 14. Acts viii. 39. and then he should not know where he was, nor be able to direct his master where to find him: *and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me*; for telling him a lie, and deceiving and mocking him; or for not seizing on Elijah, and bringing him, when he knew he was so desirous of getting him into his hands: *but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth*; and therefore did not deserve to be treated after this manner, having been an early and conscientious worshipper of the true God.

Ver. 13. *Was it not told my lord what I did when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord? how I hid* 100 *men of the Lord's prophets by* 50 *in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?*] See the note on ver. 4. this he said not in a way of ostentation, but to shew that it would be very ungenerous and ungrateful, as well as impolitic, to sacrifice such a friend at court to the Lord's prophets as he had been, and might still continue to be.

Ver. 14. *And now thou sayest, go tell my lord, behold, Elijah* is here: *and he shall slay me*.] That is, should he carry such a message to him, and Elijah should be removed elsewhere, and not to be found.

Ver. 15. *And Elijah said, as the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand*, &c.] In whose presence he was, and whose prophet and minister he was; he takes this oath, to assure Obadiah that he would certainly be upon the spot, or to be found, and not expose him to any danger: *I will surely shew myself unto him to-day*: he was determined at all events to present himself to him that day.

[m] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 39. 2.

Ver. 16. *So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him,* &c.] That Elijah was in such a place, and had desired him to inform him of it, and was ready to appear before him that day wherever he pleased; for upon the prophet's oath Obadiah was entirely satisfied, and was in no fear of delivering the message: *and Ahab went to meet Elijah:* though perhaps the bold message of the prophet might make him fear he had something to say to him not very agreeable.

Ver. 17. *And it came to pass when Ahab saw Elijah,* &c.] As soon as he came up to him, and knew who he was; Abarbinel thinks, because his hair was grown so long that Ahab did not know him certainly, and therefore put the following question: *that Ahab said unto him, art thou he that troubleth Israel?* by opposing the religion of Baal, which prevailed among them; but chiefly rain being withheld from them according to his word, and at his prayer.

Ver. 18. *And he answered,* &c.] That is, Elijah, with great boldness and undaunted courage, not fearing the face of the king, being sent to shew himself to him in the name of the King of kings: *I have not troubled Israel, but thou and thy father's house;* they, by their sins, were the cause of all the troubles, those sore evils and sad calamities that were upon them: *in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord;* to have no other gods before him, and not to make images, and worship them, which they had done: *and thou hast followed Baalim;* the several Baals, the sun, moon, and stars, the whole host of heaven, worshipped under this name; or, not content with the Phœnician Baal, or Baal of the Zidonians, followed others, see Judg. ii. 11.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore send,* and *gather to me all Israel unto Mount Carmel,* &c.] No doubt but more discourse passed between Ahab and Elijah, though not recorded, before he made this motion to him; it is very probable, that after some dispute between them, who was the true God, and about idolatry, as the cause of want of rain, Elijah proposed to the king what he afterwards did to the people, to which he could not object; and being desirous of gratifying his curiosity, and especially of having rain, which the prophet might promise him in the issue of this affair, he agreed unto it; and therefore Elijah desired that all Israel might be convened, that it might be openly and publicly done, and to the conviction and reformation of them, which was what was chiefly designed; and he chose Carmel, a mountain in the tribe of Issachar, well situated for the people that came from all parts; and the rather this than Samaria, that he might meet with no obstruction from Jezebel, and from whence he might be able to descry rain when coming, as he did. Of this mountain, see the note on Jer. xlvi. 18. to which may be added, the description of it by Mr. Sandys[w]. "Mount Carmel "stretcheth from east to west, and hath its uttermost "basis washed with the sea; steepest towards the north, "and of an indifferent altitude; rich in vines and olives "when husbanded, and abounding with several sorts of "fruits and herbs, both medicinal and fragrant, though "now much overgrown with woods and shrubs of sweet "savour." From the following solemn transaction at it, it seems, in after-times, to have become sacred, and was very venerable with the Heathens; from this mountain, a deity with them had the name of Carmel, and was worshipped here, without an image or a temple, only had an altar erected for it, in imitation of the God of Israel, worshipped here in like manner; here Vespasian sacrificed to this deity, assisted by the priest of it, Basilides, as Tacitus[x] relates; Suetonius[y] also makes mention of this deity, and of Vespasian's consulting its oracle, which gave him hopes of obtaining the empire; and from hence, in Popish times, there were an order of friars called Carmelites, instituted in the year 1180, pretending to be the successors of the children of the prophets Elijah left there: *and the prophets of Baal* 450; who are supposed to be dispersed in the several parts of the kingdom, to teach and practise the worship of Baal, and encourage and spread it in the nation: *and the prophets of the groves* 400, *which eat at Jezebel's table;* for it seems there were now more groves than that one Ahab first made, ch. xvi. 33. for which such numbers were appointed to attend, and which, perhaps, were near Samaria, since they ate at Jezebel's table, and were a sort of domestic chaplains of her's. *Asheroth,* we render *groves,* the learned Selden[z] takes to be Ashtoreth, or Ashtareth, or Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians, for whom, and so for these prophets, Jezebel might have a peculiar respect, see ch. xi. 5.

Ver. 20. *So Ahab sent unto all the children of Israel,* &c.] By messengers, requiring their attendance at Mount Carmel at such a time, at least their chief and principal men: *and gathered the prophets together unto Mount Carmel;* the 450 prophets of Baal, but not the 400 prophets of the groves; for of them we have no account afterwards, only of the former; it may be they were not at the command of Ahab, only of Jezebel, at whose table they ate, who would not suffer them to go.

Ver. 21. *And Elijah came unto all the people,* &c.] Assembled at Mount Carmel: *and said, how long halt ye between two opinions?* sometimes inclining to the one, and sometimes to the other; as a lame man in walking, his body moves sometimes to one side, and sometimes to another; or *leap ye upon two branches*[a], like a bird that leaps or hops from one branch to another, and never settles long; or rather it denotes the confusion of their thoughts, being like branches of trees twisted and implicated; thus upbraiding them with their inconstancy and fickleness; what their two opinions were, may be learnt from the next clause: *if the Lord* be *God, follow him; but if Baal,* then *follow him;* for there is but one God, one infinite, immense, and incomprehensible being; one that is omnipotent, all-sufficient, good, and perfect; there cannot be more, and therefore but one to be followed, served, and worshipped: *and the people answered him not a word;* through conviction and confusion, his reasoning being unanswerable; or not knowing which to choose at present; or fearing they should be drawn into a snare, should they name any; either incur the displeasure of the king, who was for Baal, or of the prophet, who was for the Lord, at whose word rain was withheld, and might be given, which they were desirous of.

[w] Travels, l. 3. p. 158. Ed. 5.
[x] Hist. l. 2. c. 78.
[y] Vit. Vespasian. c. 5.

[z] De Dis Syris Syntagm. 2. c. 2. p. 232, &c.
[a] פסחים על שתי הסעפים transilietis super duos ramos, Malvenda; vos transilientes super ambos ramos, Piscator.

Ver. 22. *Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only remain a prophet of the Lord*, &c.] At least as he thought, all the rest being slain, as he supposed; however there were none present but himself: *but Baal's prophets are* 450 *men*; which were very great odds he had to contend with.

Ver. 23. *Let them therefore give us two bullocks*, &c.] Who, being so many, were better able to be at the expense of them, and having the king on their party too; though perhaps no more is meant than that two bullocks should be brought thither, and presented before them: *and let them choose one bullock for themselves*; which of the two they would, if they thought one was any ways preferable to the other, it was at their option to take it: *and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood*; as sacrifices usually were: *and put no fire under*; which was wont to be done for burnt-offerings, as this was designed to be: *and I will dress the other bullock*; by slaying and cutting it in pieces; *and lay it on wood*; as for a burnt-offering: *and put no fire under*; to consume it.

Ver. 24. *And call ye on the name of your gods*, &c.] The Baalim, the many lords and gods they served: *and I will call on the name of the Lord*; the one true Jehovah and God of Israel, whom I serve: *and the God that answereth by fire*; by causing fire to come down upon the sacrifice, and consume it: *let him be God*; accounted, owned, and acknowledged as the true God, and so afterwards worshipped as such: *and all the people answered and said, it is well spoken*; they thought it a very reasonable proposal, a very good method to determine the controversy, and come at the truth, and know who was the true God, and who not.

Ver. 25. *And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal*, &c.] Who agreed to this proposal, though not expressed; or they signified it by their silence. Ben Gersom thinks they agreed to it, because that, according to their belief, Baal was Mars, and in the sign of Aries, one of the fiery planets, and therefore fancied he could send down fire on their sacrifice; but Abarbinel is of opinion that it was the sun they worshipped, under the name of Baal, the great luminary which presides over the element of fire, and therefore had power to cause it to descend; and if not, they agreed to it, he thinks, for three reasons; one was necessity, they could not refuse, after the people had approved of it, lest they should rise upon them, and stone them; and another was, that Elijah proposed to offer without the temple, contrary to the law of his God, and therefore concluded he would not answer him by fire, and so they should be upon a par with him; and the third was, that they thought they should offer their bullocks together, so that, if fire descended, it would come upon them both, and then the dispute would be, whether his God, or their god, sent it; and so no proof could be made who was God, nor the matter in controversy decided: *choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many*; therefore in civility to them gave the choice of the bullock and the altar first, he being one and they many: *and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire under*; under the wood on which was the sacrifice cut in pieces; and when they had so done, then they were to call on their gods to cause fire to descend upon it.

Ver. 26. *And they took the bullock which was given them*, &c.] By such of them as made the choice: *and they dressed it*; slew it, and cut it in pieces, and laid it on the wood, but put no fire under it: *and called on the name of Baal, from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us*; and send fire down on the sacrifice; and if the sun was their Baal, they might hope, as the heat he gradually diffused was at its height at noon, that some flashes of fire would proceed from it to consume their sacrifice; but after, their hope was turned into despair, they became and acted like madmen: *but there was no voice, nor any that answered*; by word, or by sending down fire as they desired: *and they leapt upon the altar which was made*; not by Elijah, but by themselves, either now or heretofore, and where they had formerly sacrificed; and they danced about it, and leaped on it, either according to a custom used by them; such as the Salii, the priests of Mars, used, so called from their leaping, because they did their sacred things leaping, and went about their altars capering and leaping [t]; or rather they were mad on it, as the Targum renders it, and acted like madmen, as if they were agitated by a prophetic fury and phrensy.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass at noon*, &c.] When they had been from the time of the morning sacrifice until now invoking their deity to no purpose: *that Elijah mocked them*; he jeered and bantered them: *and said, cry aloud*; your god don't hear you; perhaps, if you raise your voice higher, he may; *for he is a god*; according to your esteem of him, and, if so, he surely may hear you: unless *either he is talking*; with others about matters of moment and importance, who are waiting on him with their applications to him; or he is in meditation; in a deep study upon some things difficult to be resolved: *or he is pursuing*; his studies, or his pleasures, or his enemies, to overtake them; or he is employed on business [u]: *or he is in a journey*; gone to visit his friends, or some parts of his dominions; so Homer [w] represents Jupiter gone to pay a visit to the Ethiopians, and as yesterday gone to a feast, and all the gods following him, from whence he would not return until twelve days; and in like manner Lucian [x] speaks of the gods, mocking at them: *or, peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked*; with a loud crying to him: it being now noon, Abarbinel thinks this refers to a custom of sleeping after dinner; Homer [y] also speaks of the sleep of the gods, and which used to be at noon; and therefore the worshippers of Baal ceased then to call upon him; and it is said [z], the Heathens feared to go into the temples of their gods at noon, lest they should disturb them; but such is not the true God, the God of Israel, he neither slumbers nor sleeps, Psal. cxxi. 4.

Ver. 28. *And they cried aloud*, &c.] Trying to make

[t] Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 8. tum Salii ad cantus, &c. Vid. Gutberleth. de Saliis, c. 2. p. 9.
[u] David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 211. 1.
[w] Iliad. ver. 1. 423.
[x] Jupiter Tragoedus.
[y] Ut supra, in fine, & Iliad. ξ. ver. 1, 2.
[z] Meurs. Auctar. Philol. c. 6. apud Quistorp. in loc.

him hear, if possible: *and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them*; so the priests of Heathen deities used to slash themselves on their shoulders, arms, and thighs, in their devotions to them, as many writers observe[z], fancying their gods were delighted with human blood; particularly the priests of Bellona[a], and the worshippers of the Syrian goddess[b], and of the Egyptian Isis[c].

Ver. 29. *And it came to pass when mid-day was past, &c.*] And nothing done, no fire descended: *and they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice*; continued praying to Baal, and singing his praises, but all to no purpose; or they behaved like madmen, as the Targum; thus they went on until it was time to offer the evening sacrifice; so that they had no interruption in their service, and had all the time they could desire to have to importune their god to do the favour for them they requested: *that there was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded*; no voice was heard that returned them any answer; nor was any answer made by fire, nor any regard shewn to their mad gestures, and barbarous actions; and very likely the people also, by this time, paid no regard unto them, perceiving they were not able, by all their cries and methods they took, to obtain an answer.

Ver. 30. *And Elijah said unto all the people, come near unto me, &c.*] And observe what I do, and what will be done at my request: *and all the people came near unto him*; left the prophets of Baal to themselves, and took no more notice of them, but attended to what the prophet should say and do: *and he repaired the altar of the Lord that was broken down*; which had been set up when high places and altars were allowed of, while the tabernacle was unsettled, and the temple not built; this is supposed to have been erected in the times of the judges; though, according to a tradition of the Jews[d], it was built by Saul, see 1 Sam. xv. 12. but had been thrown down by the idolatrous Israelites, who demolished such as were erected to the name of the Lord everywhere, and built new ones for their idols, ch. xix. 10. Benjamin of Tudela[e] says, that on the top of Mount Carmel is now to be seen the place of the altar Elijah repaired, which is four cubits round.

Ver. 31. *And Elijah took* 12 *stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, &c.*] Which he might very easily come at from the mountain: *unto whom the word of the Lord came, saying, Israel shall be thy name*: which signifies one that has power with God, as Jacob had, when the word came to him to make a change in his name at Penuel, Gen. xxxii. 28. and as Elijah hoped and believed he should have at this time, being a prophet, and a worshipper of Israel's God.

Ver. 32. *And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the Lord, &c.*] Whom the 12 tribes had formerly worshipped; and though now divided in their civil state, yet ought to be united in the worship of God: *and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed*; or two seahs, one of which was the third part of an ephah, and two of them were more than half a bushel; and this trench or ditch round the altar was as broad as such a measure of seed would sow.

Ver. 33. *And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid* him *on the wood, &c.*] Just in such manner as sacrifices usually were: *and said, fill four barrels with water*; either from the brook Kishon, or, if that was dried up, from the sea; for both were near this mountain, and so to be had, though a time of drought: *and pour it on the burnt-sacrifice*; that which was intended to be one: *and upon the wood*: wherewith it was to be burnt, and so made unfit for it; and which would make the miracle appear the greater, when fire came down and consumed it.

Ver. 34. *And he said, do it the second time, and they did it the second time, &c.*] That is, poured four barrels of water more upon the wood: *and he said, do it the third time, and they did it the third time*; so that there were in all 12 barrels of water poured on the wood, agreeably to the number of the 12 stones the altar was built with, and may have respect to the same as they.

Ver. 35. *And the water ran round about the altar, &c.*] There being such a large effusion of it on it; *and he filled the trench also with water*: which surrounded the altar, so that it seemed impracticable that any fire should kindle upon it; and this gave full proof and demonstration there could be no collusion in this matter.

Ver. 36. *And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, &c.*] Which the people of God at Jerusalem were now attending to: *that Elijah the prophet came near*; to the altar he had built, and on which he had laid the sacrifice: *and said*, in prayer to God: *Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; the covenant-God of the ancestors of his people, though they had now so foully departed from him: *let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel*; and that there is no other: *and* that *I* am *thy servant*; a true worshipper of him, and his faithful prophet and minister: *and that I have done all these things at thy word*: restrained rain from the earth for some years past, and now had convened Israel, and the false prophets, together, that by a visible sign from heaven it might be known who was the true God; all which he did not of himself, but by the impulse, direction, and commandment of the Lord.

Ver. 37. *Hear me, O Lord, hear me, &c.*] Which repetition is made to express his importunity, and the vehement earnest desire of his soul to be heard in such a case, which so much concerned the glory of God; the Targum is, "receive my prayer, O Lord, concerning the fire, receive my prayer concerning the rain;" as if the one respected the sending down the fire on the sacrifice, and the other sending rain on the earth; and which sense is followed by other Jewish writers: *that this people may know that thou art the Lord God*; and not Baal, or any other idol: *and* that *thou hast turned their heart back again*; from idolatry, to the

[z] Vid. Kipping. Antiqu. Roman. l. 1. c. 10. p. 202.
[a] Tertul. Apolog. c. 9. Lactant. Institut. l. 1. c. 21.
[b] Apulei Metamorph. l. 8.
[c] Herodot. Euterpe, c. 61. Manetho. Apotelesm. l. 1. ver. 243, 244. Seneca de vita beata, c. 27.
[d] Jarchi & Kimchi in loc.
[e] Itinerar. p. 37.

worship of the true God; though some understand this of God's giving them up to a spirit of error, and suffering them to fall into idolatry, and hardening their hearts, as he did Pharaoh's; but the former sense is best.

Ver. 38. *Then the fire of the Lord fell, &c.*] An extraordinary fire from God out of heaven, as the effects of it shew: *and consumed the burnt-sacrifice;* as it had done in former instances, Lev. ix. 24. Judg. vi. 22. 1 Chron. xxi. 26. 2 Chron. vii. 1, 3. and besides this, which is still more extraordinary, *and the wood, and the stones, and the dust;* of the altar, thereby signifying that even such were not to be used any more: *and licked up the water that was in the trench;* around the altar, see ver. 32.

Ver. 39. *And when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces, &c.*] In reverence of God, astonished at the miracle wrought, ashamed of themselves and their sins, particularly their idolatry, that they should turn their backs on the true God, and follow idols: *and they said, the Lord, he is the God, the Lord, he is the God;* which acknowledgment of God, as the true God, in opposition to Baal, is repeated, to shew their firm belief and strong assurance of it.

Ver. 40. *And Elijah said unto them, take the prophets of Baal, &c.*] The 450 that were upon the spot; for the number of the people of Israel, now gathered together, were equal to it; nor was it in Ahab's power to hinder it, and he might himself be so far surprised and convicted as not in the least to object to it: *let not one of them escape;* that there might be none of them left to seduce the people any more: *and they took them;* laid hold on them, every one of them: and *Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon;* which ran by the side, and at the bottom of Mount Carmel, into the sea; see the notes on Judg. iv. 7. and v. 21. *and slew them there;* intimating, that it was owing to the idolatry they led the people into that rain had been withheld, and the brooks were dried up, as this might be; or, as Ben Gersom thinks, that the land might not be defiled with their blood, but be carried down the river after it: these he slew not with his own hand, but by others he gave orders to do it; and this not as a private person, but as an extraordinary minister of God, to execute justice according to his law, Deut. xiii. by which law such false prophets were to die; and the rather he was raised up and spirited for this service, as the supreme magistrate was addicted to idolatry himself.

Ver. 41. *And Elijah said unto Ahab, get thee up, &c.*] From the brook and valley where the execution of the prophets had been made; either up to his chariot, or to the tent or pavilion erected on the side of the mount, where the whole scene of things was transacted; *eat and drink;* which he had no leisure for all the day, from the time of the morning sacrifice to the evening sacrifice, which was taken up in attending to the issue of the several sacrifices; but now he is bid to eat and refresh himself, and that in token of joy and gladness, as became him, both for the honour of the true God, which had been abundantly confirmed, and for the near approach of rain, of which he assures him: *for there is a sound of abundance of rain;* the wind perhaps began to rise, and blow pretty briskly, which was a sign of it[f]; besides, according to the Tyrian annals[g], there were loud claps of thunder at this time, at least when the heavens became very black, as in ver. 45.

Ver. 42. *So Ahab went up to eat and to drink, &c.*] Up to his chariot, as some think, or rather to some place higher than that in which he now was: *and Elijah went up to the top of Carmel;* higher still, where he both might be alone, and have the opportunity of observing the clouds gathering, and the rain coming: *and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees;* expressive of his humility, and of his earnestness, and vehement desire, and continued importunity, that rain might fall; for this was a posture of prayer he put himself into, and continued in; and it is certain that it was through his prayer that rain came, Jam. v. 18. and from hence came the fable of the Grecians concerning Æacus praying for rain in a time of drought, when it came[h]. So the Chinese writers[i] report that at the prayers of their emperor Tangus, after a seven-years' drought, great rains fell.

Ver. 43. *And said to his servant, &c.*] Whom some take to be the son of the widow of Sarepta, but he must be too young to be employed in such service as this was: *go up now;* still higher on Mount Carmel than where he was, even to the highest point of it: *look towards the sea;* or the west, as the Targum, the Mediterranean sea, which lay to the west of the land of Israel: *and he went up and looked, and he said, there is nothing;* there was nothing in the sky, or arising out of the sea, that looked like or foreboded rain: *and he said, go again 7 times;* till he should see something.

Ver. 44. *And it came to pass at the seventh time that he said, behold there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand, &c.*] Either about the bigness or in the form of it; rain-water comes out of the sea, and, being strained through the clouds and air, becomes fresh: *and he said, go up;* the meaning seems to be, that he should first go down from the mount, and then go up to that part of it where Ahab was: *say unto Ahab, prepare* thy chariot; bind or fasten the horses to it, as the phrase seems to signify: *and get thee down;* from the mountain where he was, to go to Jezreel, which lay low in a valley: *that the rain stop thee not;* on the road, that might be made unpassable by it, signifying that such abundance should fall as would make it so.

Ver. 45. *And it came to pass in the mean while, &c.*] That the servant was gone with the message to Ahab, and Ahab was getting ready his chariot: *that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain;* which all sprung from the cloud like a man's hand; and so we are told[k], that sometimes a little cloud called the ox's eye is seen on a mount of the Cape of Good Hope, called Tafesbery, when the sky is most serene, and the sea quiet; which is at first scarce so big as a barley-corn, and then as a walnut;

[f] Fit fragor, hinc densi——nimbi, Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 8. v. 269.

[g] Apud Joseph. Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 2.

[h] Pausan. Attica, sive, l. 1. prope finem. Isocrat. Evagoras, p. 372.

[i] Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 2. p. 60.

[k] Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacra, vol. 3. p. 591.

and presently it extends itself over the whole surface of the mountain: *and Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel;* as fast as he could.

Ver. 46. *And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah,* &c.] Giving him more than common strength of body, as well as courage and fortitude of mind; so the Targum, the spirit of strength from the Lord was with him: *and he girded up his loins:* gathered up his long loose garment, and girt it about him, that he might be more fit for travelling: *and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel;* reckoned about 16 miles from Carmel[l]; this shewed his humility, that he was not elated with the wonderful things God had done by him, and that he bore no ill will to Ahab, but was ready to shew him all honour and respect due to him as a king; and that it were his sins, and not his person, he had an aversion to; and that he was not afraid of Jezebel, and her prophets, but entered into the city where she was, to instruct the people, and warn them against her idolatries; though some think he went no further than the gate of the city, prudently avoiding falling into her hands.

CHAP. XIX.

THIS chapter gives us a further account of Elijah, of his being obliged to flee for his life through the threats of Jezebel, ver. 1—4. of the care the Lord took of him, providing food for him, in the strength of which he went to Horeb, ver. 5—8. of the Lord's appearance to him there, and conversation with him, ver. 9—14. of some instructions he gave him to anoint a king over Syria, another over Israel, and a prophet in his room, ver. 15—18. and of his finding Elisha, and throwing his mantle over him, who left his secular employment, and followed him, and became his servant, ver. 19—21.

Ver. 1. *And Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done,* &c.] What miracles he had wrought, how that not only fire came down from heaven, and consumed the sacrifice, but even the stones and dust of the altar, and licked up great quantities of water in the trench around it; and that it was at his prayer that rain came down from heaven in such abundance, of which she was sensible; by all which he got the people on his side, so that it was not in his power to seize him and slay him; and this he said to clear himself, and make her easy: *and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword;* the 450 prophets of Baal he had gathered to Carmel; the Targum calls them false prophets, but Ahab would scarcely use that epithet to Jezebel; as for the 400 prophets of the grove, they were not present, and so not included. Jezebel knew they were safe, being with her, she not suffering them to go to Carmel.

Ver. 2. *Then Jezebel sent a messenger unto Elijah,* &c.] In Jezreel, or near it, to frighten him away; not caring to seize him, and dispatch him, for fear of the people, in whom he had now a great interest; or otherwise it is not easy to account for it that she should give him notice of it; unless she scorned to do it privately, as some think, and was determined to make a public example of him; but being not as yet prepared for it, sends him word what he must expect, imagining that as he had the courage to appear, he would not flee; no doubt there was an hand of Providence in it, be it which it will, that he might have time to make his escape: *saying, so let the gods do to me, and more also:* the gods she served, Baal and Ashtaroth, and by whom she swore: *if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time;* as one of the prophets Elijah had slain; she swore by her gods, and wished the greatest evils might befall her, if she did not lodge him in the state of the dead where they were in the space of 24 hours; though Abarbinel thinks it is not an oath, but that the words and meaning of them are, so the gods do; it is their usual way, and they will go on to do so for the future, because of the holiness of their name; and therefore don't boast of slaying the prophets, or make use of that as an argument of their falsehood, for they'll do the same by thee by to-morrow this time.

Ver. 3. *And when he saw that,* &c.] That her design and resolution were to take away his life; the Septuagint, Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions read, *and he was afraid;* or frightened; he that had such courage as not to be afraid to meet Ahab, and contend with 450 priests of Baal, and in the face of all Israel, who at first were not inclined to take his part, is now terrified at the threats of a single woman; which shews that the spirit and courage he had before were of the Lord, and not of himself; and that those who have the greatest zeal and courage for religion, for God, and his worship, his truths and ordinances, if left to themselves, become weak and timorous; and whether this is the true reading, or no, it was certainly his case by what follows: *he arose and went for his life;* fled to save his life, at a time when he was much wanted to encourage and increase the reformation from idolatry, and to preserve the people from relapsing who were converted; and through the miracles that had been wrought by him, and for him, he had great reason to trust in the Lord: or *he went unto,* or *according to his own soul*[m]; according to his own mind and will, not taking counsel of God, or any direction from him; and so Abarbinel interprets it: *and came to Beersheba, which belongeth to Judah;* to the tribe of Judah; for though it was in the inheritance of Simeon, yet that was within the tribe of Judah, Josh. xix. 1, 2. or to the kingdom of Judah, over which Jehoshaphat reigned, and so might think himself safe, being out of the dominions of Ahab, and reach of Jezebel; but yet he did not think so, his fears ran so high that he imagined

[l] Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 204.

[m] אל נפשו κατα την ψυχην αυτε, Sept. secundum animam suam, Vatablus, Pagninus.

she would send some after him to search for him, and slay him privately, or make interest with Jehoshaphat to deliver him up, there being friendship between him and Ahab; for though this place was 84 miles from Jezreel, as Bunting[n] computes it, he quitted it: *and left his servant there;* he took him not with him, either lest he should betray him, or rather out of compassion to him, that he might not share in the miseries of life that were like to come upon him.

Ver. 4. *But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness,* &c.] Of Paran, which began near Beer-sheba, and was the wilderness of Arabia, in which the Israelites were near 40 years; this day's journey carried him about 20 miles from Beer-sheba southward, as the above writer reckons: *and came and sat down under a juniper-tree;* Abarbinel supposes that Elijah chose to sit under this tree, to preserve him from venemous creatures, which naturalists say will not come near it; and Pliny[o] indeed observes, that it being burnt will drive away serpents, and that some persons anoint themselves with the oil of it, for fear of them; and yet Virgil[p] represents the shade of a juniper-tree as noxious; hence some interpreters take this to be a piece of carelesness and indifference of the prophet's, where he sat: *and he requested for himself that he might die;* for though he fled from Jezebel to preserve his life, not choosing to die by her hands, which would cause her prophets to exult and triumph, yet was now desirous of dying by the hand of the Lord, and in a place where his death would not be known: it is *enough, now, O Lord, take away my life;* intimating that he had lived long enough, even as long as he desired; and he had done as much work for God as he thought he had to do; he supposed his service and usefulness were at an end, and therefore desired his dismission: *for I am not better than my fathers;* that he should not die, or live longer than they; but this desire was not like that of the Apostle Paul's, but like that of Job and of Jonas; not so much to be with God and Christ, as to be rid of the troubles of life.

Ver. 5. *And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree,* &c.] Being weary and fatigued with his journey, the same under which he sat; for there was but one, as that is said to be in the preceding verse: *behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, arise,* and *eat;* so far was the Lord from granting his request to take away his life, that he made provision to preserve it; so careful was he of him, as to give an angel charge to get food ready for him, and then awake him to eat of it.

Ver. 6. *And he looked, and, behold,* there was *a cake baked on the coals,* &c.] Just took off the coals, quite hot. Bochart[q] thinks it should be rendered, *baked on hot stones;* and such was the way of baking cakes in some of the eastern countries, see the note on Gen. xviii. 6. the stones hereabout might be heated by a supernatural power, and the cake baked on them by an angel; these sort of cakes are in Hebrew called *huggoth,* as some pronounce the word, and are said to be now common in Bulgaria, where they are called *hugaces*[r]: *and a cruse of water at his head;* to drink of in eating the cake; which cruse or pot a learned man[s] thinks was Elijah's, not brought by the angel, only water put into it by him; see 1 Sam. xxvi. 11, 12. *and he did eat and drink;* but not all that was set before him: *and laid him down again;* to take some more sleep for his greater refreshment.

Ver. 7. *And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him,* &c.] In order to awake him out of sleep: *and said unto him, arise,* and eat, *because the journey* is *too great for thee;* which he had to go to Horeb, without eating more than he had; and there were no provisions to be had in a common way and manner in his road thither.

Ver. 8. *And he arose, and did eat and drink,* &c.] Of what was left of the cake and cruse of water, before provided for him: *and went in the strength of that meat 40 days and 40 nights unto Horeb the mount of God;* for so long he was going to that place, though it might have been gone in three or four days; but he went in by-ways, and wandered about in the wilderness, as the Israelites did, and that for the space of 40 days, as they did near forty years; and all this while he had no other sustenance than what he had taken under the juniper-tree, from whence he set out, which must be supernatural; for it is said[t], a man can't live without food beyond seven days, see the note on Exod. xxiv. 18. the food either staying in his stomach all this while, or however the nutritive virtue of it, by which he was supported, and held out till he came to Horeb or Sinai; called the mount of the Lord, because here he had appeared to Moses in the bush, and from hence gave the law to the children of Israel. Abarbinel is of opinion that this term of 40 days was consumed in his whole journey to Horeb, his stay there, and return to the land of Israel.

Ver. 9. *And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there,* &c.] This cave, some travellers say[u], is to be seen at this day, not far from a church dedicated to the prophet Elijah, and that the cave itself has the appearance of a chapel; but a more particular account of it is given in a journal[w] lately published, which says, this cave exists to this very day, and is situated at the foot of Mount Sinai, and is now enclosed in a church built of red and white granate marble, the entrance into which is from the west; the dimensions of this cave are in length five feet, in depth four feet, and in height four and a half. The Jewish writers are of opinion that this was the cleft of the rock in which Moses was put, when the Lord passed before him: but, if so, there would have been no need of Elijah to have gone forth to and stand upon the mount when the Lord passed by, ver. 11. *and, behold, the word of the Lord* came *to him;* an articulate voice was heard by him: *and he said unto him, what dost thou here, Elijah?* this is not a proper place for a prophet to be in, in a wilderness, in a mountain, in a cave in it: what

[n] Travels, ut supra.
[o] Nat. Hist. l. 24. c. 8.
[p] Juniperi gravis umbra—— Bucol. Eclog. 10. ver. 76.
[q] Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 32, col. 333.
[r] Busbequius apud Calmet on the word *Bread.*
[s] Schacchi Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. 1. c. 44. col. 224.
[t] Macrob. in Somn. Scipion. l. 1. c. 6.
[u] Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 2. p. 166.
[w] Journal from Cairo to Mount Sinai in 1722, p. 26. Ed. 2.

work could he do for God? or what service to his people? in the land of Israel he might bear his testimony against idolatry, and so be a means of reclaiming backsliders, and of establishing those that were in the true religion: but of what usefulness could he be here? Abarbinel takes it to be a reproof of Elijah, for going into a place so holy as it was, and in which Moses, the chief of the prophets, had been, and that it did not become such a man as he was to be in such a place.

Ver. 10. *And he said, I have been jealous for the Lord God of hosts*, &c.] Through zeal for the glory of God he had slain 450 prophets of Baal, and this had stirred up the malice and revenge of Jezebel against him, who sought his life, and which had obliged him to flee, and come to this place for shelter; this is the first part of his answer, others follow: *for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant;* the law, especially the two first commandments delivered in this very place; and therefore he could hope for no protection from them, but was forced to leave his country: *thrown down thy altars;* which had been built in times past for the worship of God, to sacrifice thereon to him, but were now demolished, that those that would not bow the knee to Baal, and could not go to Jerusalem, might make no use of them: *and slain thy prophets with the sword;* which was done by Jezebel, the Israelites conniving at it, and consenting to it, and not daring to oppose her; slain all she had knowledge of, or even were known by the prophet: hence it follows, *and I*, even *I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away:* all this Elijah said, as it seems, not only to excuse himself for fleeing, and taking up his abode where he was, but to stir up the indignation of God against Israel for their idolatries and murders, and to put him upon inflicting his judgments on them for the same.

Ver. 11. *And he said, go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord*, &c.] Who would appear there as he had to Moses formerly, though not in the same manner: *and, behold, the Lord passed by:* or was about to pass, for as yet he had not; his messengers first went before him: *and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord;* strong enough to do all this, and so it might: but *the Lord was not in the wind;* as he sometimes is, Nah. i. 3. he spake to Job out of a whirlwind, ch. xxxviii. 1. *and after the wind an earthquake;* that shook the earth all around, and the mountain also, as it did when the law was given on it, Psal. lxviii. 8. *but the Lord was not in the earthquake;* as he was when it trembled in the times of Moses, Exod. xix. 18.

Ver. 12. *And after the earthquake a fire*, but *the Lord was not in the fire*, &c.] As he was when he descended on this mount, and spake to Moses, Exod. xix. the Targum, and so Jarchi, interpret all these appearances of angels, and not amiss; the wind, of an host of angels of wind; the earthquake, of an host of angels of commotion; the fire, of an host of angels of fire; see Psal. civ. 4. these ministers of the Lord went before him, to prepare the way of his glorious Majesty; which emblems may represent the power of God, the terribleness of his majesty, and the fury of his wrath, which he could display, if he would, to the destruction of his enemies; and could as easily destroy the idolatrous kingdom of Israel, which Elijah seems to be solicitous of, as the wind rent the mountains, and broke the rocks, and the earthquake shook the earth, and the fire consumed all in its way; but he chose not to do it now, but to use lenity, and shew mercy, signified by the next emblem: *and after the fire a still small voice;* not rough, but gentle, more like whispering than roaring; something soft, easy, and musical; the Targum is, the voice of those that praise God in silence; and all this may be considered as shewing the difference between the two dispensations of law and Gospel; the law is a voice of terrible words, and was given amidst a tempest of wind, thunder, and lightning, attended with an earthquake, Heb. xii. 18, 19. Exod. xix. 18. but the Gospel is a gentle voice of love, grace, and mercy, of peace, pardon, righteousness, and salvation by Christ; and may also point at the order and manner of the Lord's dealings with the souls of men, who usually by the law breaks the rocky hearts of men in pieces, shakes their consciences, and fills their minds with a sense of fiery wrath and indignation they deserve, and then speaks comfortably to them, speaks peace and pardon through the ministration of the Gospel by his spirit; blessed are the people that hear this still, small, gentle voice, the joyful sound, Psal. lxxxix. 15.

Ver. 13. *And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle*, &c.] Through reverence of the divine Majesty he perceived was there, and through shame and confusion under a sense of his impurity, imperfections, and unworthiness, as the seraphim in Isa. vi. 2, 3. and as Moses, Exod. iii. 6. *and went out and stood in the entering in of the cave;* he attempted to come forth out of the cave upon the divine order, ver. 11. but was stopped by the terrible appearances of the wind, earthquake, and fire, a little within it; but now he came quite out, and stood at the mouth of it, to hear what the Lord would say unto him: *and, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, what dost thou here, Elijah?* the same question is here put as in ver. 9. though there by an angel, here by the Lord himself.

Ver. 14. *And he said*, &c.] Elijah, in answer to the question put, and he says the same as before: *I have been very jealous*, &c. which the question was designed to draw from him, in order to give him some instructions and directions; which would suggest to him, that though he should not deal severely with Israel, nor with Ahab and his house, yet he would hereafter by the kings he should anoint over Syria and Israel, and by the prophet he should anoint in his room, as instruments of his vengeance.

Ver. 15. *And the Lord said unto him, go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus*, &c.] He is bid to go back the way he came, through the wilderness of Arabia, which was part of his way to Damascus, near to which was another wilderness, which took its name from thence; though Fortunatus Schacchus [a] thinks no other is meant by this phrase than returning to his former course and custom of preach-

[a] Elaeochrism. Myrothec. l. 1. c. 39. col. 198.

ing the law of God, and reclaiming men from the error of their ways: *and when thou comest, anoint Hazael* to be *king over Syria;* it is nowhere related that Elijah did go to Damascus, and anoint Hazael, though it may be he did; however he acquainted Elisha with it, and he declared it to Hazael, that he should be king of Syria, and which perhaps is all that is meant by anointing; that is, that he should be made king, and which was declared by both these prophets, see 2 Kings viii. 13.

Ver. 16. *And Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint* to be *king over Israel,* &c.] This was a son of Jehoshaphat, and a grandson of Nimshi; nor does he appear to have been anointed by Elijah, but by Elisha; and being done by his order and direction was the same as if it was done by himself, unless he was twice anointed, see 2 Kings ix. 1—3. *and Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-meholah shalt thou anoint* to be *prophet in thy room:* which was in the half-tribe of Manasseh, on this side Jordan; see the note on Judg. vii. 22.

Ver. 17. *And it shall come to pass, that him that escapeth the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay,* &c.] Which suggests that many should be slain in Israel by them both, as were by Hazael, 2 Kings x. 32, 33. and by Jehu, 2 Kings ix. 24, 33. and x. 1—7. *and him that escapeth from the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay:* which may be understood either literally of the 42 children cursed by him, in consequence of which they were destroyed by bears, 2 Kings ii. 24. or rather figuratively by his prophecies, see Hos. vi. 5. who foretold the slaughters made by Hazael and Jehu, as well as others, see 2 Kings viii. 12. and ix. 7, 8. these several things were not done in the order in which they are here put; for what Elisha did was before Hazael and Jehu, and Jehu before Hazael; these words therefore don't respect the exact order of time in which they should be done, only that each should do the part appointed and assigned unto him, and what could not be so well done by the other; thus Hazael was to destroy those that came out to war; and Jehu Ahab's family that did not; and Elisha the children of idolatrous parents at Beth-el, that came not within the reach of either; though it may be observed, that Hazael began to distress Israel before Jehu appeared, 2 Kings viii. 28, 29. and the prophecies of Elisha might not have their full accomplishment until after Hazael and Jehu had done what was appointed for them.

Ver. 18. *Yet I have left me* 7,000 *in Israel,* &c.] From perishing by the sword of either of them: *all the knees which have not bowed to Baal;* that is, had not worshipped him, which was signified by this gesture: *and every mouth which hath not kissed him;* either the image of Baal itself, or the hand, in reverence of him; which rites, one or other, or both, were used by his worshippers; see the note on Hos. xiii. 2. This either refers, as some think, to the present time, and so is an answer to Elijah, who thought he was the only worshipper left, with which seems to agree Rom. xi. 2—4. or to the times to come, when destruction should be made by the above persons, and when God would have some faithful worshippers, and would take care of them; so some render the words, *I will reserve,* &c. [y].

Ver. 19. *So he departed thence,* &c.] From Mount Horeb, and came to Abel-meholah, which Bunting computes [z] at 156 miles: *and found Elisha the son of Shaphat, who was ploughing with* 12 *yoke* of oxen *before him, and he with the* 12*th:* which may be understood either of 12 couple of oxen drawing one plough; which was a large number, but will not seem strange when it is observed, that Abel-meholah, where Elisha was ploughing, lay in the vale of Jordan, which was a clayey stiff ground, and required such a number of oxen to plough it up, especially at the first tilling of it, as this might be [a]; compare 1 Kings iv. 12. with ch. vii. 46. A late traveller [b] observes, that at Damegraed, in upper Egypt on the Nile, six oxen yoked to plough had a great deal of difficulty to turn up the ground; or else, as the Jewish writers generally understand it, there were 12 ploughs, and a yoke of oxen to each, and a ploughman to attend every one, and Elisha attended the 12th; or was with one of the twelve, as the Targum, and might have the oversight of them all; Kimchi thinks, and so Abarbinel after him, that this signified that he should be leader of the 12 tribes of Israel: *and Elijah passed by him, and cast his mantle upon him;* the skirts of it.

Ver. 20. *And he left the oxen, and ran after Elijah,* &c.] His heart being touched by the Lord at the same time, and his mind enlightened to understand what was meant by that action: *and said, let me, I pray thee, kiss my father and my mother;* take his leave of them in this way, which was what was used by friends at parting, see Ruth i. 9, 14. *and* then *I will follow thee;* which he understood was meant by his casting his mantle over him: *and he said unto him, go back again;* to his plough: *for what have I done to thee?* he had only cast the skirts of his mantle over him, and had said nothing to him; this he said to try him, and get out of him what was in his heart, and how it had been touched by the spirit of God; and if so, then he suggests it was not what he had done, but what the Lord had impressed upon him, that would oblige him to return, and follow him, after he had taken his leave of his parents.

Ver. 21. *And he returned back from him,* &c.] To his father's house, and took his leave, and then came back into the field, perhaps with others accompanying him: *and took a yoke of oxen and slew them, and boiled their flesh with the instruments of the oxen;* their yokes, and the plough, with an addition of other things sufficient to boil them: *and gave unto the people, and they did eat;* the ploughmen and others that came together on this occasion; he made a feast for them, to express his joy at being called to such service he was: *then he arose and went after Elijah;* left his worldly employment, the riches he was heir to, his parents, and his friends, and followed the prophet: *and ministered unto him;* became his servant, whereby he attained to great knowledge and understanding of divine things, and was trained up to the prophetic office, which he was invested with upon the removal of Elijah; see Matt. viii. 21, 22. and xix. 27.

[y] והשארתי reservabo vel servabo, Vatablus; so V. L. Pagninus, Montanus, Tigurine version.

[z] Travels, &c. p. 204.

[a] See Fuller's Pisgah Sight, &c. B. 2. ch. 8. p. 175.

[b] Norden's Travels in Egypt and Arabia, vol. 2. p. 65.

CHAP. XX.

THIS chapter relates the siege of Samaria by the king of Syria, and his insolent demand of Ahab's wives, children, and riches, ver. 1—12. the sally made out upon him, at the direction of the prophet, and the route made of the Syrian army, ver. 13—21. the return of the Syrian army the next year, when there was a pitched battle between them and Israel, in which the former were entirely defeated, ver. 22—30. the peace Ahab made with the king of Syria, ver. 31—34. and the reproof one of the sons of the prophets gave him for it, which made him very uneasy, ver. 35—43.

Ver. 1. *And Benhadad the king of Syria gathered all his host together*, &c.] This was Benhadad the second, the son of that Benhadad, to whom Asa sent to help him against Baasha, ch. xv. 18. *and there were 32 kings with him*: these were heads of families, so called, and at most governors of cities under Benhadad; petty princes, such as were in the land of Canaan in Joshua's time: *and horses and chariots*: how many is not said: *and he went up and besieged Samaria, and warred against it*: he went up with such an intent, but had not as yet done it in form; what moved him to it cannot be said precisely, whether an ambitious view of enlarging his dominions, or because the king of Israel paid not the tribute his father had imposed upon him, see ver. 34. however, so it was, through the providence of God, as a scourge to Ahab for his impiety.

Ver. 2. *And he sent messengers to Ahab king of Israel, into the city*, &c.] Who there remained, and attempted not to go forth and meet him, and stop his progress, though he must have passed great part of his dominions to come to Samaria: *and said unto him, thus saith Benhadad*; by them, his messengers, as follows.

Ver. 3. *Thy silver and thy gold is mine*, &c.] Not of right, but reckoning it as good as in his hands, Ahab not being able to resist him: *and thy wives also*; for it seems he had more than Jezebel: *and thy children*; which were many, for he had no less than 70 sons, 2 Kings x. 1. even *the goodliest are mine*; some aggravate this, as if his view was to commit the unnatural sin with his male children, when in his possession.

Ver. 4. *And the king of Israel answered and said, my lord, O king*, &c.] So he said to Benhadad's messengers, representing him, as acknowledging his sovereignty over him: *according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have*; which he understood of holding all that he had of him, by giving him homage, and paying him tribute; not that he was to deliver all his substance, and especially his wives and children, into his hands.

Ver. 5. *And the messengers came again*, &c.] From Benhadad: *and said, thus speaketh Benhadad, saying, although I have sent unto thee, saying*; at the first message: *thou shalt deliver me thy silver, and thy gold, and thy wives, and thy children*; into his possession, and not as Ahab understood it, that he should be his vassal, and pay a yearly tribute for his quiet enjoyment of them; yet even this he would not now abide by, growing still more haughty upon the mean submission of Ahab, as by what follows.

Ver. 6. *Yet I will send my servants unto thee to-morrow about this time*, &c.] He gave him 24 hours to consider of it: *and they shall search thine house, and the houses of thy servants*; the royal palace, and the houses of the noblemen, and even of every of his subjects in Samaria: *and it shall be*, that *whatsoever is pleasant* (or *desirable*) *in thine eyes, they shall put it in their hand, and take it away*; not be content with what should be given, but search for more; and if any thing in particular was more desirable to the possessor than any thing else, that should be sure to be taken away; which was vastly insolent and aggravating.

Ver. 7. *Then the king of Israel called all the elders of the land*, &c.] His poor sneaking spirit was a little aroused with the last message, and therefore called a council of the elders of the people upon it, which was a piece of wisdom in him: *and said, mark, I pray you, and see how this man seeketh mischief*; nothing less than the entire ruin of the nation: *for he sent unto me for my wives, and for my children, and for my silver, and for my gold, and I denied him not*; in the sense he understood him, which was, that he was to be a vassal, and tributary to him, for the sake of holding these, which yet was very mean; but he wanted to have these in hand, and not them only, but the pillaging of all his subjects.

Ver. 8. *And all the elders and all the people said unto him*, &c.] They were unanimous in their advice: *hearken not* unto him, *nor consent*; promising, no doubt, that they would stand by him.

Ver. 9. *Wherefore he sent unto the messengers of Benhadad*, &c.] Upon the advice the elders had given him, and encouraged thereby, though in a poor sneaking manner after all: *tell my lord the king, all that thou didst send for to thy servant at the first I will do*; owning him as his lord, and himself as his servant, and promising to grant his first demand, though so insolent, in the sense he understood him, of paying tribute to him for it: *but this thing I may not do*; to have not only all put into his hands, but his and his servants' houses to be searched and pillaged, because the elders of his people would not agree; and yet he seems to speak as if he himself would have submitted to it, but was restrained by his council: *and the messengers departed, and brought him word again*; reported to Benhadad the answer they received from Ahab.

Ver. 10. *And Benhadad sent unto him, and said*, &c.] That is, to Ahab: *the gods do so unto me, and more also*; bring greater evils upon me than I can think of or express: *if the dust of Samaria shall suffice for handfuls for all the people that follow me*: signifying that he made no doubt of it of reducing it to dust by the numbers of men he should bring with him, which would be so many, that if each was to take an handful of dust of the ruins of Samaria, there would not be enough for them all; which was an hectoring and hyperbolical speech, uttered in his wrath and fury.

Ver. 11. *And the king of Israel answered and said*, &c.] Very mildly and very wisely: *tell* him, *let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off*: that is, he that prepares for the battle as he that has got the victory; the sense is, let no man triumph before the battle is over and the victory won; the events of war are uncertain, the battle is not always to the strong.

Ver. 12. *And it came to pass, when* Benhadad *heard this message (as he* was *drinking, he and the kings in the pavilions)*, &c.] Though it was at noon, or before, ver. 16. which shews that he and they were addicted to intemperance: *that he said unto his servants*: some of the principal officers of his army: *set* yourselves in array; prepare for battle, betake yourselves to your arms, invest the city at once, and place the engines against it to batter it down: *and they set* themselves in array *against the city*: besieged it in form, at least prepared for it; for it seems after all that it was not properly done.

Ver. 13. *And, behold, there came a prophet unto Ahab king of Israel*, &c.] Supposed by the Jewish writers to be Micaiah the son of Imlah, ch. xxii. 9. one of those perhaps that Obadiah hid in the cave, and now is sent out publicly on an errand to Ahab: *saying, thus saith the Lord, hast thou seen all this great multitude?* considered what a vast number Benhadad's army consisted of: *behold, I will deliver it into thine hand this day*; as great as it is: *and thou shalt know that I* am *the Lord*; and not Baal, who can save by few as well as by many, and from a great multitude.

Ver. 14. *And Ahab said, by whom?* &c.] Knowing he had no army with him sufficient to go out with against the Syrian army: *and he said, thus saith the Lord*, even *by the young men of the princes of the provinces*: either such, as Kimchi thinks, who were brought up with him; or, as others, the sons of governors of provinces, who were kept as hostages, that their fathers might not rebel; neither of which is likely: but rather the servants of such princes who waited on them, and lived delicately and at ease, and were not trained up to military exercises, even by these should the victory be obtained: *then he said, who shall order the battle?* begin the attack, we or they? or who shall conduct it, or be the general of the army, go before it, and lead them on? Ahab might think, being an idolater, that the Lord would not make use of him, or otherwise who could be thought of but himself? *and he answered, thou*: thou must be the commander, go forth with the army, and make the attack upon the enemy.

Ver. 15. *Then he numbered the young men of the princes of the provinces, and they were* 232, &c.] A very small number to go forth against so great an army as the host of the Syrians, and these raw unexperienced young men: *and after them he numbered all the people*, even *all the children of Israel*, being 7,000; which could never be the number of all the people in the land, nor even in the city of Samaria, who were able to bear arms; but it must mean such who were willing to go out to war on this occasion: and the number being just the same as of those that bowed not the knee to Baal, has led the Jewish commentators to conclude that these were the men that were numbered for war; but it is not likely that they were all in Samaria, or that none but those would go to war, though it must be owned the number is remarkable.

Ver. 16. *And they went out at noon*, &c.] From Samaria, the 232 young men, and the 7,000 Israelites, openly, with great spirit and courage, fearless and undaunted; but it is not said that Ahab went out at the head of them; it seems as if he did not by what is said, ver. 21. *but Benhadad* was *drinking himself drunk in the pavilions* (or *booths*, or *tents*), *he, and the kings, the* 32 *kings that helped him*; who either were his subjects, or his tributaries, or confederates; being secure, and having nothing to fear from Ahab, he and they gave themselves up to carousing and drinking, even at noon, and so destruction came upon them unawares, as on Belshazzar.

Ver. 17. *And the young men of the princes of the provinces went out first*, &c.] From Samaria, before the 7,000 did: *and Benhadad sent out*; of his pavilion, a messenger or messengers to his sentinels, to know what news, and how matters stood, whether Ahab had sent any message, signifying his compliance with his terms: *and they told him, saying, there are men come out of Samaria*; but upon what account they could not say.

Ver. 18. *And he said, whether they be come out for peace*, &c.] To propose terms of peace: *take them alive*; make them prisoners, which was contrary to the laws of nations: *or whether they be come out for war, take them alive*: he made no doubt of their being easily taken; but he would not have them be put to death, that he might examine them, and know the state of things in Samaria, and what Ahab intended to do, that he might take his measures accordingly.

Ver. 19. *So these young men of the princes of the provinces came out of the city*, &c.] First, as before observed, and marched forwards towards the Syrian camp: *and the army which followed them*; consisting of 7,000 men.

Ver. 20. *And they slew every one his man*, &c.] The Syrian army, or at least a body of men detached from them, met them, opposed them, and fought them, and they slew of them 7,232 men; as many as they themselves were: *and the Syrians fled*; not expecting such a rebuff: *and Israel pursued them*; to make some further advantage of their victory: *and Benhadad the king of Syria escaped on an horse, with the horsemen*; with two couple of horsemen, as the Targum; with these to guard him he galloped away as fast as he could for his life.

Ver. 21. *And the king of Israel went out*, &c.] Of Samaria; when he saw the Syrians fleeing, and his army pursuing, he went forth, perhaps, with more forces, who were now willing to join with him; Josephus[c] says, Ahad had another army within the walls: *and smote the horses and chariots*: that is, the men that rode on horses, and in chariots, the Syrian cavalry: *and slew the Syrians with a great slaughter*; how many were slain is not said; but the Jewish historian[d] says they plundered the camp, in which were much riches,

[c] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 14. sect. 2.

[d] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 14. sect. 2.

and great plenty of gold and silver, and took their chariots and horses, and returned to the city of Samaria.

Ver. 22. *And the prophet came to the king of Israel,* &c.] The same that came to him before: *and said unto him, go, strengthen thyself*; exhorted him to fortify his cities, especially Samaria, and increase his army, that he might be able to oppose the king of Syria: *and mark, and see what thou doest*; observe his moral and religious actions, and take heed that he did not offend the Lord by them, as well as make military preparations: *for at the return of the year the king of Syria will come up against thee*; about the same time in the next year, at the spring of the year, when kings go out to war, see 2 Sam. xi. 1.

Ver. 23. *And the servants of the king of Syria said unto him,* &c.] His ministers of state, his privy-counsellors: *their gods* are *gods of the hills, therefore they were stronger than we*; and beat them in the last battle; this notion they might receive from what they had heard of Jehovah delivering the law on Mount Sinai to Moses, and of the miraculous things done lately on Mount Carmel, as well as of their worship being in high places, especially at Jerusalem, the temple there being built on an hill, as was Samaria itself, near to which they had their last defeat; and this notion of topical deities very much obtained among the Heathens in after-times, some of which they supposed presided over rivers, others over woods, and others over hills and mountains [e]: so Nemestinus the god of woods, Collina the goddess of hills, and Vallina of valleys [f]; and Arnobius [g] makes mention of the god Montinus, and Livy [h] of the god Peninus, who had his name from a part of the Alps, so called where he was worshipped; and there also the goddess Penina was worshipped; and Lactantius [i] speaks of the gods of the mountains the mother of Maximilian was a worshipper of; and even Jupiter had names from mountains, as Olympius, Capitolinus, *&c.* and such was the great god Pan, called mountainous Pan [k]: *but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they*; and prevail over them, and conquer them.

Ver. 24. *And do this thing,* &c.] Also take this further piece of advice: *take the kings away, every man out of his place*: for being brought up delicately, they were not inured to war, nor expert in the art of it; and being addicted to pleasure, gave themselves to that, and drew the king into it, which they observed was the case before, though they did not care to mention it; and if they were tributaries or allies, they would not fight as men do for their own country: *and put captains in their rooms*; of his own people, men of skill and courage, and who would fight both for their own honour, and for the good of their country.

Ver. 25. *And number thee an army like the army that thou hast lost,* &c.] Raise an army of an equal number, which they supposed he was able to do: *horse for horse, and chariot for chariot*: as many horses and chariots as he had before: *and we will fight against them in the plain*; where they could make use of their horses and chariots to greater advantage than on hills and mountians, see Judg. i. 19. and *surely we shall be stronger than they*; and beat them: *and he hearkened unto their voice, and did so*; took their counsel, and prepared an army, and placed captains in it instead of kings.

Ver. 26. *And it came to pass at the return of the year,* &c.] In the spring, or autumn, as some think, see the note on 2 Sam. xi. 1. *that Benhadad numbered the Syrians*; took a muster of his army, to see if he had got the number he had before: *and went up to Aphek, to fight against Israel*; not that in Judah, Josh. xv. 53. rather that in Asher, Josh. xix. 30. but it seems to be that which Adrichomius [l] places in Issachar, near to the famous camp of Esdraelon, or valley of Jezreel, where it is probable the king of Syria intended to have fought the battle; and some travellers, as he observes, say [m], the ruins of that city are still shewn in that great camp or plain, not far from Gilboa, to the east of Mount Carmel, and five miles from Tabor; according to Bunting [n], it was fourteen miles from Samaria; but it may be Aphaca near Mount Lebanon, and the river Adonis [o], is meant.

Ver. 27. *And the children of Israel were numbered, and were all present,* &c.] The same as before; the 232 young men of the princes of the provinces, and 7,000 of the people, not one was missing: *and went against them*; out of Samaria, towards Aphek: *and the children of Israel pitched before them like two little flocks of kids*; being few and weak, the 232 young men in one body, and the 7,000 in another: *but the Syrians filled the country*: with their men, their horses, and their chariots.

Ver. 28. *And there came a man of God,* &c.] The same as before, ver. 13, 22. or had come [p] before the little army went out to meet the Syrians; though he might go to Ahab when encamped, for his encouragement: *and spake unto the king of Israel, and said, thus saith the Lord, because the Syrians have said, the Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the valleys*; see the note on ver. 23. *therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand*; not for Ahab's sake would the Lord do this, who does not appear thankful to God for the former victory, nor to be reformed from his idolatry, and the better for it, but for the honour of his own name, which had been blasphemed by the Syrians: and *ye shall know that I am the Lord*; both of hills and valleys, the omnipotent Jehovah, the only true God.

Ver. 29. *And they pitched one over-against the other seven days,* &c.] Very probably the Israelites pitched upon an hill, and the Syrians waited till they changed their position, not caring to fall upon them, though so very supernumerary to them, for the reason before

[e] Dii famus agrestes, & qui dominemur in altis montibus—— Ovid. Fast. l. 3.
[f] Vid. D. Herbert de Cherbury de Relig. Gent. c. 12. p. 198, 112.
[g] Adv. Gentes, l. 4.
[h] Hist. l. 21. c. 38.
[i] De Mort. Persecutor. c. 11. p. 93. Vid. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 1. Fab. 8. ver. 320. Et numina montis adorant. See Ep. 4. ver. 171.

[k] Sophoclis Œdipus Tyr. ver. 1110.
[l] Theatrum Terræ Sanct. p. 35.
[m] Brocard. & Breidenbach. in ib.
[n] Travels, &c. p. 164.
[o] Vid. Sozomen. Hist. l. 2. c. 5.
[p] ויגש accesserat, Vatablus.

given: *and so it was, that in the seventh day the battle was joined*; or they that made war drew nigh, as the Targum, and both sides engaged in battle: *and the children of Israel slew of the Syrians* 100,000 *footmen in one day*; which was a prodigious slaughter to be made by so small an army; the hand of the Lord was visible in it.

Ver. 30. *But the rest fled to Aphek, into the city*, &c.] Which perhaps was in the hands of the Syrians, and was designed for a retreat for them, should they be beaten: *and there a wall fell upon* 27,000 *of the men* that were *left*; not slain in the battle; here again the Lord might be seen, who, as Abarbinel observes, fought from heaven, and either by a violent wind, or an earthquake, threw down the wall upon them just as they had got under it for shelter: *and Benhadad fled, and came into the city into an inner chamber*; or, *into a chamber within a chamber* [q], for greater secrecy.

Ver. 31. *And his servants said unto him*, &c.] Being reduced to the utmost extremity; for if he attempted to go out of the city, he would fall into the hands of the Israelites, and there was no safety in it, the wall of it being fallen down; and it could not be thought he could be concealed long in the chamber where he was, wherefore his servants advised as follows: *behold, now, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel* are *merciful kings*; not only the best of them, as David and Solomon, but even the worst of them, in comparison of Heathen princes, were kind and humane to those that fell into their hands, and became their captives: *let us, I pray thee*; so said one in the name of the rest: *put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes upon our heads*: and so coming in such a mean and humble manner, and not with their armour on, they might the rather hope to have admittance; so the Syracusans sent ambassadors to Athens, in filthy garments, with the hair of their heads and beards long, and all in slovenly habits, to move their pity [r]: *and go out to the king of Israel*; and be humble supplicants to him: *peradventure he will save thy life*; upon a petition to him from him; to which the king agreed, and sent it by them.

Ver. 32. *So they girded sackcloth on their loins, and* put *ropes on their heads*, &c.] Signifying they came to surrender themselves to him as his captives and prisoners, and he might do with them as seemed good to him, hang them up if he pleased, for which they brought ropes with them, as a token that they deserved it, see Isa. xx. 2, 3, 4. *and came to the king of Israel, and said, thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live*; he that a little while ago insolently demanded his wives, and children, and silver, and gold, as his property, now is his humble servant, and begs, not for his crown and kingdom, but for his life: *and he said*, is *he yet alive? he* is *my brother*; which was intimating at once, that not only they might expect he would spare his life, who seemed to be so glad that he was alive, but that he would shew him more favour, having a great affection for him as his brother; this was a very foolish expression from a king in his circumstances, with respect to one who had given him so much trouble and distress, and had behaved with so much haughtiness and contempt towards him.

Ver. 33. *Now the men did diligently observe whether* any thing would come *from him*, &c.] That would be a good omen to them, and encourage them to hope for success; they observed him as diligently by his words and behaviour as soothsayers do when they look out for a lucky sign; for the word is sometimes used of divining [s]: *and did hastily catch* it; as soon as it was out of his mouth, and laid hold on it to improve it to advantage, being wiser than him: *and they said, thy brother Benhadad*; him whom thou callest thy brother; he is thy brother, and is alive; this they catched at, and expressed it, to observe whether it was a slip of his tongue, and whether he spoke it heartily, and would abide by it, or whether he would retract it: *then he said, go ye, bring him*; meaning from the city to the place where he was: *then Benhadad came forth to him*; out of his chamber, upon the report of his servants: *and he caused him to come up into the chariot*; to sit and converse with him there.

Ver. 34. *And* Benhadad *said unto him*, &c.] The word *Benhadad* is not in the original text, and some, as Osiander and others, have thought they are the words of Ahab last spoken of; which seems most likely, who not only took Benhadad into his chariot, but in his great and superabundant kindness, though the conqueror, said to him what follows: *the cities which my father took from thy father I will restore*; that is, those cities which Omri, the father of Ahab, had taken from the father of Benhadad; for as Omri was a prince of might and valour, ch. xvi. 16, 17, 18, 27. it is more probable that he took cities from the king of Syria, than that the king of Syria should take any from him, and which Ahab in his circumstances weakly promises to restore: *and thou shalt make streets for thee in Damascus, as my father made in Samaria*; which confirms it that it is Ahab, and not Benhadad, that is speaking; for Benhadad's father never had any power nor residence in Samaria, whereas Omri, the father of Ahab, had, he built it, and made it his royal seat; and, in like manner, Ahab promises Benhadad that he should have his palace at Damascus, the metropolis of Syria, and exercise power there, and over all Syria; whereby Ahab renounced all right he had to the kingdom, and any of the cities of it: for by *streets* are not meant those literally so called, for the making of which there was no reason; nor markets to take a toll from, as some, supposing them to be the words of Benhadad; nor courts of judicature, to oblige them to pay it who refused it, as others; nor fortresses to keep them in awe; but a royal palace, as a learned critic [t] has observed, for Benhadad to reside in; this Ahab gave him power to erect, and added: *and I will send thee away with this covenant*; or promise now made: *so he made a covenant with him*; confirmed the above promises: *and sent him away*; free, to enjoy his crown and kingdom, for which folly and weakness Ahab is reproved by a prophet, ver. 42.

Ver. 35. *And a certain man of the sons of the prophets*, &c.] Which the Jews take to be Micaiah, and

[q] חדר בחדר cubiculo in cubiculum, Pagninus, Montanus.
[r] Justin e Trogo, l. 4. c. 4.

[s] ינחשו augurati sunt, Pagninus, Montanus, Munster, Vatablus.
[t] Vallandi Dissert. ad 1 Reg. xx. 33, 34. Subsect. 2. sect. 4.

so Josephus[*], which is probable; the same that had been with Ahab more than once; and, whoever he was, it is not unlikely that he was the same, since Ahab knew him when his disguise was off, ver. 41. *said unto his neighbour, in the word of the Lord, smite me, I pray thee;* told his neighbour, that by the command of God he was ordered to bid him smite him, so as to wound him: *and the man refused to smite him;* being his neighbour, and perhaps a fellow-prophet, and having an affection for him.

Ver. 36. *Then said he unto him, because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord,* &c.] In not smiting him; which, if he was a prophet, he must know how great an evil it was to disregard or disobey what was said by a prophet in his name; he must be inexcusable: *behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, a lion shall slay thee. And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him;* which may seem severe, yet being an act of disobedience to the command of God, by a prophet of his, was punishable with death.

Ver. 37. *Then he found another man, and said, smite me, I pray thee,* &c.] This is not said to be his neighbour, nor one of the sons of the prophets, but a rustic man, and so stuck not to take him at his word: *and the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded* him; in his face; made some incision in his flesh, broke the skin, and fetched blood of him; perhaps somewhere about his eyes, by what follows: this he got done to him, that he might look like a wounded soldier, and thereby get the more easily to the speech of Ahab.

Ver. 38. *So the prophet departed, and waited for the king by the way,* &c.] As he went from Aphek, the place where the battle had been fought, to Samaria, his royal seat: *and disguised himself with ashes upon his face;* the Targum is, he covered his eyes with a vail, or piece of cloth, which he wrapped about his head, as men do when they have got a wound or bruise in such a part, which seems very probable; for had he besmeared his face with ashes, clay, or dust, or any such thing, he could not so easily have got it off, as in ver. 41.

Ver. 39. *And as the king passed by, he cried unto the king,* &c.] With a loud voice, signifying he had something to say unto him, at which he stopped: *and he said, thy servant went out into the midst of the battle;* this was not real, but fictitious, an apologue, fable, or parable, by which he would represent to Ahab his own case, and bring him under conviction of his folly, just as Nathan dealt with David: *and, behold, a man turned aside;* a superior officer in the army: *and brought a man unto me;* he had made a prisoner of: *and said, keep this man;* don't let him escape: *if by any means he be missing, then shall thy life be for his life, or else thou shalt pay a talent of silver;* if he let him go willingly, or by any means he should get out of his hands, then he should either die for it, or be fined a talent of silver, which of our money is 375 pounds; and to this it seems he agreed.

Ver. 40. *And as thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone,* &c.] Employed in one thing or another relative to the battle, his prisoner committed to his care made his escape: *and the king of Israel said unto him, so shall thy judgment be, thyself hast decided* it; the sentence was plain and open against him, that either he must die or pay the money, for he himself had agreed to it.

Ver. 41. *And he hasted, and took away the ashes from his face,* &c.] Took off the linen cloth from his eyes, unvailed or unmasked himself: *and the king of Israel discerned him, that he* was *of the prophets;* he knew him again, having seen him once or twice before; otherwise there could be nothing in his face that could discover him to be a prophet, rather he was to be known by his habit.

Ver. 42. *And he said unto him, thus saith the Lord,* &c.] He spake not his own sense, and in his own words, but in the name of the Lord, for which he had authority, that it might have the greater weight with Ahab: *because thou hast let go out of* thy *hand a man whom I appointed to utter destruction;* meaning Benhadad; or *the man of my anathema* or *curse*[*]; cursed of God for his blasphemy of him, and devoted by him to ruin on that account; or *of my net*[*], being by his providence brought into a net or noose at Aphek, out of which he could not have escaped, had not Ahab let him go: *therefore thy life shall go for his life;* as it shortly did, and that by the hand of a Syrian soldier, ch. xxii. 34, 35. *and thy people for his people;* which was fulfilled by Hazael king of Syria, the sins of Israel rendering them deserving of the calamities they endured by his means, see 2 Kings viii. 12. and x. 32.

Ver. 43. *And the king of Israel went to his house heavy and displeased,* &c.] With the prophet for what he had said, and with himself for what he had done in letting Benhadad go; the Targum is, he was "troubled and grieved," not so much for the sin he had committed, as for the punishment of it on him and his people: *and came to Samaria;* with a heavy heart, for the message of the prophet had spoiled the joy of his victory.

CHAP. XXI.

In this chapter we have an account of Ahab's design to have Naboth's vineyard, for which he offered him another, or the value of that, but Naboth refusing to part with it, Ahab fell sick, ver. 1—4. the reason of which being found out by Jezebel, she devised means to get Naboth put to death under the colour of justice for blasphemy, ver. 5—14. and then bid Ahab go and take possession of the vineyard, where he was met by

[*] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 14. sect. 5.
[*] איש חרמי vir anathematis mei, Montanus, Piscator.
[*] Vir retis mei; so some in Vatablus.

Elijah, who denounced the judgments of God upon him, and Jezebel, and all his family, for his injustice, ver. 15—26. but he humbling himself, the evil threatened was deferred to the days of his son, ver. 27—29.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, after these things,* &c.] After the two battles with the king of Syria, in which Ahab was victorious, and after he had let Benhadad, a blasphemer, and injurious to him, go free: that *Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel:* of which place see the note on Hos. i. 5. or *who was in Jezreel;* that is Naboth, for the vineyard was in Samaria, ver. 18. *hard by the palace of Ahab king of Samaria;* that being the metropolis of the kingdom of Israel, is put for it, who, besides his palace in Samaria, had another in Jezreel; which, according to Bunting[y], were 16 miles distant from each other.

Ver. 2. *And Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs,* &c.] For a kitchen-garden to produce eatables of the vegetable kind for his household, or for a flower-garden; and perhaps for both, as Kimchi observes, it being customary to have such in court-yards, or behind the house; perhaps he might take his notion of an herb-garden from his neighbours the Syrians, who were very diligent and laborious in cultivating their gardens, as Pliny[z]; hence *multa Syrorum olera,* the many herbs of the Syrians, became a proverb with the Greeks: *because it is near unto mine house:* lay very convenient for him: *and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it:* or, *if it seemeth good unto thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money:* which seems very well spoken, that he would either give him a better in exchange, or purchase it at its full value; he did not pretend to take it by usurpation, by force, against his will, as it was represented by Samuel kings would do, 1 Sam. viii. 14. as yet such oppression and tyranny was not exercised.

Ver. 3. *And Naboth said to Ahab, the Lord forbid it me that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.*] The inheritances of families were not to be alienated to another family, or tribe, nor even to be sold, unless in extreme poverty, and then to return at the year of jubilee, Lev. xxv. 23, 28. Now Naboth was a man in good circumstances, and under no necessity of selling his vineyard; and, if he sold it, he might reasonably conclude, it becoming a part of the royal demesnes, would never revert to his family; and therefore, both out of regard to the law of God, and the good of his family, would not part with it at any rate: this shews that he was a conscientious man, and therefore is thought to be one of those that would not bow his knee to Baal, and against whom Ahab had a grudge, and sought an opportunity against him.

Ver. 4. *And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased,* &c.] Just in the same humour he was after the prophet had delivered his message to him, ch. xx. 43. where the same words are used as here: *because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him, for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers:* neither by way of exchange nor of purchase: and such a denial he could not bear, since it looked like treating him with contempt, and taxing him with imprudence at least, if not with injustice, or both: *and he laid him down upon his bed:* or couch, which might be not in his bedchamber, but in one of his halls, where his courtiers were: *and turned away his face:* to the wall, not choosing to have conversation with any of his nobles: *and would eat no bread;* the vexation took away his stomach, and he became melancholy, at least sullen.

Ver. 5. *But Jezebel his wife came unto him, and said, why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?*] She perceived he was low-spirited, and supposed he had met with something that had ruffled him, and made him so uneasy that he could not eat his food; and she desired to know what it was, that she might relieve him if possible.

Ver. 6. *And he said, because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, give me thy vineyard for money,* &c.] Sell it him at his own price: *or else, if it please thee;* if he liked it better: *I will give thee another vineyard for it: as good, or better; and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard:* he represents this answer as surly and ill-natured, and as the effect of obstinacy, concealing the reason Naboth alleged for his denial.

Ver. 7. *And Jezebel his wife said unto him, dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel?* &c.] Art thou not king of Israel? canst thou not do as thou pleasest? hast thou not power to oblige a subject to obey thy commands, and especially in such a trifling matter as parting with a vineyard, and that upon the most reasonable terms? thou hast too much demeaned thyself as a king; thou oughtest to have exerted thy kingly power and authority, and demanded it from him; the Targum is, "thou now shalt prosper in thy kingdom "over Israel;" thy reign now is prosperous, and like to continue so, having obtained two such victories over thine enemies, and therefore should not be dejected with such a trifling thing as this: *arise, and eat bread, and let thine heart be merry;* the kingdom being in such a flourishing state; and let not this affair give thee any trouble or uneasiness; I'll take care of that, leave it with me: *I will give thee the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite;* without paying any money, or giving another vineyard in exchange for it.

Ver. 8. *So she wrote letters in Ahab's name, and sealed them with his seal,* &c.] He giving her leave, no doubt, to take his seal; though she might not communicate her scheme to him, lest he should object to it: *and sent the letters unto the elders, and to the nobles that were in his city dwelling with Naboth:* to the chief magistrates of the city of Jezreel, where Naboth dwelt.

Ver. 9. *And she wrote in the letters, saying, proclaim a fast,* &c.] Pretending fears of some dreadful calamity coming upon the nation, and therefore fasting and humiliation were necessary to avert it, and it would be right to inquire what crimes were committed by men among them, and punish them for them; and intimated to them that Naboth should be pitched upon as the great offender, and be accused, condemned, and put to death. R. Joseph Kimchi[a] thinks the phrase

[y] Travels, &c. p. 164.
[z] Nat. Hist. l. 20. c. 5.

[a] Apud David. Kimchium in loc.

signifies, *call an assembly* or *congregation*; convene a court of judicature, from the use of the word in the Talmudic language[b]; and so it is thought it is used in Jer. xxxvi. 6. and indeed it can hardly be thought that Jezebel should have much notion of fasting; and besides, if it was a public fast, why should it be proclaimed only in Jezreel, and not throughout the kingdom? *and set Naboth on high among the people*: the court being set, bring him to the bar and arraign him; perhaps in their courts of judicature there was a high place above the heads of the people, where criminals accused used to stand when they took their trials, that they might be seen and heard by all in court.

Ver. 10. *And set two men, sons of Belial, before him, to bear witness against him*, &c.] Worthless wretches, that have cast off the yoke of the law, as Belial signifies, lawless abandoned creatures, that have no conscience of any thing; *knights of the post*, as we call them, that will swear any thing; these were to be set before Naboth, right against him to confront him, and accuse him to his face, and charge him with crimes next mentioned: saying, *thou didst blaspheme God and the king*: and so was guilty of death for the former, if not for both, and of confiscation of estate for the latter, which was the thing aimed at; and Jezebel was willing to make sure work of it, and therefore would have him accused of both: *and then carry him out, and stone him, that he die*; immediately, without requiring the witnesses to give proof of their charge, and without giving Naboth leave to answer for himself.

Ver. 11. *And the men of the city*, even *the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jezebel had sent unto them*, &c.] That Jezebel should contrive so execrable a scheme, and that there should be such sons of Belial among the common people to swear to such falsehoods, need not seem strange; but that the elders and nobles of the city, the chief magistrates thereof, should be so sadly and universally depraved as to execute such a piece of villany, is really surprising. Idolatry, when it prevails, takes away all sense of humanity and justice: and *as it was written in the letters which she had sent unto them*: they punctually, exactly, obeyed the orders in them, as follows.

Ver. 12. *They proclaimed a fast*, &c.] Or called a court, see on ver. 9. *and set Naboth on high among the people*: placed him at the bar as a criminal, see the note on ver. 9. though Josephus[c] thinks he was set on an high place in the court, because he was of an illustrious birth.

Ver. 13. *And there came in two men, children of Belial, and sat before him*, &c.] Which position shewed that they were his accusers, and had a charge against him; it being usual for the accusers and accused to be set face to face, as it was the manner of the Romans in after-times, Acts xxv. 16. Josephus says[d] there were three men to accuse him; but the Targum, and all the ancient versions, have only *two*: *and the men of Belial witnessed against him, even against Naboth, in the presence of the people*: both before the judges of the court, and before all the people that filled it, who came to hear the trial; so bold and impudent were they: *saying, Naboth did blaspheme God and the king*; or *bless*, an euphemism; the phrase of cursing God being shocking to the ear, and therefore such a word is used to express it, see Job i. 5. and ii. 9. *then they carried him forth out of the city*; without any further process of examining witnesses, and of hearing what the accused had to say in his defence; but immediately they carried him out of court, and out of the city, to put him to death, malefactors being executed always without the city: *and stoned him with stones, that he died*; which was the death blasphemers were put to, Lev. xxiv. 14, 23. of the manner of which, see the note on Acts vii. 58. it seems from 2 Kings ix. 26. that his sons were stoned with him.

Ver. 14. *Then they sent to Jezebel, saying, Naboth is stoned, and is dead.*] Not only stoned, but stoned to death. This message was sent to her from the magistrates of Jezreel; for though the letters came in Ahab's name, they might be privately informed that this was a scheme of Jezebel's; besides, they knew she had the sway at court, and especially that the news of this man's death would be acceptable to her, and the more if he was of the 7,000 that would not bow the knee to Baal.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass when Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, and was dead, that Jezebel said to Ahab*, &c.] To whom she communicated the news as soon as possible: *arise, take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which he refused to give thee for money, for Naboth is not alive, but dead*; some think that Naboth was a near relation to Ahab, his father's brother's son[e]; which they endeavour to support from his estate lying next to Ahab's, and from his being ordered to be set in an high place among the people; and Josephus, as before observed, says he was of illustrious descent; and so Ahab upon his death, his sons being also put to death with him, was next heir to his estate; and therefore Jezebel bid him enter on the possession of it, he being dead, and his sons also, and therefore there was nothing in his way to obstruct him: but rather her meaning is, that Naboth was dead, not of a natural but violent death, by the hand of the civil magistrate; as for blasphemy against God, so for treason against the king, in virtue of which his estate was forfeited to the crown, and that Ahab had a right to possess it; and so it was certainly adjudged in after-times however among the Jews, that if a man was condemned to die by the sanhedrim, his goods came to his heirs, but if for treason against the king, they ceded to him[f].

Ver. 16. *And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead*, &c.] Of which he was informed by Jezebel: *that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it*: if it was in Jezreel, that was 16 miles from Samaria, and lay lower than that, in a valley, and therefore he is said to go down to it; and which he did very likely in great state and pomp, many of his nobles and captains accompanying him, as we read that Jehu and Bidkar did ride after him at this time, 2 Kings ix. 25.

[b] Vid. Buxtorf. Talmud. Lexic. in rad. עצר.
[c] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 13. sect. 8.
[d] Ibid.

[e] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 48. 2.
[f] Sanhed. ib.

Ver. 17. *And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the prophet*, &c.] Where he now was, when this word came to him, is not certain; nor what he had been employed in for some time past, since we hear nothing of him since the unction of Elisha, other prophets of lesser note being employed in messages to Ahab from time to time; perhaps Elijah, whilst Ahab was engaged in war with the king of Syria, spent his time in founding or reviving the schools of the prophets, and instructing and training up those that were in them for public usefulness, since we afterwards hear of them; the word that came to him is, by the Targum, called the word of prophecy, as indeed it was, foretelling the destruction of Ahab and his house: *saying*: as follows.

Ver. 18. *Arise, go down to meet Ahab king of Israel, which is in Samaria*, &c.] Whose seat was there, his palace where he dwelt; and Benjamin of Tudela says [g], that in his time might be discerned in Samaria the palace of Ahab king of Israel, that is, some traces of it; some connect the last clause with Israel, as if the sense was, that Ahab was king over those tribes of Israel, of which Samaria was the head: *behold*, he is *in the vineyard of Naboth*: or *will be* by the time thou gettest thither; though the Arabic version is, he is *now* in the vineyard of Naboth; *whither he is gone down to possess it*; as if it was his legal inheritance.

Ver. 19. *And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, thus saith the Lord, hast thou killed, and also taken possession?* &c.] Killed in order to possess, and now taken possession upon the murder; some versions, as the Vulgate Latin and Arabic, read without an interrogation, *thou hast killed and hath taken possession*, so Joseph Kimchi and Ben Melech; charging him with the murder of Naboth, and the unjust possession of his vineyard; the murder is ascribed to him, because his covetousness was the cause of it; and it was done by the contrivance of his wife; and it is highly probable Ahab knew more of it, and connived at it, and consented to it, than what is recorded, and however, by taking possession upon it, he abetted the fact: *and thou shalt speak unto him, saying, in the place where dogs licked the blood of Naboth shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine*: which was fulfilled in his sons, who were his flesh and blood, 2 Kings ix. 26. for the punishment was respited in his days, and transferred to his sons, see ver. 29. though dogs did lick his blood, even his blood also, according to this prophecy, though not in the same place, see ch. xxii. 38. wherefore some take these words not to be expressive of the place where, but of the cause or reason for which this should be done, and read the words, *inasmuch*, or *because dogs have licked* [h], &c.

Ver. 20. *And Ahab said to Elijah, hast thou found me, O mine enemy?* &c.] So he reckoned him, because he dealt faithfully with him, and reproved him for his sins, and denounced the judgments of God upon him for them: *and he answered, I have found* thee; as a thief, a robber and plunderer, in another's vineyard: he had found out his sin in murdering Naboth, and unjustly possessing his vineyard, which was revealed to him by the Lord; and now was come as his enemy, as he called him, as being against him, his adversary, not that he hated his person, but his ways and works: *because thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord*: had given up himself wholly to his lusts, was abandoned to them, and as much under the power of them as a man is that has sold himself to another to be his slave; and which he served openly, publicly in the sight of the omniscient God, and in defiance of him. Abarbinel gives another sense of the word we render *sold thyself*, that he *made himself strange*, as if he was ignorant, and did not know what Jezebel had done; whereas he knew fully the whole truth of the matter, and that Naboth was killed through her contrivance, and by her management purposely; and so he did evil in the sight of that God that knows all things, pretending he was ignorant when he was not, and this Elijah found out by divine revelation; so the word is used in Gen. xlii. 6. see 2 Kings xii. 5, 7. but the former sense is best, as appears from ver. 25.

Ver. 21. *Behold, I will bring evil upon thee*, &c.] Upon his own person, by cutting him off with a violent death, though his family was so numerous, having no less than 70 sons: *and will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel*: see the note on ch. xiv. 10.

Ver. 22. *And will make thine house like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha the son of Ahijah*, &c.] Two of his predecessors, whose families were utterly destroyed, ch. xv. 29. and xvi. 11. *for the provocation wherewith thou hast provoked me to anger, and made Israel to sin*: not only by his worship of the calves, but of the idols of the Zidonians, particularly Baal, and also of the Amorites, ver. 26.

Ver. 23. *And of Jezebel also spake the Lord*, &c.] To Elijah, and by him: *saying, the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel*: or in the inheritance or portion of Jezreel, as the Targum; Jarchi interprets it, the vally of Jezreel; the fulfilment of this see in 2 Kings ix. 30, 33, 36.

Ver. 24. *Him that dieth of Ahab in the city the dogs shall eat, and him that dieth in the field the fowls of the air shall eat.*] That is, they shall have no burial, see ch. xiv. 11. and xvi. 4. hitherto are the words of the Lord by Elijah; next follow the remarks of the historian.

Ver. 25. *But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord*, &c.] Not of any of his predecessors, even those whose families had been destroyed, as his would be, ver. 21. see the note on ver. 20. *whom Jezebel his wife stirred up*: to idolatry, revenge, and murder, and to whose will he was a slave, and is one instance of his being a captive to sin, and giving up himself to the power of it.

Ver. 26. *And he did very abominably in following idols*, &c.] Which were abominable to the Lord; *dungill gods*, as the Tigurine version: *according to all things as did the Amorites, whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel*: meaning the seven nations that formerly inhabited Canaan, but were driven out for their sins, to make way for the children of Israel, of

[g] Itinerar. p. 30.

[h] במקום אשר pro eo quod, Junius & Tremellius; propterea quod, Grotius; so some in Vatablus.

which the Amorites were one, and here put for all the rest.

Ver. 27. *And it came to pass when Ahab heard these words*, &c.] Delivered in ver. 21—24. *that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh*: tore off his clothes, and stripped himself of all, even of his very shirt, and put sackcloth on his bare flesh, a coarse cloth made of hair, and such as sacks are made with: *and fasted*: how long it is not said: *and lay in sackcloth*: in the night on his bed, would have no linen on him day nor night: *and went softly*: step by step, as persons mourning, grieving, and pensive, do; the Targum renders it *barefoot*, and so Jarchi.

Ver. 28. *And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite*, &c.] After he was gone from Ahab, and Ahab had been some time in this humble posture; the Targum calls it the word of prophecy, and so it was, as the next verse shews: *saying*: as follows.

Ver. 29. *Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me?* &c.] Which yet was but an external humiliation, to be seen only with bodily eyes, as were all his actions and postures, before observed. Some Jewish writers[i] think his repentance was true and perfect, and his conversion thorough and real: they tell us[k], that he was in fasting and prayer morning and evening before the Lord, and was studying in the law all his days, and returned not to his evil works any more, and his repentance was accepted: but the contrary appears manifest; we never read that he reproved Jezebel for the murder of Naboth, nor restored the vineyard to his family, which he would have done had he been a true penitent; nor did he leave his idols; we quickly hear of his consulting with the 400 prophets of the groves, and expressing his hatred of a true prophet of the Lord, ch. xxii. 6, 8. his humiliation arose from dread of punishment, and not from the true fear of God; however, it was such as was never seen in any of his wicked predecessors, and is taken notice of by the Lord. Luther[l] from these words concluded, and was persuaded, that he was saved: *because he humbled himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house*: this was not a pardon, only a reprieve; the sentence pronounced on him and his family was not taken off, nor countermanded, only the execution of it prolonged; it is promised that the destruction of his family should not be in his life-time, but after his death, in his son's days, otherwise he himself died a violent death, and the dogs licked his blood, as were foretold; however, this may be an encouragement to those who are truly humbled for their sins, and really repent of them, that they shall receive forgiveness at the hand of God, since he shewed so much regard to an outward humiliation and repentance.

C H A P. XXII.

THIS chapter relates, that after three years' peace with the king of Syria, Ahab was inclined to go to war with him, to take Ramoth-gilead out of his hands; and he drew in Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to join him in it, ver. 1—4. but before they went into it, they took advice, Ahab of his 400 prophets, which Jehoshaphat not being satisfied with, a true prophet of the Lord, Micaiah, was sent for, ver. 5—14. who, when he came, jeered Ahab with what his prophets had said to him; intimated that he should be killed, and explained it to him how he came to be deceived by his prophets, ver. 15—23. upon which he was smitten on the cheek by Zedekiah, one of the false prophets, and imprisoned by the order of Ahab, ver. 24—28. after which the two kings went to the battle, and Jehoshaphat was in great danger of his life; but Ahab was wounded, and died, ver. 29—40. and the chapter is concluded with an account of the reign of Jehoshaphat king of Judah, ver. 41—50. and of Ahaziah king of Israel, ver. 51, 52, 53.

Ver. 1. *And they continued three years without war between Syria and Israel*.] From the time that Benhadad made a covenant with Ahab; not three full years, but part of them: it was threatened by Elijah from the Lord, that Ahab's life should go for Benhadad's, because he had let him go, ch. xx. 42. but because of his humiliation, as is thought by Ben Gersom and others, it was respited for those three years; and now an opportunity and occasion would be given for the fulfilment of what was threatened.

Ver. 2. *And it came to pass in the third year*, &c.] Of the peace, before it was expired: *that Jehoshaphat the king of Judah came down to the king of Israel*: to Ahab, from Jerusalem to Samaria, reckoned 32 miles[m]; either to make peace with him, and put an end to the wars which subsisted between Israel and Judah since the division of the kingdom, ver. 44. or to contract an affinity with him, by marrying his son to a daughter of Ahab, 2 Kings viii. 18, 26. or rather after peace was made, and that strengthened by the marriage; and so he went merely to pay a visit, as he judged he might then with great safety; and he and all his retinue were entertained by Ahab in a very sumptuous and liberal manner, 2 Chron. xviii. 1, 2.

Ver. 3. (*And the king of Israel said unto his servants*, &c.] His nobles, those of his privy-council, his ministers of state; or *had said*[n], some little time before Jehoshaphat came: *know ye that Ramoth in Gilead is ours*; a city of refuge beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and so of course must belong to the kingdom of Israel, of which see Josh. xx. 8. *and we be still, and take it not out of the hand of the king of Syria?*) neither demand it, nor take any measures to oblige him to deliver it up; representing it as a great omission, and as a piece of negligence and slothfulness, or cowardice.

Ver. 4. *And he said unto Jehoshaphat, wilt thou go*

[i] Bereshit Rabba in Abarbinel in loc.
[k] Pirke Eliezer, c. 43.
[l] Mensal. Colloqu. c. 32. p. 360.

[m] Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 172. near 40, Rainold. Prælect. 21. col. 266.
[n] ויאמר et dixerat, Junius & Tremellius.

with me to battle to Ramoth-gilead? &c.] This affair being lately canvassed at the council-board, and very much on Ahab's mind, he puts this question to Jehoshaphat, his visitor, relation, and ally; wisely considering that his own forces were small, and that to have such an auxiliary might be of great advantage to him: *and Jehoshaphat said to the king of Israel, I am as thou art, my people as thy people, my horses as thy horses*: meaning, that he and his soldiers, foot and horse, were at his service.

Ver. 5. *And Jehoshaphat said unto the king of Israel, inquire, I pray thee, at the word of the Lord to-day.*] Being a pious and religious prince, he did not choose to go into a war at once, without consulting the Lord by his prophets, whether it was his will and pleasure they should engage in it, and should prosper; and he was desirous of having this done immediately, before they proceeded any further.

Ver. 6. *Then the king of Israel gathered the prophets together, about* 400 *men*, &c.] False prophets, as the Targum and Arabic version; and they are called Ahab's prophets, and not the Lord's, ver. 23. perhaps these were the prophets of the groves, that ate at Jezebel's table, and were preserved when the prophets of Baal were destroyed, since the number agrees with them, see ch. xviii. 19. *and said unto them, shall I go against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall I forbear?* which would you advise to? signifying he should take their advice: *and they said, go up; for the Lord shall deliver* it *into the hand of the king*; which words are very ambiguous, like the oracles of the Heathens; for they do not express who or what should be delivered up, for the word *it* is a supplement, nor to what king the delivery should be made; whether the Syrians, and the place they held, should be given up to king Ahab, which they would have understood; or whether the Israelites should be delivered up to king Benhadad; so that, whichever had been the case, the credit of their prophecy would be secured. They used the word *Lord*, and not Baal, in complaisance to Jehoshaphat, and perhaps as directed by Ahab.

Ver. 7. *And Jehoshaphat said*, is there *not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?*] He suspected these to be false prophets, though he would not call them so; nor suggest that they were not the prophets of the Lord, because he would not affront Ahab, who had an opinion of them; and therefore asks, if there were no other that went under the character of a prophet of the Lord, that he might inquire of him for his further satisfaction.

Ver. 8. *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat,* there is *yet one man (Micaiah the son of Imlah), by whom we may inquire of the Lord*, &c.] And but one in Samaria; Elijah and Elisha were elsewhere: *but I hate him, for he doth not prophesy of good concerning me, but evil*: who is thought to be the same that was several times with him when engaged in the war with the king of Syria, ch. xx. 13, 22, 28, 35, 38. and each time, excepting the last, he brought him good tidings; but because, in his last message, he told him, that, since he had let Benhadad go, his life should go for his life, and his people for his people, for that he hated him: *and Jehoshaphat said, let not the king say so*: which was very modestly, though perhaps too gently, said; suggesting that the prophets of the Lord should be heard, respected, and honoured, let their message be as it would, since they spake not of their own mind and will, but what they were moved unto by the spirit of God.

Ver. 9. *Then the king of Israel called an officer*, &c.] An eunuch, as the word is sometimes used, one of his pages: *and said, hasten* hither *Micaiah the son of Imlah*; who, as it seems from ver. 26. was in prison, where perhaps Ahab had cast him for his last prophecy to him, and where he had lain ever since; and this gives a reason why he could so readily send for him, knowing where he was.

Ver. 10. *And the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, sat each on his throne*, &c.] In great state and majesty: *having put on their robes*; their royal robes, which they wore when they appeared in pomp and grandeur: *in a void place in the entrance of the gate of Samaria*; where courts of judicature were held, and there was an open void space for the people to assemble in to hear; the word has the signification of a corn-floor, and the Jews suppose they and their attendants sat in a semicircle like the half of a corn-floor, after the same manner in which they say the sanhedrim at Jerusalem sat[o]: *and all the prophets prophesied before them*; concerning this affair of going to Ramoth-gilead.

Ver. 11. *And Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah made him horns of iron*, &c.] Horns are emblems of power and might, and iron ones of greater strength still; the prophets sometimes made use of visible signs, to represent the things they prophesied of should come to pass, see Isa. xx. 2, 3. Jer. xxvii. 2. and the same method this prophet took: *and he saith, thus saith the Lord*; imitating the true prophets: *with these shalt thou push the Syrians until thou hast consumed them*: Abarbinel thinks he had in view the blessing of Joseph by Moses, Deut. xxxiii. 17. where he is compared to a bullock with horns; and these said to be the ten thousands of Ephraim, and the thousands of Manasseh; and Ahab being of the tribe of Joseph, and ruling in Ephraim and Manasseh, the prophet chose to make use of this emblem for his encouragement.

Ver. 12. *And all the prophets prophesied so, saying, go up to Ramoth-gilead, and prosper*, &c.] All encouraged the king to go up against this place, and prophesied of victory, as Zedekiah did: *for the Lord shall deliver* it *into the king's hand*, see the note on ver. 6.

Ver. 13. *And the messenger that was gone to call Micaiah spake unto him*, &c.] By the way, as they came along together, as Josephus[p] observes: *behold, now, the words of the prophets declare good unto the king with one mouth*; they are unanimous that he shall prosper in his undertaking against the Syrians: *let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good*; which, as an ignorant man, he might advise to from good will to the prophet, that he might not be branded with singularity, and a spirit of contradiction, and that he might have the favour of

[o] T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 5. 1. Vid. Kimchium in loc.

[p] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 15. sect. 4.

the king, and be released from prison, pitying his miserable condition in which he found him.

Ver. 14. *And Micaiah said, as the Lord liveth*, &c.] He swore by the living God, for the confirmation of what he was about to say: *what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak*: truly and faithfully, keeping nothing back, nor adding any thing, whether it be good or evil, pleasing or displeasing; it looks as if as yet he had no instruction from the Lord what to say, and yet the vision he after declares seems to have been had by him before, ver. 17, 19.

Ver. 15. *So he came to the king*, &c.] Being introduced by the officer: *and the king said unto him, Micaiah, shall we go up against Ramoth-gilead to battle, or shall we forbear?* the same question in the same words that was put to the other prophets, ver. 6. only there he uses the singular number, here the plural, including Jehoshaphat with him: *and he answered him, go, and prosper: for the Lord shall deliver* it *into the hand of the king*; he answered not in the name of the Lord, saying, *thus saith the Lord*, nor did he speak his own sense and in his own words, nor seriously, but by way of derision: he took up the words of the prophets, and bantered them; it is as if he should say, the prophets bid you *go*, and tell you that you shall *prosper*, and that the city will be delivered into the king's hand; do as they direct you, and see what the issue will be, no doubt it will be good, since they are all agreed; but he delivered the above words with such gestures, and such a tone, and with a contemptuous smile in his countenance, which shewed that he spoke not seriously, but sarcastically; and this the king plainly discovered, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 16. *And the king said unto him, how many times shall I adjure thee*, &c.] Not that he had as yet adjured him at all, or not till now; but he asks him how often he must be obliged to do it; and now he adjures him once for all, that he might not be forced to repeat it: *that thou tell me nothing but* that which *is true in the name of the Lord?* for he observed he did not speak in the name of the Lord before, and what he said was not in a serious but ludicrous manner, and not to be regarded as truth.

Ver. 17. *And he said*, &c.] The prophet, in a serious and solemn manner, being adjured by the king: *I saw all Israel scattered on the hills, as sheep that have not a shepherd*; the armies of Israel routed, dispersed, and fleeing, some one way and some another, on the mountains of Gilead near Ramoth, weak and helpless, not knowing where to go for safety, having none to direct them; and this was either now instantly represented to his mind, or what had been before in a dream or vision: *and the Lord said, these have no master*; these sheep have no shepherd this army hath no general, Israel *has* lost its king: *let them return every man to his house in peace* very few slain, Jarchi thinks Ahab only, see ver. 31. that part of the threatening, ch. xx. 42. was now to be accomplished, *thy life shall go for his life*; but the other part, *and thy people for his people*, was to be deferred to another time.

Ver. 18. *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat*, &c.] Plainly perceiving that the prophet foretold that he should fall in battle: *did not I tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?* intimating that this proceeded from spite and malice, from ill will to him and hatred of him, and was not from the Lord, and therefore not to be regarded; he had told him three years ago his life should go for letting Benhadad go; but it had not proved true, and no more would this; and Jehoshaphat being an easy man, and too credulous, believed what Ahab said of the character of this prophet, or otherwise it is not to be accounted for that he should go with him to war after such a declaration made.

Ver. 19. *And he saith, hear thou therefore the word of the Lord*, &c.] Since he had represented what he had said as proceeding from hatred to him, he would make it clear and plain that what he had said was the word of the Lord, and according to his mind; and that what the other prophets had said was owing to a lying spirit in them, which the Lord suffered for his ruin; all which are represented as in a vision, in which things are brought down to the capacities of men, and not as really transacted: *I saw the Lord sitting on his throne*; so it was represented to his mind, as if he had seen with his bodily eyes the divine Being in a glorious form, as a king sitting on his throne, to do justice and judgment; as Ahab and Jehoshaphat were now sitting on their thrones, only as a far greater King, even the King of kings, and in a more splendid manner: *and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left*; the ministering angels ready to do his will.

Ver. 20. *And the Lord said, who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth-gilead?* &c.] Not that it can be supposed that the Lord entered into a consultation with the angels upon this subject; only that it was the decree of God that he should go thither, and fall by the hand of the man whom he had let go, as a just punishment of him: *and one said on this manner, and another said on that manner*; not that there was such an altercation among them; it only signifies, that there are divers ways and means, by which the purposes and decrees of God may be and are brought about.

Ver. 21. *And there came forth a spirit*, &c.] Not from the heavenly host on the right hand or the left, for they are pure and holy spirits, and impeccable, and cannot lie or deceive; but the evil spirit, Satan, the father of lies, the old deceiver, who came forth from his own place and his own company: *and stood before the Lord* presented himself before him, as Satan did, Job i. 6. *and said, I will persuade him*; or prevail upon him; evil spirits love to be employed in doing hurt to men, they go about seeking whom they may devour. This could not be the spirit of Naboth, as the Jews say [a], seeking revenge on Ahab; that was in a state of happiness, could not move from thence, and be capable of sinning.

Ver. 22. *And the Lord said unto him, wherewith?* &c.] What way and method did he propose, to persuade Ahab to go up to Ramoth? the Lord is introduced in this visionary narrative as asking this question, not as ignorant of the scheme of the evil spirit, but in order to bring it out, and lead on to the following account: *and he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying*

[a] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 89. 1. & 102. 2. Targum in 2 Chron. xviii. 20.

spirit in the mouth of all his prophets; put them on encouraging Ahab to go up, and promising him success, as he had in former battles with the king of Syria, and which might both encourage them to give forth such a prediction, and him to believe it to be true; this proposal was quite agreeable to the character of the devil, as the father of lies: *and he said, thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also;* not only make use of this artifice to persuade, but succeed also; the Lord knew that what he should suggest to the prophets, and they should deliver to Ahab, would be agreeable to his inclination, nor would he do any thing in the course of his providence to hinder its taking effect: *go forth, and do so;* which was giving leave to try his skill in the art of persuasion, in which he knew he would succeed, and bring on the righteous judgment of God upon Ahab; with this compare John xiii. 27.

Ver. 23. *Now therefore behold, the Lord hath put a lying spirit in the mouths of all these thy prophets,* &c.] That is, suffered the lying spirit to suggest a lie to them, and sent them strong delusions to believe that lie, whose minds were disposed at any rate to flatter Ahab, to whom they told it; which was the way designed to bring him to the ruin appointed for him: *and the Lord hath spoken evil concerning thee;* he had decreed it in himself, declared it by Miacaiah his prophet, and suffered all those steps to be taken by Satan and the false prophets, to bring him to it.

Ver. 24. *But Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah went near,* &c.] Stepped in haste and passion from the place where he was; *and smote Micaiah on the cheek;* in contempt of him, and to shew his indignation at what he said; this he did in open court, before two kings; one he believed would favour and screen him in this lawless action, and the other, out of his own jurisdiction, had not courage and presence of mind to resent it: *and said, which way went the spirit of the Lord from me to speak unto thee?* hereby boasting that he had the spirit of the Lord, and was directed by him in what he said, and still remained with him, and could not possibly go to Micaiah, and suggest the very reverse; and therefore pertly asks him which way the spirit went, intimating that it was impossible he could steer a course contrary to himself.

Ver. 25. *And Micaiah said, behold, thou shalt see in the day when thou shalt go into an inner chamber to hide thyself.*] Who would either accompany Ahab to the battle, and, upon his being wounded, flee to the first place of secrecy for safety; or, upon the news of his defeat brought to Samaria, would betake himself to a private chamber for security, fearing the enemy would pursue to the very place; or else through fear of the populace, who would attribute the death of the king to the advice of him and the other prophets.

Ver. 26. *And the king of Israel said,* &c.] To some of his officers: *take Micaiah, and carry him back unto Amon the governor of the city;* the chief magistrate under the king; a sort of sheriff, who had the care of malefactors, and of all committed to prison, from whom he was received by the messenger, and now sent back to him: *and to Joash the king's son;* who might be over his household, as sometimes the king's son was, 2 Chron. xxvi. 21. or might be viceroy whilst the king was without the city, and at the gate of it, and about to go to war.

Ver. 27. *And say, thus saith the king, put this fellow in prison,* &c.] In the common prison of the city, where he had been before, as it seems; and might be now ordered into a more confined place in it, and what might be called *little ease: and feed him with bread of affliction, and with water of affliction;* with bad bread and foul water, and but little of either; just enough to keep alive, and to continue starving: *until I come in peace;* which he seemed confident of, and intimates that then he would punish him more severely, even with death, as a false prophet.

Ver. 28. *And Micaiah said, if thou return at all in peace, the Lord hath not spoken by me,* &c.] I am content to be reckoned a false prophet, and to be punished as such: *and, he said, hearken, O people, every one of you;* he called aloud unto them to observe what he had predicted, and mark the issue of it, and to bear testimony for him, or against him, as things should be.

Ver. 29. *So the king of Israel, and Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, went up to Ramoth-gilead.*] Which, according to Bunting[*], was 24 miles from Samaria. That Ahab went is no wonder, it was his own motion first, his inclination led to it, his prophets encouraged him, and, in bravado to the prophet of the Lord, was determined upon it; but it may seem much more strange that Jehoshaphat should, after such an account as Micaiah had given, and who, doubtless, could observe a great difference between him and the prophets of Ahab; and yet there is much to be said which might incline him to go, as that there were 400 prophets all agreed, and who made use of the name of the Lord, and pretended to be true prophets; and though he might suspect them, he could not confute them; and Micaiah, he prophesied evil of Ahab only, and therefore Jehoshaphat might think himself safe in going; and besides, he had given his word to Ahab, and he did not choose to go from it; to which may be added, that Ahab's cause was just, to recover a part of his own dominions.

Ver. 30. *And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, I will disguise myself, and enter into the battle,* &c.] Change his clothes, his royal robes, and put on others, perhaps the habit of a common soldier; having, it may be, been informed by some deserters or spies, of the design of Benhadad against him. Abarbinel thinks the meaning is, that he would clothe himself with a coat of mail, and take to him the several instruments of war, and so go into the battle secure; this seems probable from ver. 34. and this he might do to elude the prophecy of Micaiah: *but put thou on thy robes;* his royal robes, or rather keep them on, that he might appear to be the chief commander of the army. There seems to be a good deal of insincerity and treachery in this conduct of Ahab's, whatever honour he might pretend to Jehoshaphat, or safety he might promise him in such a situation; his view seems to be to save himself at the hazard of the life of Jehoshaphat, especially if the Septuagint version could be established, *and put on my clothes;* which is natural

[*] Travels, &c. p. 172.

enough, but would have been too barefaced: *and the king of Israel disguised himself, and went into the battle;* as if he had been a common soldier.

Ver. 31. *But the king of Syria commanded his 32 captains that had the rule over his chariots,* &c.] This was the number of his kings in the first battle with Israel, and of his captains in the second, ch. xx. 1, 24, 25. and the same number he had now, being very probably not only the number of his chariots, but the division of his army was into so many battalions, under the command of these captains of chariots: *saying, fight neither with small nor great;* of those that belonged to Jehoshaphat: *save only with the king of Israel;* and his men; for it can hardly be thought that his orders were to fight with none, nor kill any in the battle but Ahab personally; though it is very probable he might give them directions to aim at him chiefly, knowing that, if he was killed or taken, his army would flee or surrender; and he might be desirous of getting him into his hands, as he had been in his; and the rather his spite was against him, as he was the mover of the war.

Ver. 32. *And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots saw Jehoshaphat,* &c.] In his royal robes: *that they said, surely it is the king of Israel;* for they might not know the persons either of Ahab or him, but judged by his habit: *and they turned aside to fight against him;* pressed upon him with all their force, either to take him or slay him: *and Jehoshaphat cried out;* with a loud voice, either to the captains to let them know who he was, or to his men to come to his assistance, or rather to God to help and deliver him; since it is said in 2 Chron. xviii. 31. that the Lord helped him, and moved or inclined the hearts of the captains to depart from him, as it follows here.

Ver. 33. *And it came to pass, when the captains of the chariots perceived that it was not the king of Israel,* &c.] Against whom only their orders were to fight: *that they turned back from pursuing him;* for upon so great a force coming upon him he could not withstand, he fled.

Ver. 34. *And a certain man drew a bow at a venture,* &c.] Not aiming at the king of Israel, or knowing whereabout he was. In the Targum on 2 Chron. xviii. 33. this man is said to be Naaman, the general of the army of the king of Syria, and so Jarchi here; but though he did this in his simplicity, as the word signifies, without any intention to smite any particular person; yet God directed the arrow to the man he had marked for destruction, and neither his disguise, nor coat of mail, could secure from that: *and smote the king of Israel between the joints of the harness;* of which the pieces of armour on him were joined together, the higher and lower parts of it, the breastplate, and what covered the belly; and though these were joined as close as they were capable of joining them in those times, yet the arrow, guided by divine Providence, found its way into his body: *wherefore he said unto the driver of his chariot, turn thine hand;* or hands, with which he held the reins, and turn the horses on one side: *and carry me out of the host;* where the battle was hottest, to a place more remote and private, that he might have the wound examined, and the blood stopped, and return again, as it seems he did: *for I am wounded;* or rather *I am sick*[s], or ill, as the Targum; somewhat out of order, and therefore chose to retire a little while; not caring it should be known that he was smitten and wounded, lest his soldiers should be disheartened.

Ver. 35. *And the battle increased that day,* &c.] It went on, and did not stop upon Ahab's going out of the host, but was very hot, and both sides fought furiously: *and the king was stayed up in his chariot against the Syrians;* the Targum is, "he strengthened himself, "and stood;" he exerted himself to the uttermost, and stood as long as he could, or could be supported, fighting against the Syrians, to animate his army, and that the Syrians might not have any notion of his being wounded: *and died at even;* in his chariot: *and the blood ran out of the wound into the midst of the chariot;* or *bosom*[t] of it, the hollow part of it.

Ver. 36. *And there went a proclamation throughout the host, about the going down of the sun,* &c.] Much about the time that Ahab died; and this proclamation by an herald might be made by his order, as he was dying, or by Jehoshaphat, when he understood he was dead: *saying, every man to his city, and every man to his own country;* the order was to cease fighting, and make the best of their way as fast as they could to their own homes, since their shepherd and master was dead, which fulfilled the vision of Micaiah, ver. 17. It seems to have been a drawn battle, at least there is no account of the advantage on either side.

Ver. 37. *So the king died, and they brought him to Samaria,* &c.] In the chariot he died in: *and they buried the king in Samaria;* where his father Omri was buried, ch. xvi. 28.

Ver. 38. *And* one *washed the chariot in the pool of Samaria,* &c.] After the body was taken out, very likely the chariot-driver, who drove it into the pool, and plunged it into it, as the word signifies, to cleanse it from the blood of his master: *and the dogs licked up his blood;* mixed with the water of the pool; the Septuagint adds, *the swine,* which is not probable, such creatures not being bred in the land of Israel: *and they washed his armour;* his coat of mail, through the joints of which the blood issued, and ran upon it. The word is sometimes used for *whores,* and is so translated here in the Greek version, and by Munster and Castalio; and both Ben Gersom and Abarbinel say, that women, who were harlots, washed here in his blood, mixed with water; and so Josephus[u] writes, that afterwards it was a custom for whores to wash in this pool; though some say[w] two whores were painted on Ahab's chariot, by the order of Jezebel, to inflame his lust, and these were what were washed; but the word signifies armour, or rather ornaments, clothes, jewels, *&c. and now all this was according to the word of the Lord which he spake;* both by Elijah, that as the dogs licked the blood of Naboth, so they should his, as they now did, though not in the same place; nor was it necessary to fulfil the prophecy in ch. xxi. 19. see the note there; though some have thought[x] that his blood, mixed with the

[s] החליתי ægrotare factus sum, Vatablus; ægrotus factus sum, Junius & Tremellius.

[t] אל חיק ad sinum, Montanus; in sinum, Vatablus.

[u] Antiqu. l. 8. c. 15. sect. 6.

[w] See Jarchi & Kimchi in loc.

[x] Kimchi in loc.

water of the pool of Samaria, was carried in a stream down to Jezreel, and there licked by the dogs, where Naboth's was; but chiefly what was spoken by Micaiah is here respected, that thus Ahab fell at Ramoth-gilead, as he had prophesied, ver. 17, 20, 28. and his life went for the life of Benhadad, as he had before declared, ch. xx. 42.

Ver. 39. *Now the rest of the acts of Ahab, and all that he did, and the ivory house which he made,* &c.] Which, being a very curious and extraordinary thing, is particularly mentioned; though perhaps it might not be made wholly of ivory, but inlaid with it; we read of ivory houses in Amos iii. 15. *and all the cities that he built,* are *they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?* in which the acts of his predecessors were recorded, see ch. xiv. 19. and xv. 31. and xvi. 14, 20, 27. not the Scripture book of Chronicles, for there none of these things are related.

Ver. 40. *So Ahab slept with his fathers, and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead.*] Of whom more is said in the latter part of this chapter, and in the following book.

Ver. 41. *And Jehoshaphat the son of Asa began to reign over Judah in the fourth year of Ahab king of Israel.*] And as Ahab reigned 22 years, ch. xvi. 29. Jehoshaphat must reign about 18 years with him, and 7 years after him.

Ver. 42. *Jehoshaphat was* 35 *years old when he began to reign, and he reigned* 25 *years in Jerusalem,* &c.] So that he must be 60 years of age when he died: *and his mother's name* was *Azubah, the daughter of Shilhi;* but of what family they were is not said.

Ver. 43. *And he walked in all the ways of Asa his father,* &c.] Who was a good prince: *he turned not aside from doing that which was right in the eyes of the Lord;* in his moral conversation, religious worship, and civil government: *nevertheless, the high places were not taken away,* for *the people offered and burnt incense yet in the high places;* he took away the high places and groves for idolatrous worship, 2 Chron. xvii. 6. but not the high places in which sacrifices were offered to the Lord, which ought to have been, especially since the temple was built; and those in the tribes of Judah and Benjamin were altogether inexcusable, being near to the temple, and under no restraint, as those of the 10 tribes were; but the people were fond of them, because of their antiquity, and it was difficult for religious princes to remove them, if inclined.

Ver. 44. *And Jehoshaphat made peace with the king of Israel.*] First with Ahab, with whom he contracted an affinity, and joined with him in his expedition to Ramoth-gilead, and with Ahaziah his successor.

Ver. 45. *And all the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, and all his might that he shewed, and all his wars,* are *they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] Many of them are recorded in the canonical book of Scripture, which bears the name of Chronicles; and more might be in this referred to, out of which might be taken what God has thought fit to transmit to future times; see 2 Chron. xvii. xix. xx.

Ver. 46. *And the remnant of the Sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.*] His father Asa removed many of these filthy creatures, but not all; as many, no doubt, as came within his knowledge, but some remained, whom this his son removed, being of the same disposition with his father, see ch. xv. 12.

Ver. 47. There was *then no king in Edom, a deputy* was *king.*] Which had been the case from the times of David, who subdued Edom, and placed garrisons in it, and governors over it, 2 Sam. viii. 14. and continued through the reign of Jehoshaphat, unto the times of his son, under whom the Edomites revolted, and set up a king of their own, 2 Kings viii. 20. with a view to which this is observed, as also to account for it how Jehoshaphat could build ships in Ezion-geber, which was in the land of Edom, of which in the next verse, because the whole country was governed by a viceroy, or deputy, under him.

Ver. 48. *Jehoshaphat made ships of Tarshish,* &c.] Ships to go to sea, particularly the Indian sea, ch. x. 22. Tarshish is used for the sea in general, Psal. xlviii. 7. Isa. ii. 16. in the Cetib, or text, it is *ten;* in the Keri, or margin, it is *made,* which we follow, and may be put together, as in the Tigurine version, and read, *he made ten ships* to go by sea: even *to go to Ophir for gold;* as Solomon did; of which place see ch. ix. 28. *but they went not, for the ships were broken at Ezion-geber;* the port where they were built: as soon as they were launched, or sailed, they were broken to pieces against the rocks near the harbour, which stood up like a man's back-bone, whence the port had its name; see the note on ch. ix. 26. and if this was Calzem, as there observed, near to it was a dangerous place for ships, and where many were lost, and is supposed to be the place where Pharaoh and his host were drowned [y]; the reason of this shipwreck was, because Jehoshaphat joined himself with Ahaziah king of Israel, for which he was reproved by the prophet Eliezer, and this was his punishment, 2 Chron. xx. 35, 36, 37.

Ver. 49. *Then said Ahaziah the son of Ahab unto Jehoshaphat,* &c.] Who very probably had built some more ships on his own bottom, having broke off his partnership with Ahaziah: *let my servants go with thy servants in the ships;* since he was refused a part in the ships themselves, he desires leave to send men aboard them to traffic for him abroad: *but Jehoshaphat would not;* having been reproved by a prophet of the Lord, and had suffered the loss of his ships by joining with him already.

Ver. 50. *And Jehoshaphat slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father,* &c.] In the city of Sion, where David, Rehoboam, Abijam, and Asa, were buried: *and Jehoram his son reigned in his stead;* who was now 32 years of age, and he reigned 10 years.

Ver. 51. *Ahaziah the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the* 17*th year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah,* &c.] It is observed, that Jehoshaphat began to reign in the 4th year of Ahab, and Ahab reigned 22 years, see ver. 41. and ch. xvi. 29. and therefore Ahab's

[y] Vid. Geograph. Nub. Climat. 3. par. 3. in fine.

son must begin to reign in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat; but perhaps he was made king in his father's life-time, before he went on his expedition to Ramoth-gilead, or Ahab's reign was not 22 years complete: *and reigned two years over Israel;* not complete, as appears from 2 Kings iii. 1.

Ver. 52. *And he did evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] Which evil was idolatry: *and walked in the way of his father;* his father Ahab, who worshipped Baal: *and in the way of his mother;* his mother Jezebel, who was still living, and served Baal and Astarte, the deities of her country: *and in the way of Jeroboam the son of Nebat;* who set up and worshipped the golden calves: *who made Israel to sin;* by the worship of the same, into which he drew them by his example and authority.

Ver. 53. *For he served Baal, and worshipped him,* &c.] That is, Ahaziah served him, as his father had done, and his mother still did: *and provoked to anger the Lord God of Israel, according to all that his father had done;* of which there is an instance in the first chapter of the following book; for falling through a lattice, and becoming sick upon it, he quickly died, having sent messengers to inquire of the god of Ekron whether he should die or not.

THE SECOND BOOK OF THE KINGS,

COMMONLY CALLED THE

FOURTH BOOK OF THE KINGS.

THIS, and the preceding book, are properly but one book divided into two parts, because of the bigness of it, as the book of Samuel; it is a continuation of the history of the kings of Israel and Judah; and for a further account of it the reader is referred to the title of the preceding book.

CHAP. I.

THIS chapter begins with the rebellion of Moab against Israel, ver. 1. relates a fall of the king of Israel in his house, which brought on him a sickness, about which he sent messengers to inquire of the god of Ekron, who were stopped by Elijah, and bid to return, as they did; and upon the king's examination of them about the cause of their return, he perceived it was Elijah that forbad them, ver. 2—8. upon which the king sent to him two captains, with 50 men each, one after another, to bring him to him, but fire came down from heaven and consumed them, ver. 9—12. but a third with 50 men sent to him were spared, and he is bid to go along with them with a message to the king, as he did, ver. 13—16. and the chapter is closed with the death of Ahaziah, ver. 17, 18.

Ver. 1. *Then Moab rebelled against Israel after the death of Ahab.*] Which had been in subjection to them from the times of David, 2 Sam. viii. 2. refusing to pay a tribute as they had done; taking advantage of Ahab's ill success with the king of Syria, and of his death, and the condition and circumstances of his successor.

Ver. 2. *And Ahaziah fell down a lattice in his upper chamber that was in Samaria,* &c.] Which was either a window or lattice in the form of net-work, to let in light; or rather were the rails of a balcony or battlement on the roof of his palace, in this form, on which leaning, it broke down, and he fell into the garden or court-yard; or walking on the roof of his house, and treading unawares on a sky-light, which let in light into a room underneath, he fell through it into it: *and was sick;* the fall perhaps threw him into a fever, and which seemed threatening, being violent: *and he sent messengers, and said unto them, go inquire of Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron, whether I shall recover of this disease;* not to heal him of it, but to know the issue of it; a vain curiosity this! Ekron was one of the principalities of the Philistines, and this idol was the god they worshipped, which signifies a master-fly: which some think was a large metallic fly; made under a planet that rules over flies; and the Heathens had deities they called Myiodes, Myagros, and Απομυιος, which signifies a driver away of flies; as Jupiter and Hercules were called by the Eleans and Romans, and worshipped and sacrificed to by them on that account [a]; and so the Cyreneans, a people of Lybia, worshipped the god Achor, which seems to be a corruption of the word Ekron, because he freed them from flies, after they

[a] Pausan. Eliac. 1. sive, l. 5. p. 313. & Arcadica, siv^e, l. 8. p. 497. Clement. Alex. Admon. ad Gentes, p. 24.

had been infested with a pestilence through them [b]; and Ekron being a place near the sea, and both hot and moist, might be much infested with those creatures. Within the haven of Ptolemais, or Acco, was formerly a temple of Baal-zebub, called in after-times *the tower of flies*, and used as a Pharus [c].

Ver. 3. *But the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah*, &c.] One of the ministering spirits sent by the Lord to him: *arise, go up to meet the messengers of the king of Samaria:* that is, the king of Israel, whose capital city was Samaria: is it *not because* there is *not a God in Israel:* known, acknowledged, and worshipped there, of whom there had been sufficient proof of his deity and divine perfections, as omniscience, omnipotence, *&c.* that *ye go to inquire of Baal-zebub the god of Ekron?* about future things, when they had God nigh unto them, fully acquainted with them, as this message shews.

Ver. 4. *Now therefore thus saith the Lord*, &c.] Jehovah, the only true God: *thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die:* this sickness should be unto death, and the bed he had betaken himself to should be his death-bed. The phrases of going up to bed, and coming down, are used with great propriety; for in the eastern countries, in their bedchambers, they had a gallery raised four or five feet above the floor, with a balustrade on the front [d], and steps leading up to it; or ladders, which had more or fewer rounds, according as the beds were higher or lower [e]: *and Elijah departed:* having met the messengers, and delivered his message from the Lord unto them.

Ver. 5. *And when the messengers turned back unto him*, &c.] To Ahaziah king of Israel, as they did as soon as Elijah was gone from them; concluding from his habit, his gravity, and the authority with which he spoke, that he was a prophet of the Lord, and especially from his knowledge of them, and of what they were sent about: *he said unto them, why are ye now turned back?* for, by the time they had been gone, he knew they could never have been at Ekron and returned.

Ver. 6. *And they said unto him, there came a man up to meet us, and said unto us, go, turn again unto the king that sent you*, &c.] King Ahaziah: *and say unto him:* and then they repeated all that is said by the angel to Elijah, and he had delivered to them, ver. 3, 4. and which was a sufficient reason for their turning back, since they got a full answer from a man of God, of what they were to inquire of at Ekron; which was, whether the king would recover of this disease or no.

Ver. 7. *And he said unto them, what manner of man* was he, &c.] What appearance or figure did he make? what his habit or clothing? *which came up to meet you, and told you these words?* they had related to him.

Ver. 8. *And they answered him*, he was *an hairy man*, &c.] Either the hair of his head and beard were grown very long, having been much neglected for a great while; or he had an hairy garment on, either of goats' hair, such as the Chinese wear [f], whose women spin it, see Exod. xxxv. 26. and of which garments are made; or of camels' hair, such as John the Baptist wore, who came in his spirit and power, and imitated him in his dress, being also, as Elijah here, *girt with a girdle of leather about his loins;* for more expeditious travelling, not for warmth, the climate being hot: *and he said, it is Elijah the Tishbite;* for he had seen him formerly in his father's court in this dress.

Ver. 9. *Then the king sent unto him a captain of* 50 *with his* 50, &c.] Not in honour to him, but to bring him by force if he refused to come willingly: *and he went up to him, and, behold, he sat on the top of an hill;* generally supposed to be Mount Carmel; *and he spake unto him;* at the bottom of the hill, so loud that he might hear him: *thou man of God;* or the prophet of the Lord, as the Targum, as thou callest thyself; for this was said in a sneering, flouting, manner: *the king hath said, come down;* and in the king's name he ordered him to come down, signifying, if he would not, he would send his men to fetch him down.

Ver. 10. *And Elijah answered and said to the captain of fifty, if I be a man of God*, &c.] As I am, and thou shalt know it by the following token, though thou callest me so jeeringly: *then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty;* this he said not in a passion, and from a private spirit of revenge, but for the vindication of the honour and glory of God, and under the impulse of his spirit, who was abused through the insult on him as his prophet: *and there came down fire from heaven, and consumed him and his fifty;* a flash of lightning, which destroyed them at once; the Lord hearkening to the voice of his prophet, in vindication of him in his office, and of his own glory.

Ver. 11. *Again also he sent unto him another captain of fifty with his fifty*, &c.] The king, not being at all terrified with the awful judgment upon the former, sends another: *and he answered and said unto him, O man of God, thus hath the king said, come down quickly;* he flouts the prophet in the same manner as the former, and in the king's name commands him to come down, and that immediately; which the king added to his orders, or he himself, signifying he would not be trifled with, if he did not come down directly, he would force him.

Ver. 12. *And Elijah answered and said unto them*, &c.] The same as he had to the first captain, and made the same request of fire from heaven; which accordingly came down, and destroyed this captain and his fifty also.

Ver. 13. *And he sent again a captain of the third fifty with his fifty*, &c.] Which was most daring and insolent, and shewed him to be dreadfully hardened, to persist in his messages after such rebuffs: *and the third captain of fifty went up;* instead of calling to the prophet at the bottom of the hill as the other did, he went up to the top of it: *and came and fell on his knees before Elijah;* in reverence of him as a prophet of the Lord, and under a dread of the power he was possessed of, of calling for fire from heaven on him and his men, as the former instances shewed: *and besought him, and*

[b] Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 10. c. 27. Vid. Chartarii Imagines Deorum, p. 151. & Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 26.
[c] Adrichom. Theatrum Ter. Sanct. fol. 6. 1.
[d] See Dr. Shaw's Travels, p. 209. Ed. 2.
[e] Vid. Isidor. Origin. l. 20. c. 11. & Alstorph. de Lect. Vet. c. 2.
[f] Semedo's History of China, part 1. ch. 3.

said unto him, O man of God, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty thy servants, be precious in thy sight: he owns their lives lay at his mercy; he begs they might be spared, since it was not in contempt of him, and through ill will to him as the prophet of the Lord, but in obedience to the king's command, that they were come to him.

Ver. 14. *Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burnt up the two captains of the former fifties with their fifties,* &c.] He owns the facts, and ascribes the death of them to the true cause, and appears to have an awful sense of the judgment of God on them, fearing the same would befall him and his: *therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight:* by sparing it, what is precious and valuable being spared.

Ver. 15. *And the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah,* &c.] The same as in ver. 3. or *had said* [a], as some render it, before this captain came: *go down with him:* the captain and his men: *and be not afraid of him:* of King Ahaziah, whom he might fear, because of the message he had sent him, that he should die of that sickness, and for turning back his messengers to the god of Ekron, and for destroying his two captains and their fifties; nor of his mother Jezebel, who had threatened his life for killing her prophets: *and he arose, and went down with him unto the king:* boldly and courageously, not fearing his wrath; so that the captain not only had his life and the life of his men spared, but answered the end of his message also.

Ver. 16. *And he said unto him,* &c.] Elijah to King Ahaziah when introduced into his chamber; and after some discourse passed between them, he confirmed what he had said to his messengers, and expressed it in the same language as in ver. 3, 4. see the notes there.

Ver. 17. *So he died, according to the word of the Lord which Elijah had spoken,* &c.] How long or how soon after this is not said; however, he died of the sickness, and on the bed to which he went up, as he said: *and Jehoram reigned in his stead:* who was another son of Ahab, and brother of Ahaziah, ch. iii. 1. *in the second year of Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah;* but as he must begin his reign in the 19th, or in the latter end of the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, see 1 Kings xxii. 51. and 2 Kings iii. 1. and Jehoshaphat reigned in all 25 years, 1 Kings xxii. 42. he must live and reign after this six or seven years; this therefore is to be reconciled by observing, that this son of Jehoshaphat was made viceroy, or was taken into partnership in the throne by his father when he went with Ahab to Ramoth-gilead; and it was in the second year of this his reign with his father that the other Jehoram began his: *because he had no son:* that is, Ahaziah, wherefore his brother reigned in his stead.

Ver. 18. *Now the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did,* &c.] During his two-years' reign, which yet were imperfect, and his acts must be but few: *are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?* in which were written his father Ahab's also, and his predecessors', see 1 Kings xxii. 39.

CHAP. II.

THIS chapter relates, how that Elisha accompanied Elijah to several places, and on the other side Jordan Elijah was taken up from him to heaven, which occasioned great lamentation in him, ver. 1—12. but having the mantle of Elijah, he divided the waters of Jordan, and passed over, ver. 13, 14. and the sons of the prophets at Jericho, perceiving the spirit of Elijah on him, shewed him great respect, and proposed sending men to seek his master, which they did in vain, ver. 15—18. when he healed the waters at Jericho, at the request of the men of it, ver. 19—22. and the chapter is concluded with the destruction of forty-two children at Beth-el by bears, who mocked him, ver. 23, 24, 25.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when the Lord would take up Elijah into heaven by a whirlwind,* &c.] Thereby lifting him up from the earth, and which, as it was the purpose and will of God, Elijah had notice of, as appears by his motions to different places, under a divine direction: *that Elijah went with Elisha from Gilgal:* where it seems they met, a place where the Israelites first pitched when they came over Jordan, and where the tabernacle was for some time, and was famous for religious services, see Josh. iv. 19. and v. 9.

Ver. 2. *And Elijah said unto Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee,* &c.] Seemingly unwilling he should go with him, and be present at his assumption; which was either out of modesty, not affecting the spread of the honour and glory to be conferred upon him; or to prevent the grief of Elisha at his departure, or to try whether Elisha knew any thing of it, and what affection he had for him: *for the Lord hath sent me to Beth-el;* to give some comfort and some instruction and advice to the college of prophets there: *and Elisha said* unto him, as *the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee;* being determined to see the last of him, and to have the benefit of his company and conversation, his heavenly discourse, and instruction from him as long as he could, and in hope of receiving a blessing from him at parting: *so they went down to Beth-el;* together, which, according to Bunting [b], was six miles.

Ver. 3. *And the sons of the prophets that were at Beth-el,* &c.] Or the disciples of them, as the Targum; here, though a place where one of Jeroboam's calves was set up, was a school of the prophets, perhaps founded by Elijah as a nursery for religion, and a check upon the idolatry of the times: *came forth to Elisha;* out of their college: *and said unto him, knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head to-day?* who was, as Abarbinel observes, the crown and glory of his head; or else this is said, as generally thought, in allusion to disciples sitting at the feet of their masters, and so they at the head of them; the rapture of Elijah was by a spirit of prophecy revealed unto them: *and he said, yea, I know it;*

[a] וידבר edixerat autem, Junius & Tremellius.

[b] Travels, &c. p. 205.

being revealed to him in the same way: *hold your peace;* not caring to continue any discourse with them on the subject, that his thoughts, which were intent upon it, might not be interrupted, and that his master might not know that he knew of it, and lest he should be snatched away from him, and he not see him, whilst discoursing with them.

Ver. 4. *And Elijah said unto him, Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee,* &c.] At Beth-el: *for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho;* to the school of the prophets there, to strengthen, encourage, and advise them: *and he said, as the lord liveth,* &c.; using the same form of oath as before: *so they came to Jericho;* together, which, as the above writer says[i], was four miles from Beth-el.

Ver. 5. *And the sons of the prophets that were at Jericho,* &c.] For though this place was lately rebuilt under a curse to the builder, yet was blessed with a school of the prophets: whose disciples *came to Elisha, and said unto him;* as in ver. 3. and to whom he made the same reply.

Ver. 6. *And Elijah said unto him, tarry, I pray thee, here,* &c.] At Jericho, seemingly very desirous to shift him off, that he might not see his assumption: *for the Lord hath sent me to Jordan;* where passing that he was to be taken up: *and he said,* &c.; Elisha swore, as before, he would not leave him: *and they two went on;* to Jordan, which was six miles from Jericho[k].

Ver. 7. *And fifty men of the sons of the prophets went, and stood to view afar off,* &c.] To have a view, if they could, of the assumption of Elijah to heaven, and be witnesses of it: *and they two stood by Jordan;* on the banks of it, even Elijah and Elisha.

Ver. 8. *And Elijah took his mantle, and wrapped it together,* &c.] Folded it up close together, in a position to smite with it; this is thought to be not his hairy garment, but a shorter robe, that was worn upon his shoulders; but the Greek version renders it by *melotes,* and so in ver. 14. which, according to Isidore[l], was a goat's skin, hanging down from the neck, and girt at the loins; and being thus clothed, perhaps, may be the reason of his being called an hairy man, ch. i. 8. *and smote the waters, and they were divided hither and thither;* just as Moses lifted up his rod, and the waters of the sea were divided for the Israelites: *so that they two went over on dry ground;* in like manner as the Israelites did through the sea.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass, when they were gone over,* &c.] Had got on the other side Jordan: *that Elijah said unto Elisha, ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken from thee;* for, having followed him so closely, he now made no more a secret of his assumption, and having had full trial of his attachment to him, and affection for him: *and Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me;* the two parts of the gifts of the spirit he had, that of prophecy, and that of doing miracles, as some think; or two parts out of three of what Elijah was possessed of; or rather double as much, and which he might desire, not from a spirit of vanity and ambition to be greater than his master, but from an eagerness to promote the glory of God, and the interest of religion, to reclaim the Israelites from their idolatry, and establish the true religion, which he might observe Elijah was not able to do with that measure of grace and gifts he had; or however this phrase denotes an abundance, a large portion or measure, as it everywhere does. Many, after Ben Gersom, have thought it refers to the double portion of the first-born, and that Elisha does not mean a double portion with respect to Elijah, but with respect to the junior prophets, with whom he might be considered as a first-born, and so desired a double or greater portion than they, and which may be rightest[m]; and when he asked this, he did not suppose it was in Elijah's power to give him it, only that he would pray to God, at parting with him, that he would bestow it on him.

Ver. 10. *And he said, thou hast asked a hard thing,* &c.] Not a common privilege, but what is rarely enjoyed, and difficult to obtain, few are so favoured of God: nevertheless, *if thou see me* when I am *taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee, but if not, it shall not be* so; meaning, that if his rapture was visible to Elisha, and he was favoured with a sight of his assumption, and be an eye-witness of it, this would be a token both to Elijah that it was agreeable to the Lord to ask of him this favour for him, and to Elisha to expect it, otherwise not.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked,* &c.] About the donation of the gifts of the spirit requested, about the state of religion in Israel, and about the training up of prophets in the colleges, and about Elisha's succession as a prophet in his room, and his discharge of that office, and such-like things, as may be supposed, in which he gave him instruction and advice: *that, behold,* there appeared *a chariot of fire, and horses of fire;* either angels in this form, see Psal. civ. 4. and lxviii. 17. in which they appeared for the glory and honour of the prophet, and as emblems of his flaming love and zeal for the purity of religion, and that his assumption might be conspicuous to Elisha; and perhaps by this means might be seen by the 50 men on the other side Jordan: this chariot, drawn with these horses, was not seen in the heaven, but as running on the earth, and came between the two prophets, and separated them from each other, taking up Elijah into it by means of a wind whirling about him, and which was no other than the ministry of angels; or these might be a conflux of exhalations or clouds, formed in this likeness by a supernatural power, and, by the solar rays striking on them, might appear fiery or red; and so his assumption was much in such-like manner as our Lord was taken up in a cloud, Acts. i. 9. *and Elijah went up by a whirlwind to heaven;* body and soul; such a change passing on him, as he went through the region of the air, which divested him of his mortality and corruption, and fitted him for the invisible world.

Ver. 12. *And Elisha saw it,* &c.] The ascension of Elijah to heaven, the manner of it, and all relative to it, as the disciples saw the ascension of Christ, between which and this there is a great agreement, see Acts i. 9, 10. and so Elisha had the token by which he might expect to have the double portion, as the disciples after the ascension of Christ had an extraordinary effusion

[i] Travels, &c. p. 205.
[k] Ibid.

[l] Origin. l. 19. c. 24.
[m] See Weemse of the Moral Law, l. 2. c. 7. p. 41.

of the spirit and gifts upon them: *and he cried, my father, my father;* or my master, my master, as the Targum; Elijah being a father to Elisha, and the rest of the prophets, in the same sense as disciples of the prophets are called sons: *the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof;* who was a greater defence to Israel, and was of more service to them by his instructions and prayers, than an army consisting of chariots and horsemen; so the Targum, "he was better to Israel "by his prayers than chariots and horsemen:" *and he saw him no more;* he was carried up in the above manner into the heaven of heavens, out of the sight of mortals, and never seen more, but at the transfiguration of Christ on the mount: *and he took hold of his own clothes, and rent them in two pieces;* not on account of Elijah's case and circumstances, who was now in a most happy and glorious state and condition, but as lamenting his own loss, and the loss of the public.

Ver. 13. *He took up also the mantle of Elijah that fell from him,* &c.] Which he had now no further need of, and Elisha had, having rent his clothes in two; and this falling into his hands was a token of his succeeding him in his office, and that he should have the double portion of his spirit: *and he went back, and stood by the brook of Jordan;* at the place where he and Elijah had passed over together.

Ver. 14. *And he took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters,* &c.] He wrapped it together, as Elijah had done, and smote the waters in like manner, to make trial whether he had the same spirit and power conferred on him: *and said, where is the Lord God of Elijah?* let him appear now, and shew his power as he did by him; he knew the mantle would not do without the Lord, and the exertion of his might: *and when he also had smitten the waters, they parted hither and thither;* as when Elijah smote them. The words *aph-hu*, rendered he *also*, is left untranslated by the Septuagint, and is interpreted by Theodoret [n] *hidden.* They stand immediately after *the God of Elijah*, and may be rendered, *yea he*, even he himself; meaning not Elijah, as if he was inquired after, or was present and smote the waters; but rather, as we and others, Elisha, even he also smote the waters; though some take it to be the name of God, as *Hu* was, and is with the Arabs to this day, see the note on Isa. xliii. 13. Athanasius [o] interprets it of God, *Appho;* and so Elisha calls him by his title and attribute, *Aph-hu:* but the words may be an answer to the prophet's question, *where is the Lord God of Elijah?* here he is, even he himself, in the faith of which the water, being smitten, parted; and with this agrees Abarbinel's note on the text; the meaning is, though we are deprived of Elijah, yet not of the providence of God; and tho gh the servant is wanting, the Lord or master is not; for even he, the blessed God, is in his room, and his excellency is as it was before; which sense is approved of by Frischmuth [p]: *and Elisha went over;* the river Jordan, as on dry land.

Ver. 15. *And when the sons of the prophets, which were to view at Jericho, saw him,* &c.] Who went out from thence towards Jordan, to have a sight if they could of the assumption of Elijah; these, when they saw Elisha come over Jordan, the waters being parted by him: *they said, the spirit of Elijah doth rest on Elisha;* or he has the same power and spirit to work miracles as he had, which they discerned by his dividing the waters of Jordan with his mantle: *and they came to meet him, and bowed themselves to the ground before him;* in reverence of him as their master, in the room of Elijah.

Ver. 16. *And they said unto him, behold, now, there be with thy servants 50 strong men,* &c.] Perhaps meaning themselves, ver. 7. who were young, stout, and strong, and able to travel for days together: *let them go, we pray thee, and seek thy master;* for though they knew he was to be taken away, yet knew not for what time, and imagined he might be found again: *lest peradventure the spirit of the Lord hath taken him up;* as it seems he was wont to do, see 1 Kings xviii. 12. *and cast him upon some mountain, or into some valley;* where he sometimes had his abode; or they might fancy, if he was taken up to heaven, yet in his soul only, and that, when that was separated, his dead body would be left on a mountain, or in a valley; and therefore they were desirous of seeking and finding it, that it might not be exposed to birds and beasts of prey, but that they might bury it in a decent and honourable manner: *and he said, ye shall not send;* he knew it was to no purpose, since he was translated to heaven, body and soul, and which he was an eye-witness of.

Ver. 17. *And when they urged him until he was ashamed,* &c.] To deny them any longer, being so very pressing and importunate: *he said, send;* lest they should think he had not the respect for his master he should have had; or was so fond of his office, that he did not choose he should be found alive if he could, and return and reassume it: *they sent therefore 50 men;* some one way, and some another: *and they sought three days, but found him not;* and then returned.

Ver. 18. *And when they came again to him, for he tarried at Jericho,* &c.] Waiting their return to hear the report they made: which when they had, *he said unto them, did I not say unto you, go not?* assuring them it would be fruitless, and to no purpose; though this search of theirs served both to confirm the assumption of Elijah, and the truth of Elisha being a prophet of the Lord.

Ver. 19. *And the men of the city said unto Elisha,* &c.] The inhabitants of Jericho, perceiving him to be a prophet, and endowed with a power of working miracles: *behold, I pray thee, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord seeth;* in a plain, surrounded with gardens and orchards, with vineyards, olive-yards, and groves of palm-trees, and other odoriferous ones: *but the water is naught, and the ground barren;* that is, that part of it where this water was, or ran, for from thence it became barren; or *caused to miscarry,* as the word signifies [q]; not only trees cast their fruit, which it watered, but women became abortive that drank of it, as Josephus says [r], and so cattle. Abarbinel

[n] Apud Flamin. Nobil. in loc. So Suidas in voce Αφφω.
[o] De Commun. Essent. Patris, &c. vol. 1. p. 274. See Weemse of the Moral Law, l. 1. c. 7. p. 102.

[p] Dissert. de Eliæ Nomine, &c. sect. 11, 12.
[q] משכלת orbans, Montanus, Vatablus; facit abortum, Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.
[r] De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 3.

thinks it was so from the times of Joshua, being cursed by him; but, if so, it would not have been inhabited again; rather this was owing to a new curse, upon its being rebuilt; though this might affect only a small part of the ground, not the whole, as before observed.

Ver. 20. *And he said, bring me a new cruse, and put salt therein*, &c.] One that had never been used, that it might not be thought that the virtue was owing to any thing that had been, or was, put into it: *and they brought* it *to him*; the pot with the salt in it.

Ver. 21. *And he went forth unto the spring of the waters*, &c.] The fountain from whence they flowed, the head of them: *and cast the salt in there*: which was an unlikely means of making bad water good, since that makes it brackish, and not so drinkable, and what makes ground barren; but this method, contrary to nature, was taken, that the miracle might appear the greater; or, as the Jews express it, be a miracle within a miracle: *and said, thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters*; he did not pretend to heal them in his own name, and by his own power, but in the name and by the power of the Lord, to whom he would have it ascribed: *there shall not be from thence any more death, or barren* land; or *miscarrying*; no more noxious and mortal diseases should be got by drinking them, nor any abortions occasioned by them in women, cattle, and fruit-trees, as had been.

Ver. 22. *So the waters were healed unto this day, according to the saying of Elisha which he spake.*] In the name of the Lord; and not only they remained so unto the time of the writer of this history, but to the times of Josephus, as he testifies [s], and even to ours; for there is a spring now called Elisha's spring or fountain, of which Mr. Maundrell says [t], "its waters are at "present received in a basin about nine or ten paces "long, and five or six broad; and from thence issuing "out in good plenty, divide themselves into several "small streams, dispersing their refreshment to all "the field between this and Jericho, and rendering it "exceeding fruitful." So some other travellers [u] say of it, that the water is very clear and cool, and issues in a copious steam. Pliny [w] gives it the name of *Callirroe*, the beautiful stream, and speaks of it as hot, wholesome, and medicinal, and of great note.

Ver. 23. *And he went up from thence unto Beth-el*, &c.] From Jericho, which lay in a plain, to Beth-el, situated on an hill, and therefore is said to go up to it; hither he went, to acquaint the sons of the prophets with the assumption of Elijah, to condole their loss of him, and to comfort and encourage them, and confirm his own authority among them as a prophet in his stead: *and as he was going up by the way*; the ascent to the city: *there came forth little children out of the city*: the word for *children* is used of persons of thirty or forty years of age; and though these are said to be *little*, they were so well grown as to be able to go forth out of the city of themselves, without any to guide them, or to take care of them; and were of an age capable not only of taking notice of Elijah's baldness, but knew him to be a prophet, and were able to distinguish between good and evil; and, from a malignant spirit in them, mocked at him as such, and at the assumption of Elijah; which they had knowledge of, and to whom, taught by their idolatrous parents, they had an aversion: some Jewish writers [x] say, they were called *Naarim*, which we render *children*, because shaken from the commandments, or had shaken off the yoke of the commands; and *little*, because they were of little faith: *and mocked him, and said unto him, go up, thou bald head; go up, thou bald head*; meaning not up the hill to Beth-el, where his coming was not desirable to the greater part in it, being idolaters; and perhaps these children were sent out to intimidate him with their flouts and jeers from entering there; but having heard of Elijah going up to heaven, as was said, they jeeringly bid him go up to heaven after him, and then they should have a good riddance of them both; thus at the same time mocking at him for his baldness, and making a jest of the wondrous work of God, the assumption of Elijah; which, with behaving so irreverently to an hoary head, a prophet of the Lord, was very heinous and wicked, and therefore what befell them need not be wondered at.

Ver. 24. *And he turned back, and looked on them*, &c.] With a stern countenance, thereby reproving them, and in order to intimidate them, and make them ashamed, and cause them to leave off, but to no purpose; they repeated their mockeries with great vehemence: *and cursed them in the name of the Lord*: moved thereunto, not from passion and a spirit of revenge, but by an impulse of the spirit of God: *and there came forth two she-bears out of the wood*; which are fiercest, and especially when bereaved of their whelps, as these might be; the wood seems to be near to Beth-el, perhaps in the wilderness of Beth-el, of which see Josh. viii. 15. and xviii. 12. and Reland [y] thinks it is the same with the wood of Ephraim, 2 Sam. xviii. 6. though the Jews, to increase the miracle, say [z], there was no wood at all, and, if there was, that there were no bears in it; but though those creatures are mostly in northern countries, yet there were of them in Judea, see 1 Sam. xvii. 34. *and tare 42 children of them*; it seems there were more than these; but such a number of them they tore to pieces and destroyed; which was very extraordinary, and was an awful punishment for their wickedness, which they knowingly and willingly committed, and of their parents in them, who had trained them up in such impiety, and put them upon it, and sent them out to do it.

Ver. 25. *And he went from thence to Mount Carmel*, &c.] Where Elijah used to frequent, and where also there might be a school of the prophets; this, according to Bunting [a], was 56 miles from Beth-el: *and from thence he returned to Samaria*; the capital of the kingdom of Israel; there to bear his testimony against idolatry, to reprove for it, and reclaim from it; this, as the same writer says [b], was 32 miles from Carmel.

[s] De Bello Jud. l. 4. c. 8. sect. 3.
[t] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 80.
[u] Egmont and Heyman's Travels, vol. 1. p. 331.
[w] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 16.
[x] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 46. 2.

[y] Palestin. Illustrat. p. 378.
[z] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 47. 1.
[a] Travels, &c. p. 206.
[b] Ibid.

CHAP. III.

THIS chapter gives the character of Jehoram king of Israel, ver. 1, 2, 3. relates the rebellion of the king of Moab against him, ver. 4, 5. the war that he and his allies entered into on that account, ver. 6—9. the distress the combined army were in for want of water, their application upon this to Elisha, who promised them water, and they had it in a wonderful manner, ver. 10—20. and the chapter is concluded with the rout of the Moabites, and the barbarity of their king to his eldest son, ver. 21—27.

Ver. 1. *Now Jehoram the son of Ahab began to reign over Israel in Samaria the 18th year of Jehoshaphat king of Judah*, &c.] So that the two years of the reign of his brother Ahaziah were not complete, only part of the 17th and part of the 18th of Jehoshaphat, since he began to reign in his 17th year, at the beginning of that, and died towards the close of the 18th, when Jehoram succeeded him, see 1 Kings xxii. 51. *and reigned twelve years.*

Ver. 2. *And he wrought evil in the sight of the Lord*, &c.] Was guilty of idolatry: *but not like his father, and like his mother*: his father Ahab, and his mother Jezebel: *for he put away the image of Baal that his father had made*: he did not destroy it, only removed it from the temple of Baal where it was set, that it might not be worshipped, at least publicly, see 1 Kings xvi. 31, 32. this he did, either moved to it by his own conscience, observing the sudden deaths of his father and brother, which he might suppose was for their idolatry; or in order to obtain success in his war with Moab he was entering into; or being instigated by Jehoshaphat to do it, or otherwise he might refuse to join him.

Ver. 3. *Nevertheless he cleaved unto the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin*, &c.] He closely adhered to the worship of the calves set up by him: *he departed not therefrom*: that being a piece of state-policy, to keep up the division of the two kingdoms.

Ver. 4. *And Mesha king of Moab was a sheep-master*, &c.] With which his country abounded; he kept great numbers of them, and shepherds to take care of them; he traded in them, and got great riches by them; his substance chiefly consisted in them: *and rendered unto the king of Israel*: either as a present, or as an annual tribute: 100,000 *lambs, and* 100,000 *rams, with the wool*: that is, upon them, unshorn, and so the more valuable; and it was usual for tributary nations to pay their tribute to those to whom they were subject in such commodities which they most abounded with; so the Cappadocians, as Strabo [c] relates, used to pay, as a tribute to the Persians, every year, 1,500 horses and 2,000 mules, and five myriads of sheep, or 50,000; and formerly, Pliny [d] says, the only tribute was from the pastures.

Ver. 5. *But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled against the king of Israel.*] Who then was Ahaziah; but either through the pusillanimity of his temper, or the sickness that attended him, or the shortness of his reign, he took no steps to the reduction of him, or to oblige him to pay his tribute, which he neglected to do, and is meant by his rebellion.

Ver. 6. *And King Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time*, &c.] As soon as he came to the throne: *and numbered all Israel*: who were fit to bear arms, got them together at some certain place, and mustered them, and prepared for a war with Moab, to reduce them.

Ver. 7. *And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, the king of Moab hath rebelled against me*, &c.] By refusing to pay him tribute: *wilt thou go up with me against Moab to battle? and he said, I will go up*; which he agreed to, partly to encourage Jehoram in the reformation of religion which he had begun, and partly to chastise the Moabites for their invasion of his country, 2 Chron. xx. 1. *I am as thou art, my people as thy people*, and *my horses as thy horses*; the same answer he returned to Ahab, 1 Kings xxii. 4. see the note there.

Ver. 8. *And he said, which way shall we go up?* &c.] That is, Jehoram said so to Jehoshaphat, consulting with him which was the best way to take to the land of Moab, whether the shortest way, over Jordan; or some other: *and he answered, the way through the wilderness of Edom*; which bordered upon it, and the same through which the Israelites passed; for Kadesh was on the extreme border of Edom, whither they came, Numb. xx. 1, 16. and this Jehoshaphat proposed, partly that they might come upon Moab unawares, and attack them where they were weakest, and not on their guard; and partly to take the king of Edom with them, who was no other than Jehoshaphat's deputy, and so be assisting to them, and prevent him from revolting, which otherwise he might take this opportunity of doing.

Ver. 9. *So the king of Israel went, and the king of Judah*, &c.] The way of the wilderness of Edom, as proposed by the latter: *and the king of Edom*: whom they took with them in their way, who was not properly a king, but a viceroy or deputy, see 1 Kings xxii. 47. *and they fetched a compass of seven days' journey*: they went round the dead sea, and through the wilderness of Edom, and so to the borders of Moab: *and there was no water for the host, and for the cattle that followed them*: neither for the soldiers in the army, nor the cattle that drew the carriages, being in a wilderness.

Ver. 10. *And the king of Israel said, alas!* &c.] Lamenting their sad case, as being desperate; and the rather he was the more concerned, as he was the principal who had drawn the other kings into this

[c] Geograph. l. 11. p. 362.

[d] Nat. Hist. l. 18. c. 3.

affair, though he throws it upon the Lord and his providence: *that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hands of Moab;* into whose hands they must inevitably fall, if they could have no water to refresh them; since they would be so weak as not to be able to stand a battle with them, and be dispersed here and there in search of water, and so fall into their hands. Extreme thirst is intolerable. It is reported [e] of Lysimachus, that he delivered himself and his army into the hands of the enemy for a draught of water. Leo Africanus [f] relates, that in the desert of Azaoad stand two marble pillars, testifying that a rich merchant bought of a carrier of wares a cup of water at the price of 10,000 ducats; but there not being water sufficient neither for the one nor the other, they were both suffocated with thirst.

Ver. 11. *But Jehoshaphat said, is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may inquire of the Lord by him?* &c.] This the good king should have done before he set out, but had neglected it; however, it was not too late: *and one of the king of Israel's servants answered and said;* who might be one that feared the Lord, and was intimate with Elisha, or however had knowledge of him, as appears by what follows: *here* is *Elisha the son of Shaphat, which poured water on the hands of Elijah;* or ministered to him, as the Targum; was his menial servant, waited on him, and assisted him when he washed his hands [g]; some Jewish writers understand it of his pouring water on the hand of Elijah at Carmel, when the altar and trench were filled with it, and when a miracle was wrought, as they fancy, and the fingers of Elijah became as fountains of water.

Ver. 12. *And Jehoshaphat said, the word of the Lord is with him,* &c.] To give them an answer, which he concluded from his being a servant and disciple of Elijah, whom he succeeded in his office, and of whom he had, doubtless, heard; and from his following the camp, and being in it, which he easily imagined was not to fight, but to assist by his advice and counsel, and by his prophecies, as there might be occasion for them: *so the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat and the king of Edom went down to him;* descended from their chariots, and went to the tent in the camp where he was; they did not send for him to come to them, but, in honour of him, went to him themselves.

Ver. 13. *And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, what have I to do with thee?* &c.] An idolater; I can hold no discourse nor have any conversation with thee, nor give thee any advice or assistance: *get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother;* the prophets of Baal, and of the groves: *and the king of Israel said unto him, nay;* meaning, he would not apply to them, who he was sensible could give him no relief, only to the Lord God, from whom this affliction was, and therefore begs he would pray to him to have mercy on them; so the Targum, "I "beseech thee remember not the sins of that wicked- "ness, pray for mercy for us:" *for the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab;* signifying, that he should not perish alone, but the other two kings with him, who had no connexion with the prophets of his father and mother in their idolatry, and therefore hoped for their sakes mercy would be shewn.

Ver. 14. *Elisha said, as the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand,* &c.] Whose minister and prophet he was, to whom he prayed, and whose service he was ready to perform: *surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah;* revere him not only as a king, but as a pious prince, and a worshipper of the true God: *I would not look toward thee, nor see thee;* give him no countenance at all, pay no regard to his request, not so much as to look at him in a civil way; but turn away his face from him with contempt and disdain, as unworthy to be conversed with by a prophet of the Lord.

Ver. 15. *But now bring me a minstrel,* &c.] A piper, a man that knows how to play upon the harp, as the Targum; according to Procopius Gazæus, this was one of the Levites he ordered to be fetched, who was used to the spiritual melody of David, and could play on musical instruments as he directed. This he did to allay his passion, and compose his spirits, ruffled at the sight of Jehoram, and to fit him to receive prophetic inspiration, which sometimes came upon the Lord's prophets when thus employed, see 1 Sam. x. 5. Some think [h] the music the prophet called for is that sort the Greeks call *harmony*, which is the gravest and saddest, and settles the affections: *and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him;* the spirit of prophecy, as the Targum, which came by the power of God, and as a gift from his hand.

Ver. 16. *And he said, thus saith the Lord, make this valley full of ditches.*] In which the allied army lay encamped, that they might be ready to receive large quantities of water, sufficient for the whole army and cattle, when it came.

Ver. 17. *For thus saith the Lord, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see the rain,* &c.] Neither perceive the south wind blow, which usually brings rain, nor clouds gathering in the heavens, as portending it, nor any falling from thence: *yet that valley shall be filled with water;* and all the ditches dug in it: *that ye may drink, both ye and your cattle, and all your beasts;* there would be such a quantity as would be enough for them all, the soldiers, the horses they rode on, and the beasts that drew their waggons.

Ver. 18. *And this is but a light thing in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] To give them such a plenty of water in such an extraordinary manner: he would do for them what was greater, not only save them from falling into the hand of Moab, which they feared, but *he will deliver the Moabites into your hands;* which was more than was asked for, or expected.

Ver. 19. *And ye shall smite every fenced city and every choice city,* &c.] That is, the inhabitants of them with the sword, and demolish them also, ver. 25. *and shall fell every good tree;* which seems con-

[e] Plutarch. in Apothegm.
[f] Descriptio Africæ, l. 1. p. 78.
[g] See the like phrase of the business of a servant in Homer, Iliad. 3. ver. 270. & Iliad. 9 ver. 174. Odyss. 1. ver. 147. & Odyss. 2. ver. 261. & Odyss. 4. ver. 258, 261. & passim.
[h] Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 4. p. 143.

trary to the law in Deut. xx. 19. but that may respect trees belonging to a city when besieged only, or only to Canaanitish cities; or the law was now dispensed with, and that for this time only, to make the punishment of Moab the greater, for their rebellion and other sins: *and stop all wells of water*; which must be very distressing to those that survived the calamity of the sword: *and mar every good piece of land with stones*; as that it could not be ploughed and sowed, nor any thing spring up and grow upon it.

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass in the morning, when the meat-offering was offered*, &c.] At Jerusalem; which always went along with the daily burnt-offering of the lamb, which might not indeed be offered before break of day, yet quickly after; for no sacrifice could be offered before that, see the note on Exod. xxix. 39. *that, behold, there came water by the way of Edom*; not from the heavens, but it may be out of some rock, rolling along on the earth from the hills and mountains, down into the valleys, where the armies were: *and the country was filled with water*; all round about them. Who has not heard of the *thundering* legion, as it was called by the Emperor M. Aurelius, who, when the army under him was about to engage with the Germans and Sarmatians, and sadly distressed with thirst, fell down on their knees and prayed, upon which a large shower of rain came down to the refreshment of the army, and thunder-bolts, which annoyed and put the enemy to flight[i]? at the battle of the Romans with Jugurtha, a sudden and unexpected shower of rain fell, to the refreshment of the Romans, in intolerable thirst[k].

Ver. 21. *And when all the Moabites heard that the kings were come up to fight against them*, &c.] The kings of Israel, Judah, and Edom: *they gathered all that were able to put on armour, and upward*; that were of an age capable of that, and all who were more grown; or *girt on a girdle*[l], a military one, with which the sword was girt, who were at age to wear and knew how to wield a sword: *and stood in the border*; of their land, between Edom and them, to defend themselves and their country against these invaders.

Ver. 22. *And they rose up early in the morning*, &c.] To watch the motions of their enemies, and be upon their guard against them: *and the sun shone upon the water*; with which the valley was filled: *and the Moabites saw the water on the other side as red as blood*; so it appeared through the rays of the sun reflected on it.

Ver 23. *And they said, this is blood*, &c.] They were very confident of it, having no notion of water, there having been no rain for some time; and perhaps it was not usual to see water at any time in this place: *the kings are surely slain*; they and their forces: *and they have smitten one another*; having quarrelled either about their religion, or about want of water, and the distress they were come into through it, laying the blame of their coming out to war, or of their coming that way, on one another; and the Moabites might rather think something of this kind had happened, from what had lately been done among themselves, and their allies, 2 Chron. xx. 23. *now therefore, Moab, to the spoil*: having no occasion to fight, or prepare for it; all they had to do was to march directly to the enemy's camp, and plunder it.

Ver. 24. *And when they came to the camp of Israel*, &c.] Not in an orderly regular manner, in rank and file, as an army should march, but in a confused manner, every one striving who should get thither first, and have the largest share of the booty: *the Israelites rose up and smote the Moabites, so that they fled before them*: being prepared for them, they fell upon them sword in hand, and soon obliged them to flee: *but they went forward smiting the Moabites, even in* their *country*; they pursued them closely, and slew them as they fled, and followed them not only to their borders, but into their own country: though Schultens[m], from the use of the word נכה in the Arabic language, renders the passage, *and they blunted their swords in it* (in that slaughter), *even by smiting the Moabites*.

Ver. 25. *And they beat down the cities*, &c.] Demolished the walls of them, and houses in them, wherever they came: *and on every good piece of land cast every man his stone, and filled it*; which they had taken out of the walls and houses they pulled down; or which they picked up in the highway, as they passed along, being a stony country; or which being laid in heaps, gathered out of the fields, they took and scattered them all over them: *and they stopped all the wells of water*; with stones and dirt: *and felled all the good trees*; fruit-bearing ones; see the note on ver. 19. *only in Kir-haraseth left they the stones thereof*; not able to demolish it, it being a strong fortified city, the principal of the kingdom, and into which the king of Moab had thrown himself, and the remains of his forces; of which see Isa. xvi. 7, 10. *howbeit, the slingers went about it, and smote it*; smote the soldiers that appeared upon the walls of it; though Kimchi, and other Jewish writers, understand it of engineers, who cast out large stones from a sort of machines then in use, to batter down and break through the walls of cities.

Ver. 26. *And when the king of Moab saw that the battle was too sore for him*, &c.] The siege was so close, the slingers or engineers did so much execution, that he saw the city would soon be taken, and he be obliged to deliver it up: *he took with him 700 men that drew swords*; men expert in war, bold and daring: *to break through even unto the king of Edom*; through his quarters, and so escape, he lying nearest to the city, and perhaps the weakest body of men with him; or he might think he was not so hearty in the cause of the kings, and would make but a feeble resistance, and let him pass: *but they could not*; break through; they met with a greater opposition than was expected; perhaps the Edomites remembered how they had lately used them, which made them fight more desperately against them, see 2 Chron. xx. 23.

Ver. 27. *Then he took his eldest son, that should have reigned in his stead*, &c.] Not the eldest son of the king of Edom, whom the king of Moab had in his hands before, which made the king of Edom the more

[i] Euseb. Hist. Eccl. l. 5. c. 5. Orosii Hist. l. 7. c. 15. p. 120.
[k] Orosius, ib. l. 5. c. 15. p. 77.

[l] חגר חגרה cingente cingulo, Montanus.
[m] De Defect. Heb. Ling. Heb. sect. 26.

willing to join in this expedition for the recovery of his son, as Joseph Kimchi thinks; or whom he took now in his sally out upon him, as Moses Kimchi and Ben Gersom, proceeding upon a mistaken sense of Amos ii. 1. for the king of Edom could have no son that had a right, or was designed to succeed him, since he was but a deputy king himself; and besides, the sacrificing of him was not the way to cause the kings to raise the siege, but rather to provoke them to press it the more closely: it was the king of Moab that took his son and heir to the crown, *and offered him for a burnt-offering upon the wall;* that it might be seen by the camp of Israel, and move their compassion; or rather this was done as a religious action, to appease the deity by an human sacrifice so dear and precious, to give success, and cause the enemy to break up the siege; and was either offered to the true God, the God of Israel, in imitation of Abraham, as some Jewish writers fancy [n], or to his idol Chemosh, the sun; and Jarchi observes, out of an exposition of theirs, that *vau* is wanting in the word for *wall*, and so may be interpreted of the sun, towards which this burnt-offering was offered; and it is observed, from various Heathen authors, that it was usual with the Heathens, when in calamity and distress, to offer up to their gods what was most dear and valuable to them; and particularly the Phœnicians [o], and from them the Carthaginians had this custom, who at one time offered up 200 sons of their nobility, to appease their gods [p]: *and there was great indignation against Israel;* not of the king of Edom against them, for not rescuing his son, or because they were the means of this disaster which befell him; but of the king of Moab, who was quite desperate, and determined to hold out the siege to the utmost extremity: *and they departed, and returned to* their own *land;* the three kings, the one to Edom, the other to Israel, and the third to Judah; when they saw the Moabites would sell their lives so dear, and hold out to the last man, they thought fit to break up the siege; and perhaps were greatly affected with the barbarous shocking sight they had seen, and might fear, should they stay, something else of the like kind would be done.

CHAP. IV.

THIS chapter treats of the miracles of Elisha, of his multiplying a poor widow's pot of oil for the payment of her husband's debts, ver. 1—7. of obtaining a son for a Shunamitish woman, who had been very hospitable to him, ver. 8—17. of his raising up her son to life when dead, ver. 18—37. of his curing the deadly pottage made of wild gourds, ver. 38—41. and of his feeding 100 men with 20 barley-loaves, ver. 42—44.

Ver. 1. *Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha,* &c.] This, according to the Targum, was the wife of Obadiah, who had hid the prophets by 50 in a cave in the times of Ahab; and so Josephus [q], and it is the commonly received notion of the Jewish writers; though it does not appear that he was a prophet, or the son of a prophet, but the governor or steward of Ahab's house; she was more likely to be the wife of a meaner person; and from hence it is clear that the prophets and their disciples married: *saying, thy servant my husband is dead:* which is the lot of prophets, as well as others, Zech. i. 5. *and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the Lord;* her husband was well known to the prophet, and known to be a good man, one of the 7,000 who bowed not the knee to Baal, for the truth of which she appeals to Elisha; and this character she gives of her husband, lest it should be thought that his poverty, and leaving her in debt, were owing to any ill practices of his: *and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen;* which it seems were allowed of when men became poor and insolvent, and died so, to which the allusion is in Isa. l. 1. Matt. xviii. 25. see the note there. Josephus [r] suggests, that the insolvency of this man was owing to his borrowing money to feed the prophets hid in the cave; and it is a common notion of the Jews that this creditor was Jehoram the son of Ahab; and in after-times it was a law with the Athenians [s], that if a father had not paid what he was mulcted in court, the son was obliged to pay it, and in the mean while to lie in bonds, as was the case of Cimon [t], and others.

Ver. 2. *And Elisha said unto her, what shall I do for thee?* &c.] Or can I do, being poor himself, and unable to relieve her out of his substance, and not knowing where to get any thing for her; and so what could she expect from him? signifying, that he pitied her case, but all that he could do was to give her his best advice, and pray for her: *tell me what thou hast in thy house?* that she could part with and dispose of, in order to pay her debt, and satisfy her creditor: *and she said, thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil;* that is, nothing of any value; she might have some things, some sort of household goods, though perhaps she had parted with most of them in her poverty; this was the most valuable thing she had.

Ver. 3. *Then he said, go, borrow thee vessels abroad of all thy neighbours,* &c.] For he perceived that she had none: even *empty vessels;* which they might more readily lend her: *borrow not a few;* but as many as she could get; the prophet, under a divine impulse, was directed to say this to her, foreseeing, by a spirit of prophecy, that a large quantity of oil would be given her.

Ver. 4. *And when thou art come in,* &c.] Into her house: *thou shalt shut the door upon thee, and upon*

[n] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 39. 2. Pesikta in Abarbinel in loc.

[o] Vid. Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 1. c. 10. p. 40. l. 4. c. 16. p. 156. Porphyr. de Abstinentia, l. 2. sect. 56. Vid. Ælian. Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 28.

[p] Diodor. Sicul. Bibliothec. l. 20. p. 756.

[q] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4. sect. 2.

[r] Ut supra.

[s] Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 10.

[t] Cornel. Nep. in Vita Cimon. l. 5. c. 1.

thy sons; that they might be alone in the house while the miracle was working; that they might not be interrupted in what they were to do, by the creditor coming in upon them, or by neighbours, who would be for getting the oil from them in the vessels they had lent them: and that the miracle might appear the plainer, no oil being brought into the house by any: *and shalt pour out into all these vessels;* out of the single pot of oil into all they borrowed: *and thou shalt set aside that which is full;* by itself, and fill the rest of the empty ones.

Ver. 5. *So she went from him,* &c.] And did as he advised her, borrowed many empty vessels of her neighbours, having faith in what the prophet had said to her: *and shut the door upon her, and upon her sons;* and then went to work as she was directed, with her sons: *who brought* the vessels *to her;* the empty ones she had borrowed: *and she poured out;* the oil out of her pot into them.

Ver. 6. *And it came to pass when the vessels were full,* &c.] For the oil being miraculously increased as it was poured forth, there was enough to fill all the vessels; Ben Gersom and Abarbinel say, that when the pot was emptied, all the air that entered it was turned into oil: *that she said to her son, bring me yet a vessel;* as she had two sons, one it is probable was employed in setting aside the full vessels, as she poured into them, and the other in bringing to her the empty vessels, and to whom she thus speaks: *and he said unto her,* there is *not a vessel more;* not an empty one, they were all filled: *and the oil stayed;* it ran no longer, it was no more multiplied; there was no necessity of continuing the miracle: this oil may be an emblem of the grace that flows from the fulness of it in Christ, to which it is compared, which will be always flowing, as long as there is a vessel of salvation, or faith in any to receive it; see Matt. xxv. 3. John i. 14, 16. 1 John ii. 20, 27.

Ver. 7. *Then she came and told the man of God,* &c.] Elisha the prophet, what had been done, what a quantity of oil she had, and advised with him what was to be done with it: *and he said, go, sell thy oil, and pay thy debt;* what was thus miraculously produced was no doubt very good and excellent, and would fetch a good price; and she is therefore bid to turn it into money, and pay her debts with it; she was not to keep it all for her own use, and indulge to luxury with it, but first pay her just debt, as every one ought to do that is able: *and live thou and thy children of the rest;* so that it seems there was enough to pay her debt with it, rid her of her troubles, and somewhat remaining for the support of herself and children.

Ver. 8. *And it fell on a day,* &c.] Or so it was at a certain time: *that Elisha passed to Shunem;* a city in the tribe of Issachar; of which see Josh. xix. 18. *where was a great woman;* of great wealth and riches, of great benevolence and hospitality, and of great grace and piety; that feared sin, as the Targum paraphrases it; a woman of great credit and reputation on all accounts. The Jews say[r] she was the sister of Abishag the Shunammite, and the mother of Iddo the prophet: *and she constrained him to eat bread;* she had observed him at all times pass that way, and guessed by his habit and deportment that he was a religious man, and therefore took an opportunity to invite him into her house, and take a dinner with her; but he being modest and shy, she was obliged to use some pressing language, and be importunate with him, that he would accept of her invitation, which he did: *and so it was, that, as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread;* being made very welcome, and encouraged by the free and kind entertainment he met with, as often as he had occasion to come that way, he called and took a meal with her; and this it seems was pretty often, for Shunem was not far from Carmel, which he frequented, and lay in the way to Samaria, Beth-el, and Jericho, places he often visited, the schools of the prophets being there.

Ver. 9. *And she said unto her husband,* &c.] Not being willing to do any thing without his leave and consent: *behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God which passeth by us continually;* and calls here frequently: this she perceived by his discourse and conversation; and by his carriage and behaviour he appeared to be a prophet, and one very eminent for holiness and religion.

Ver. 10. *Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall,* &c.] Either of the city, to which their house might join, or of their garden, a little distance from the house; though the Jewish writers commonly understand it of a little edifice built up of walls of stone or bricks, and not one with reeds, or stud and mud: *let us set for him there a bed;* that he may stay all night when he pleases: *and a table;* not only to eat his food, but to write on, and lay his books on he reads. Of the table of a scholar of the wise men, in later times, we are told[s], that two-thirds of it were covered with a cloth, and the other third was uncovered, on which stood the plates and the herbs: *and a stool;* to sit upon at table: *and a candlestick;* with a candle in it, to light him in the night to read by, and the like: *and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither;* where he would be free from the noise of the house, and be more retired for prayer, reading, meditation, and study, and not be disturbed with the servants of the family, and be mixed with them; all this she contrived, both for his honour, and for his quietness and peace.

Ver. 11. *And it fell on a day that he came thither,* &c.] As he had been wont to do: *and he turned into the chamber;* built for him, and to which he was directed: *and lay there;* all night, and which no doubt was frequently repeated by him, he accepting of the kindness of his host.

Ver. 12. *And he said to Gehazi his servant,* &c.] Who attended him wherever he went, and ministered to him, and lay very probably in the same chamber with him; he might be one of the sons of the prophets: *call this Shunammite;* tell her I desire to speak with her: *and when he had called her, she stood before him;* at the door of the chamber, in great reverence of him, and with much humility, waiting to hear what he had to

[r] Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.

[s] T. Bab. Bava Bathra, fol. 57. 2.

say to her: this must be understood after what had further passed between Elisha and Gehazi, and between Gehazi and the woman, who returned to his master, and acquainted him with what she had said to him, upon which he was sent to call her, and she came.

Ver. 13. *And he said unto him*, &c.] To Gehazi, before he went to call her: *say now unto her, behold, thou hast been careful for us with all this care;* in building a chamber, and furnishing it with proper household goods, and providing food for them from time to time: *what is to be done for thee?* can any thing be thought of by thee that will be acceptable, and in my master's power to do for thee, or thy husband? *wouldest thou be spoken for to the king, or to the captain of the host?* that her husband might be promoted to some post in the court, or in the camp; intimating, that if either of these was agreeable, Elisha would speak on his behalf, having interest in both through his services in Edom: *and she answered, I will dwell among my own people;* she was content and satisfied with her present state of life, and the situation she was in, and with her friends and neighbours she lived among, and did not care to remove, though it was to a higher rank of life, and to greater dignity and honour; and she had no suit to make to the king or general, nothing to complain of; and she had friends enough to speak for her, should she want any assistance.

Ver. 14. *And he said*, &c.] That is, Elisha to Gehazi, when he returned to him, and told him what the Shunammite said: *what then is to be done for her?* something he thought should be done in gratitude for the favours they had received, and advises with his servant what could be thought of, he being one about the house: *and Gehazi answered, verily she hath no child, and her husband is old;* and so not likely to have any by him; as children were always very desirable by women, and especially in those days, the servant suggests, that no doubt to have one would be very acceptable to her.

Ver. 15. *And he said, call her*, &c.] Perhaps finding an impulse on his own mind, from the spirit of God, that this was the thing to be done for her: *and when he had called her, she stood in the door;* of his chamber: see the note on ver. 12.

Ver. 16. *And he said, about this season*, &c.] In the next year: *according to the time of life;* the usual time women go with child: *thou shalt embrace a son;* in thine arms, that shall be born of thee, which she should have in her lap, and in her bosom: *and she said, nay, my lord, do not lie unto thine handmaid;* or speak unto her what was not truth; it was so great, and so unaccountable, how it could be in her circumstances, that she could not believe it to be true, though she wished it might; or do not deceive me with vain and false words, or flatter me, jest with me, which would be unbecoming his character as a man of God, and prophet of the Lord; according to the Targum, she wished it might prove true, and she not deceived; see ver. 28.

Ver. 17. *And the woman conceived, and bare a son at the season that Elisha said unto her*, &c.] Quickly after this she conceived, and became pregnant, and by that time the year came round, she was brought-to-bed of a son: *according to the time of life;* when she had gone her full time to have a son born alive, and live.

Ver. 18. *And when the child was grown*, &c.] Perhaps was six or seven years of age, or more: *it fell on a day that he went out to his father to the reapers;* it was harvest-time, and the men were reaping the corn in the fields; and his father, though a wealthy man, was with them to direct them, and see they did their business well, as Boaz formerly; and the child went out from the house to the field, to see his father and the reapers, for his recreation and diversion.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto his father, my head, my head*, &c.] After he had been some time with him, he complained of a pain in his head, which might be owing, as Abarbinel thinks, to the sun's beating upon it, being harvest-time, and hot weather; and the pain being exceeding great and vehement, he repeated his complaint, see Jer. iv. 19. *and he said to a lad, carry him home to his mother;* his father gave orders to a lad that attended the reapers to have him home to his mother, that she might give him something to ease him of his pain.

Ver. 20. *And when he had taken him, and brought him to his mother*, &c.] The lad led him home, and delivered him to his mother: *he sat on her knees till noon, and* then *died;* out of her great affection, she took him on her knees, and laid his head in her bosom to sooth the pain, and in this posture he continued until the middle of the day, and then expired; by which it appears it was in the morning when he went into the field, and when the sun was pretty high, and beat strongly on him; which, it may be, produced a fever, and which issued in his death.

Ver. 21. *And she went up*, &c.] Into the little chamber built for the prophet: *and laid him on the bed of the man of God;* not from any imagination of any virtue in it to bring her child to life; though she might think of the prophet, and have faith that he could raise it to life, as Elijah raised the widow of Zarephath's son laid on his bed, of which she might have heard; but this being a private room, and into which none went, she laid it here to conceal its death from her husband and family, and to prevent grief, and that they might not bury it until she returned: *and shut the door upon him;* that no creature might enter, and do any damage to his corpse: *and went out;* not out of the chamber, that she did before she shut the door, but out of the house.

Ver. 22. *And she called unto her husband*, &c.] In the field, who might be within call, or by a messenger she sent to him: *and said, send me, I pray thee, one of the young men, and one of the asses, that I may run to the man of God, and come again:* intimating that she should not be long gone, but should return again presently; saying not a word of the death of the child, or of the occasion of her going.

Ver. 23. *And he said, wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day?* &c.] What reason is there for it? what is the meaning of it? it is *neither new moon nor sabbath;* neither the first day of the month, nor the seventh day of the week, times which were religiously observed; so with the Heathens the new moon and the 7th of the

week, and so the 4th, were sacred[t]; which notions they borrowed from the Jews, see the note on 1 Sam. xx. 5. and when, it seems, it was usual to frequent the house of the prophet, to hear the word of God read and explained, and other religious exercises performed, as praying and singing praise, and receiving some good instructions and advice. Joseph Kimchi gives a different sense of these words; "there is not a month past, no, "not a week, since thou sawest him;" why therefore shouldest thou be in such haste to go to him? so the words for new moon and sabbath may signify: *and she said*, it shall be *well;* it was right for her to go, and it would be well for him and her, and the family; or, *peace*[u], be easy and quiet, farewell: it is much he had no mistrust of the death of the child, or that it was worse, since it went from him ill.

Ver. 24. *Then she saddled an ass*, &c.] Her servant did it by her order: *and said to her servant, drive, and go forward;* make all the haste he could: *slack not thy riding for me, except I bid thee;* don't be afraid of riding too fast for me; if thou dost, I'll tell thee; till then, keep on a good pace: Abarbinel says she walked a-foot all the way, and ordered the man not to slacken his pace in riding for her, unless she called to him; and the Targum seems to favour this sense, "don't press "me to ride unless I call to thee;" so that the ass was for Elijah to ride on; but one would think, that, as she was in haste, quicker dispatch would be made by her riding than by walking, see ver. 22.

Ver. 25. *So she went and came unto the man of God at Mount Carmel*, &c.] Where Elijah used to be, and where, perhaps, was a school of the prophets; this, according to Bunting[w], was 16 miles from Shunem: *and it came to pass, when the man of God saw her afar off;* as he might from the eminence of the mountain: *that he said to Gehazi his servant, behold*, yonder is *that Shunammite;* that has so often and so hospitably entertained us at her house.

Ver. 26. *Run now, I pray thee, to meet her*, &c.] In respect to her, and to know the occasion of her coming; something is the cause of it: *and say unto her, is it well with thee? is it well with thy husband?* is it *well with the child?* has any disaster befallen thee, thy husband, or the child? are all in good health? or does any disorder attend any of them? *and she answered*, it is *well;* as in general they were, the greatest part, she and her husband; and though the child was dead, yet, if gone to heaven, as she might hope, it was well too; and it is right to judge and say, that all that the Lord does is well: she gives a short answer to the servant, not being willing to be detained, and being desirous of telling her case to the prophet himself.

Ver. 27. *And when she came to the man of God to the hill*, &c.] To the top of it: *she caught him by the feet;* in reverence to him, and as a supplicant, she prostrated herself at his feet, and, out of affection to him, caught hold on them, and held them fast, and determined not to leave him until he had promised to go with her, see Matt. xxviii. 9. It was usual with the Jews to lay hold on and kiss the feet or knees of those to whom they did homage, or made supplication, see Matt. xxviii. 9. Luke vii. 38. and the note there; and so with the Greeks, as may be observed in various passages in Homer[x] and others: *but Gehazi came near to thrust her away;* as being troublesome and disagreeable to his master, and not for her honour and credit: *and the man of God said, let her alone, for her soul is vexed within her;* or *is bitter*[y], full of trouble and distress, and knows not what to do, nor very well what she does: *and the Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me;* what is the cause of this her trouble; for prophets did not know things of themselves, nor had they the vision of prophecy at their will and pleasure, but according to the will of God.

Ver. 28. *Then she said, did I desire a son of my lord?* &c.] It was not at her request she had one, at least the first motion was not from her; the prophet first told her, and assured her she should have one, without her asking for it; she might be pleased with it, and desire the promise might be fulfilled; but it was not an inordinate, importunate, desire of one, in which she had exceeded, that so the taking it away from her might be a correction of her for it: *did I not say, do not deceive me:* by giving hopes of a child, and yet have none; and now it was equally the same, or worse, to have one, and then to have it taken away again as soon as had almost; so the Targum, "did I not say unto "thee, if a child is given me, let it live, if not, don't "trouble or grieve me;" and then, no doubt, she told him plainly the child was dead, and where she had laid it, though not recorded.

Ver. 29. *Then he said to Gehazi, gird up thy loins*, &c.] His loose and long garments about him, that he might make quicker dispatch in travelling: *and take my staff in thine hand, and go thy way;* not for the sake of travelling with it, but for an end after mentioned: *if thou meet any man, salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again;* that so no time may be lost: *and lay my staff upon the face of the child;* he not intending when he said this to go himself, but at the time, as near as he could, when this action was performed, would pray to God to restore life to the child; for he could not imagine that by this bare action it could be done.

Ver. 30. *And the mother of the child said*, &c.] Having no faith in what the servant was to do, or could do: as *the Lord liveth, and* as *thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee;* signifying she would not go with his servant, but insisted upon it that he himself went with her, or she would not depart: *and he arose, and followed her;* influenced by her importunity, and a sense of favours he had received from her, and more especially by the spirit of God.

Ver. 31. *And Gehazi passed on before them*, &c.] The prophet and the Shunammite: *and laid the staff upon the face of the child;* as he was ordered: *but there was neither voice nor hearing;* it seems as if he spoke when he laid the staff on the child, but it heard and answered him not, so that there was no sign of life in it: *wherefore he went again to meet him;* upon the road between

[t] Hesiod. Opera & Dies, l. 2.
[u] שלום pax, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.
[w] Travels, &c. p. 207.
[x] Vid. Barthium ad Claudian. de Raptu Proserpin. l. 1. ver. 50.
[y] מרה amara, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

Carmel and Shunem: *and told him, saying, the child is not awaked*: by which he expresses its being dead; or, if he knew nothing of its death, he supposed it fast asleep, which was the reason of its not hearing and answering, though the former seems best.

Ver. 32. *And when Elisha was come into the house*, &c.] Of the Shunammite, and into the chamber built for him: *behold, the child was dead*, and *laid upon the bed*; upon his bed, and where he found it really dead.

Ver. 33. *He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain*, &c.] Himself and the dead child; that nobody might come in and interrupt him in his prayers for the restoration of it to life, nor see the motions and gestures he used, and the postures he put himself in: *and prayed unto the Lord*: that he would restore the child to life.

Ver. 34. *And he went up*, &c.] To the bed, which was on an ascent in the chamber, see the note on ch. i. 4. *and lay upon the child*; as Elijah did on the widow's son of Zarephath, 1 Kings xvii. 21. *and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands, and stretched himself upon the child*: that is, he did each of these one after another, since the disproportion of their bodies would not admit of their being done together: *and the flesh of the child waxed warm*: not from any virtue imparted to it by these motions and actions of the prophet, but from life being infused into it by the Lord, which caused an heat in the several parts of the body.

Ver. 35. *Then he returned and walked in the house to and fro*, &c.] Left the chamber, and came down to the house where the family chiefly resided, and walked to and fro in deep thought and meditation, and, no doubt, in fervent ejaculations for the wished-for blessing to be completed: *and went up*; to the chamber again, and up to the bed in it: *and stretched himself upon him*; as before: *and the child sneezed seven times*: which was a sign of life, and even of health; and hereby his head was cleared, as some observe, of those humours that had caused the pains in it[a], and had issued in death: *and the child opened his eyes*; upon the prophet, another sign of life.

Ver. 36. *And he called Gehazi, and said, call this Shunammite*, &c.] To come up to the chamber to him: *so he called her: and when she was come in unto him, he said, take up thy son*: from off the bed, alive, safe, and sound.

Ver. 37. *Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground*, &c.] In reverence of him, and with the most profound gratitude and thankfulness for the mercy received: *and took up her son, and went out*: of the chamber into her house, with great joy and gladness.

Ver. 38. *And Elisha came again to Gilgal*, &c.] Where he was with Elijah a little before his assumption to heaven, ch. ii. 1. and whither he went, there being a school of the prophets, as he did to all places where there were any, and where he had been before with Elijah; partly to instruct, encourage, and strengthen them, and partly to confirm his office as a prophet by miracles, which he did in several places he came to: *and there was a dearth in the land*; a famine through drought: *and the sons of the prophets were sitting before him*; as disciples before their master, see Acts xxii. 3. *and he said unto his servant*; very probably Gehazi: *set on the great pot, and seethe pottage for the sons of the prophets*; who seemed to have lived together in one house or college, and to be to the number of 100, see ver. 43. and therefore required to have a large pot set on to boil pottage for them all.

Ver. 39. *And one went out into the fields to gather herbs*, &c.] To put into the pottage, the gardens affording none in this time of dearth; or, however, being scarce, were at too great a price for the sons of the prophets to purchase them, and therefore one of them went out into the field to gather what common herbs he could: *and found a wild vine, and gathered thereof wild gourds his lap full*; thought to be the same with coloquintida, the leaves of which are very like to a vine, of a very bitter taste, and a very violent purgative, which, if not remedied, will produce ulcerations in the bowels, and issue in death; some think the white brier or white vine is meant, the colour of whose berries is very inviting to look at, but very bitter and ungrateful, and it vehemently purges[b]; the Arabs call a sort of mushroom that is white and soft by this name[c], but cannot be meant here, because it has no likeness to a wild vine: *and came and shred them into the pot of pottage*; cut or chopped them small, and put them into the pot: *for they knew them not*; what they were, the nature and virtue of them, being unskilful in botany.

Ver. 40. *So they poured out for the men to eat*, &c.] When the pottage was boiled, they poured it out into dishes or basins, for the sons of the prophets to eat: *and it came to pass, as they were eating of the pottage, that they cried out, and said, O thou man of God, there is death in the pot*; poison, the cause of death; the pottage was so exceeding bitter, that they concluded there must be some poisonous herb in it; and coloquintida is so bitter, that it is called *the gall of the earth*: *and they could not eat thereof*: they left off eating, it being so very disagreeable, and, as they supposed, dangerous.

Ver. 41. *But he said, then bring meal: and he cast it into the pot*, &c.] And stirred it about in it: *and he said, pour out for the people, that they may eat*; as they now might freely, and without any danger, as he intimated: *and there was no harm in the pot*; or any thing that could do any hurt or mischief to the health of men: this was not owing to the natural virtue of meal, but to a miraculous power attending it, whereby the pottage was cured of its malignity, as the bad waters of Jericho were by salt, in a preceding miracle.

Ver. 42. *And there came a man from Baal-shalisha*, &c.] Of which place see the note on 1 Sam. ix. 4. the Targum is, from the south country: *and brought the man of God bread of the first-fruits, 20 loaves of barley*: so that it was now barley-harvest, and this the first-fruits of it, which, according to the law, Lev. xxiii. 10. was to be brought to the priest; but being forbid in the land of Israel going up to Jerusalem, religious men brought their first-fruits to the prophets, and here to

[a] Vid. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 28. c. 6. Aristot. Problem. sect. 33. qu. 9.
[b] Vid. Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 605, 606.
[c] Golius, col. 1817.

Elisha, the father of them; believing it would be dispensed with, and acceptable, since they were not allowed to carry them to the proper person; and in this time of famine was very agreeable to the man of God, supposing it only a present: *and full ears of corn in the husk thereof;* these were green ears of corn, which they used to parch; but might not be eaten until the first-fruits were offered, and then they might, Lev. xxiii. 14. the Targum renders it, *in his garment*, in the skirt of his clothes; and to the same purpose are the Syriac and Arabic versions; and so Jarchi interprets it; and Ben Gersom says, it signifies some vessel in which he brought them: *and he said, give unto the people, that they may eat;* Elisha did not reserve this offering or present for himself, but, as he had freely received, he freely gave.

Ver. 43. *And his servitor said*, &c.] His servant Gehazi very probably: *what, should I set this before 100 men?* for so many, it seems, the sons of the prophets were in this place; and these loaves being very small, no more, it is thought by some, than one man could eat, and the ears of corn but few, the servant suggests they would be nothing comparatively to such a company of men: *he said again, give the people, that they may eat:* he insisted upon it that his orders should be obeyed: *for thus saith the Lord, they shall eat, and shall leave thereof;* it was suggested to him by a spirit of prophecy, there would be enough for them, and to spare.

Ver. 44. *So he set it before them*, &c.] The twenty barley-loaves, and the full ears of corn: *and they did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord:* as the disciples did at the miracle of the loaves and fishes; though that must be allowed to be a greater miracle than this, Matt. xiv. 17—21.

CHAP. V.

THIS chapter gives an account of the leprosy of Naaman the Syrian, and of the cure of it by Elisha; how he came to hear of him, and the recommendation he had from the king of Syria to the king of Israel, ver. 1—8. who, coming to Elisha's house, was ordered to dip himself seven times in Jordan, which made him depart in wrath; but one of his servants persuaded him to do it, and he did, and was cured, ver. 9—14. upon which he returned to Elisha, and offered him a present, which he refused, ver. 15—19. but Gehazi, his servant, ran after him with a lie in his mouth, and obtained it, and returned to his master with another, for which he was smitten with the leprosy of Naaman, ver. 20—27.

Ver. 1. *Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria*, &c.] The general of Benhadad's army; for he was now king of Syria, though some think Hazael his successor was: *was a great man with his master;* high in his favour and esteem: *and honourable;* not only acceptable to the king, and loaded with honours by him, but greatly respected by all ranks and degrees among the people: *because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria;* out of the hands of their enemies, and victory over them, and particularly in the last battle with Israel, in which Ahab was slain, and, as the Jews suppose, by the hands of Naaman, see the note on 1 Kings xxii. 34. however, when any salvation was wrought, or victory obtained, even by Heathens, and by them over Israel, the people of God, it was of the Lord: *he was also a mighty man in valour;* a very courageous valiant man: but he was *a leper;* was stricken with the leprosy, which had deformed and disgraced his person, and weakened his strength, and dispirited him; all his grandeur and honour could not protect him from this loathsome disease.

Ver. 2. *And the Syrians had gone out by companies*, &c.] Not regular troops, but a sort of banditti of robbers, which made excursions into the land of Israel, to plunder and carry off what booty they could: *and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid;* for boys and girls were a part of the booty of such robbers, whom they could sell for money, see Joel iii. Jarchi and Kimchi say she was a girl of Naaron, a city so called: *and she waited on Naaman's wife;* being either made a present of to the general by those plunderers, or was bought by him of them for his wife's service.

Ver. 3. *And she said unto her mistress*, &c.] As she was waiting upon her at a certain time, and perhaps her mistress was lamenting the case of her husband as desperate and incurable: *would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria;* meaning Elisha, who, though sometimes in one place, and sometimes in another, yet often at Samaria, and it seems was there when this girl was taken captive: *for he would recover him of his leprosy;* the maid had heard of the miracles wrought by Elisha, and doubted not that at the request of her lord he would be willing, as she believed he was able, to cure him of this disease.

Ver. 4. *And one went in and told his lord*, &c.] What the girl had said to her mistress; one of the servants of the house that overheard it; or rather, Naaman went and told his lord the king of Syria; for as this was said to his wife, no doubt she told it to her husband, and not a servant; and the following words require this sense, and is the sense of most Jewish commentators: *saying, thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel;* who for her wit and beauty might be well known at court by the name of the Israelitish girl.

Ver. 5. *And the king of Syria said, go to, go*, &c.] On what Naaman related to him from what the maid had said, he urged him by all means to go directly to Samaria: *and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel;* recommending him to use his interest in his behalf; this was Jehoram the son of Ahab: *and he departed;* set out on his journey immediately, as soon as he could conveniently: *and took with him 10 talents of silver, and 6,000 pieces of gold;* partly for the expenses of his journey, and partly to make presents to the king of Israel's servants, and especially to the prophet; a talent of silver, according to Brerewood [4], was 375 pounds of

[4] De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4.

our money; but, according to Bishop Cumberland's[e] exact calculation, it was 353*l.* 11*s.* 10½*d.* the pieces of gold are, by the Targum, called golden pence, and a golden penny, according to the first of the above writers[f], was of the value of our money 15 shillings; so that these amounted to 4,500 pounds sterling: *and ten changes of raiment;* both for his own use, and for presents.

Ver. 6. *And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying,* &c.] The contents of which were, so far as it concerned Naaman and his case, which are only observed, these: *now when this letter is come unto thee;* was received by him: *behold, I have* therewith *sent Naaman my servant unto thee:* the bearer of it: *that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy:* meaning not he himself, but that he would recommend him to the care of a proper person, his prophet, and enjoin him to do the best he could for him; but the king of Israel mistook his meaning, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass, when the king of Israel had read the letter, that he rent his clothes,* &c.] As one in great distress, being thrown into perplexity of mind by it, not knowing what to do; or, as some think, at the blasphemy he supposed to be in it, requiring that of him which only God could do: *and said,* am *I God, to kill and to make alive:* or have the power of life and death, which only belongs to the Supreme Being: *that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy;* for a leper was reckoned as one dead, his disease incurable, his flesh upon him being mortified by it, see Numb. xii. 12. and therefore not supposed to be in the power of man, only of God, to cure; and therefore, in Israel, none had any thing to do with the leper but the priest, in the name of God: *wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me;* to pick a quarrel with him, in order to go to war with him as he supposed. This seems to have been spoken to his lords and courtiers about him.

Ver. 8. *And it was so, when Elisha the man of God had heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes,* &c.] And upon what account: *that he sent to the king, saying, wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes?* and thereby expressed so much concern and distress: *let him come now to me;* meaning Naaman the Syrian leper: *and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel;* able in the name of the Lord to work miracles, which he should be sensible of and acknowledge, to the glory of the God of Israel, by the cure that should be wrought upon him; and hereby he taxed the king of Israel with ignorance or neglect of him as a prophet.

Ver. 9. *So Naaman came with his horses, and with his chariot,* &c.] In his chariot drawn by horses; or *with horsemen and chariots,* a great retinue, both for his own grandeur, and for the honour of the prophet, and to make him the more respectable by him: *and stood at the door of the house of Elisha;* who now dwelt at Gilgal, as is probable, see ch. iv. 38. hither Naaman was directed, and here he stopped; and having sent a messenger to Elisha to acquaint him who he was, and what was his business, he stayed waiting for an answer.

Ver. 10. *And Elisha sent a messenger unto him,* &c.] Or returned an answer by Naaman's messenger; he did not go out to him, choosing to be retired, as he commonly did; and being perhaps employed in prayer for the cure; and it may be also to shew his contempt of or little regard he had to wordly grandeur and honour, as well as to mortify the pride of Naaman: *saying, go and wash in Jordan seven times;* so, according to the law of the cleansing the leper, he was to be sprinkled seven times, and on the seventh day his flesh was to be bathed or dipped all over in water, which is meant by washing here, Lev. xiv. 7, 9. *and thy flesh shall come again to thee;* which was eaten and consumed by the disease on him: *and thou shalt be clean;* freed from this pollution, or filthy disease, with which he was defiled; for a leper was reckoned unclean, Lev. xiii. 3.

Ver. 11. *But Naaman was wroth with him,* &c.] On more accounts than one: *and went away;* not to Jordan, but from the prophet's house, with an intention to return to his own country: *behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me,* this he said within himself, making no doubt of it but that he would shew him so much respect and civility as to come out of his house to him, and converse with him, or invite him into it; and not doing this was one thing made him wroth: *and stand;* he supposed that he would not only come out, but stand before him, as inferiors before their superiors in reverence, but instead of that he remained sitting within doors: *and call on the name of the Lord his God;* he expected, that as he was a prophet of the Lord, that he would have prayed to him for the cure of him: *and strike his hand over the place;* wave his hand to and fro, as the word signifies, over the place of the leprosy, as the Targum, over the place affected with it; or towards the place where he worshipped the Lord, as Ben Gersom, toward the temple at Jerusalem; or towards Jordan, the place where he bid him go and wash, as Abarbinel; but the first sense seems best: *and recover the leper;* meaning himself, heal him by the use of such means and rites.

Ver. 12. Are *not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?* &c.] Abana is, in the marginal reading, called Amana, and so the Targum; perhaps from the Mount Amana, from whence it sprung, a mountain in Syria[g], mentioned with Lebanon, Cant. iv. 8. This river is thought to be the Chrysorrhoas of Pliny[h], and other writers; there are no traces of its name, or of the following, to be met with now; the only river by Damascus is called Barrady, which supplies Damascus and its gardens, and makes them so fruitful and pleasant as they be: it pours down from the mountains, as Mr. Maundrell[i] describes it, and is divided into three streams, of which the middlemost and biggest runs directly to Damascus, through a large field, called the field of Damascus; and the other two are drawn round, the one to the right hand, and the other to the left, on the borders of the gardens. Pharpar is thought[k] to be the river Orontes, which runs close to the walls of Antioch, and courses through its large and spacious plain, being

[e] Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 4. p. 129.
[f] Ut supra, c. 3.
[g] Tacit. Annal. l. 2. c. 42.
[h] Nat. Hist. l. 5. c. 18.

[i] Journey from Aleppo, p. 122, 123.
[k] Cartwright's Preacher's Travels, p. 7, 8. Hiller. Onomast. Sacr. p. 901.

numbered among the rivers of Syria; it takes its rise from Lebanon, and, sliding through the said plain, falls into the Syrian sea. Benjamin of Tudela[l] speaks of these rivers under their Scripture names; Abana or Amana, as he says, passes through the city, and supplies the houses of great men with water through wooden pipes; and Pharpar is without the city, and runs among the gardens and orchards, and waters them. Farfar is also the name of a river in Italy[m]: *may I not wash in them, and be clean?* as well as in Jordan; or rather, since they are better waters, and so not have been at this trouble and expense to come hither; or have I not washed in them every day? I have, and am I clean? I am not; which is the sense the several Jewish writers give[n]: *so he turned, and went away in a rage;* in a great passion, swearing and cursing perhaps, ordering his chariot-driver to turn and be gone at once.

Ver. 13. *And his servant came near, and spake unto him, and said, my father,* &c.] Or my lord, as the Targum; this being not a familiar and affectionate expression, but a term of honour, reverence, and submission: *if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it?* something that was hard and difficult to be done, or painful to bear, to go through some severe operation, or disagreeable course of physic: *how much rather then when he saith to thee, wash, and be clean?* which is so easy to be done; though Abarbinel observes it may be interpreted, the prophet has bid thee do a great thing, and which is wonderful; for though he has said, wash and be clean, consider it a great thing, and which is a wonderful mystery, and therefore don't despise his cure.

Ver. 14. *Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God,* &c.] He listened to the reasoning of his servant, and his passion subsided, and did as the prophet ordered him: *and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child:* clear and fresh, soft and tender as an infant, quite new flesh: *and he was clean;* from the leprosy, and all the filthy symptoms of it.

Ver. 15. *And he returned to the man of God, he and all his company,* &c.] To give him thanks for the advice he had given him, and by him to give thanks to God for the cure he had received; for he was sensible it was from the Lord, as his words shew: *and came and stood before him:* for being admitted into the prophet's house, instead of the prophet standing before him, as he before expected, he now stood before the prophet in veneration of him, and sensible of his obligation to him: *behold, now I know there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel:* though he did not before, but his cure fully convinced him of it: *I pray thee, take a blessing of thy servant;* not a wish of health and happiness, which the prophet would not have refused, but a present; the Targum calls it an offering.

Ver. 16. *But he said, as the Lord liveth, before whom I stand,* &c.] Whose minister and prophet he was, and by whom he swears: *I will receive none:* to let him know that this cure was not to be attributed to him, but the Lord only; and that what concern he had in it was not for the sake of money, but for the glory of the God of Israel: *and he urged him to take it, but he refused it:* Naaman was very pressing upon him to receive a gift from him, but he could not be prevailed upon to accept it.

Ver. 17. *And Naaman said, shall there not then, I pray thee, be given to thy servant two mules' burden of earth?* &c.] Not that he desired of Elisha that he would suffer his servant Gehazi to receive a present as much as two mules could carry; but inasmuch as the prophet refused a present from him, his servant, he asks a favour of him, that he would permit him to take with him, out of the land of Israel, as much earth as two mules could carry, that is, to make an altar of earth, as the next words indicate: but as he might have this any where without the prophet's leave, some Jewish writers[o] think he requested it from his own house, and from the place his feet trod on, as conceiving in a superstitious way that there was a sort of holiness in it; or however, that wheresoever he had it, if with the prophet's leave, a blessing would go with it, or that would be a sort of a consecration of it; and having an altar made of the earth of this land, would shew that he was in the faith of the same God, and performed the same worship to him Israel did: *for thy servant will henceforth offer neither burnt-offering nor sacrifice unto other gods, but unto the Lord;* hence the Jews say, he became a proselyte of righteousness[p], embraced the true religion, and the worship of the true God, according to the laws given to Israel; and the following words, rightly understood, confirm the same.

Ver. 18. *In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant,* &c.] Which he next mentions, and on account of which he desires the prayers of Elisha for him, as the Vulgate Latin version; or it may be, this is a prayer of his own, put up at this time to the true Jehovah, in whom he believed: that *when my master;* meaning the king of Syria: *goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing:* the house of Rimmon was a temple of an idol of that name; what idol it was is not easy to say; the Septuagint version calls it Remman, thought by some to be the same with Remphan, Acts vii. 43. a name of Saturn, said to be given him from a Greek word, which signifies to *wander*[q], he being placed among the wandering stars in the supreme heavens; which is not likely, for the word is certainly of a Syriac signification, and comes either from רום, which signifies *high*, and so the same with Elioun, the Phœnician deity, called the most high[r]; or, as *Rimmon* is used for a pomegranate, this is thought to design the Syrian goddess, to whom this sort of fruit was sacred; or Juno, whose statue, in her temple at Mycenæ[s], had a pomegranate in one hand; or rather this Rimmon

[l] Itinerar. p. 55.
[m] Servius in Virgil. Æneid. l. 7. p. 1243.
[n] Ben Gersom in loc. & R. Joseph Kimchi, & R. Jonah in Ben Melech in loc.
[o] Ben Gersom & Abarbinel in loc.

[p] Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 11. 2.
[q] A ῥεμβεῖν vagari, Hesychius.
[r] Vid. Selden. de Dis Syris Syntagm. 2. c. 10.
[s] Pausan. Corinthiac. sive, l. 2. p. 114.

was Jupiter Cassius, so called from Mount Cassius, which divided Syria from Egypt, who is painted with his hand stretched out, and a pomegranate in it[t]; and may be the same with Caphtor, the father of the Caphtorim, Gen. x. 14. who might be deified after his death, their names, Rimmon and Caphtor, being of the same signification[v]. But be this deity as it may, it was worshipped by the Syrians; and when the king of Syria went in to worship, he used to lean upon the hand of one of his officers, either being lame, or for state-sake, in which office Naaman was; and his request to the prophet, or to the Lord, is, not for pardon for a sin to be committed; nor to be indulged in his continuance of it; not to worship the idol along with his master; nor to dissemble the worship of it, when he really worshipped it not; nor to be excused any evil in the discharge of his post and office; but for the pardon of the sin of idolatry he had been guilty of, of which he was truly sensible, now sincerely acknowledges, and desires forgiveness of; and so Dr. Lightfoot[w], and some others[x], interpret it; and to this sense the words may be rendered, *when my master went in to the house of Rimmon to worship there*; which was his usual custom; *and he leaned on my hand*, which was the common form in which he was introduced into it: *and I worshipped in the house of Rimmon*, as his master did, for the same word is used here as before; *in as much*, or *seeing I have worshipped in the house of Rimmon*, have been guilty of such gross idolatry: *the Lord, I pray, forgive thy servant in this thing*; the language of a true penitent.

Ver. 19. *And he said unto him*, &c.] That is, the prophet said to Naaman: *go in peace*; in peace of mind; be assured that God has pardoned this and all other transgressions: *so he departed from him a little way*; about a mile, as the Targum, and so other Jewish writers; of this phrase, see the note on Gen. xxxv. 16. some say a land's length, that is, about 120 feet; rather it was 1,000 cubits, or half a mile.

Ver. 20. *But Gehazi the servant of Elisha the man of God said*, &c.] Within himself, observing what had passed: *behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought*; he speaks contemptibly of Naaman, as an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and reproaches his master for letting him go free, without paying for his cure; when he thought he should have taken what he brought and offered, and given it to needy Israelites, and especially to the sons of the prophets, that wanted it; and perhaps it mostly disturbed him, that he had no share of it himself: *but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him*; the word for *somewhat*, wanting a letter usually in it, is what is sometimes used for a blot; and Jarchi observes, that Gehazi taking something from Naaman, was a blot unto him, and indeed such an one that he could not wipe off.

Ver. 21. *So Gehazi followed after Naaman*, &c.] As fast as he could: *and when Naaman saw him running after him*; which he might observe, looking back, or be informed of by some of his servants: *he lighted down from the chariot to meet him*; in honour to the prophet, whose servant he was: *and said, is all well?* fearing something ill had befallen Elisha; or he himself had done something wrong, which occasioned the servant to run after him.

Ver. 22. *And he said, all is well*, &c.] He need give himself no uneasiness at the coming and sight of him: *my master hath sent me, saying, behold, even now there be come to me*; just then, since he departed from him: *from Mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets*; where perhaps was a school of them: *give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments*; which, as it was a downright lie, so highly improbable that Elisha should ask so large a sum of money, with two changes of raiment, for two young scholars, see ver. 5. and which Naaman, with a little reflection, might have seen through; but his heart was so filled with gratitude for the benefit received, that he was glad of an opportunity, at any rate, of shewing respect to the prophet.

Ver. 23. *And Naaman said, be content*, &c.] Or be pleased; don't object to it: *take two talents*: a talent for each young man, which amounted to between 3 and 400 pounds apiece: *and he urged*; pressed him hard, insisted upon his taking them, who might pretend a great deal of modesty, and a strict regard to his master's orders: *and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments*, for each young man: *and laid them upon two of his servants*: the servants of Naaman, not choosing to burden Elisha's servant with them; for such a quantity of money and clothes was pretty heavy: *and they bare* them *before him*; both for his ease, and for his honour.

Ver. 24. *And when he came to the tower*, &c.] Of Samaria, or which was near it; a fortified place, and where was a watch, to whom he could safely commit the money and clothes: *he took* them *from their hand*; not willing they should go any further with him, lest the affair should be discovered to his master: *and bestowed* them *in the house*; deposited them there in the hands of some person whom he could trust; or laid them out, or ordered them to be laid out, in the purchase of houses, lands, vineyards, *&c.* see ver. 26. *and he let the men go, and they departed*; to their master.

Ver. 25. *But he went in, and stood before his master*, &c.] To know his will, and minister to him, as he had used to do, and as if he had never been from the house: *and Elisha said unto him, whence* comest thou, *Gehazi?* where had he been, and where was he last? *and he said, thy servant went no whither*; he pretended he had never been out of doors, which was another impudent lie; one would have thought that he who had lived so long with the prophet, and had seen the miracles wrought by him, and knew with what a spirit of prophecy he was endowed, would never have ventured to tell such an untruth, since he might expect to be detected; but covetousness had blinded his eyes and hardened his heart.

Ver. 26. *And he said unto him, went not mine heart with thee?* &c.] Did my heart or knowledge go from me, that what thou hast done should be hid from me?

[t] Achilles Tatius, l. 3. Vid. Reland. Palestin. Illustrat. tom. 2. p. 934.
[v] See Clayton's Origin of Hieroglyphics, p. 113.
[w] Works, vol. 1. p. 86.
[x] Vid. Quenstedt. Dissert. de. Petit. Naaman. sect. 21, 29.

so Ben Gersom and others; or my heart did not go with thee, it was contrary to my mind and will what thou didst; so Abendana; or rather, as the Targum, by a spirit of prophecy it was shewn unto me, &c. I knew full well what thou wentest for, and hast done; and so Maimonides[y]; was not I employed in my thoughts? or, did I not think that so it was as thou hast done? I did: *when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?* meaning Naaman the Syrian: *is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments:* as Gehazi had now done: *and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and men-servants, and maid-servants?* that is, to purchase those with the two talents of silver he had received, as he thought in his heart, or intended to do, as the Targum; or had given orders to purchase such for him to the persons to whom he had committed the care of them in the tower; this was not a proper time, when the honour of the prophet, and the credit of religion, and the good of this man, as a new proselyte, were in danger thereby.

Ver. 27. *The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed for ever,* &c.] As long as any of his race remained; as through his covetousness he had his money, so for his punishment he should have his disease: *and he went out from his presence;* as one ashamed and confounded, and discharged from his master's service: *a leper as white as snow;* a leprosy of which colour is the worst, and is incurable.

CHAP. VI.

IN this chapter are recorded other wonders of Elisha, as causing iron to swim, ver. 1—7. having knowledge of the secret counsels of the king of Syria, which he disclosed to the king of Israel, ver. 8—12. smiting the Syrian army with blindness sent to take him, and which he led into the midst of Samaria, ver. 13—23. and the chapter is closed with an account of the siege of Samaria, and a sore famine in it, ver. 24—33.

Ver. 1. *And the sons of the prophets said unto Elisha,* &c.] Or the disciples of the prophets, as the Targum: *behold now, the place where we dwell with thee is too strait for us;* their numbers were so increased, that there was not room enough for them in the house they dwelt in with the prophet; which increase was owing, the Jews[z] say, to the departure of Gehazi last mentioned, who was a bad man, and used the disciples so ill, that they could not stay in the college; but, when he was gone, they flocked in great numbers; but rather it was owing to the very instructive ministry and wonderful miracles of Elisha: the place where the prophet and his disciples now dwelt seems to be Gilgal, ch. iv. 38.

Ver. 2. *Let us go, we pray thee, unto Jordan,* &c.] Which, according to Josephus[a], was 50 furlongs, or upwards of 6 miles, distant from Gilgal: *and take thence every man a beam;* by cutting down the trees that grew there; for Mr. Maundrell says[b], the banks of Jordan are beset with bushes and trees, which are an harbour for wild beasts; and another traveller[c] observes, that it is shadowed on both sides with poplars, alders, &c. and who speaks of their cutting down boughs from the trees when there: *and let us make us a place there where we may dwell;* near the banks of Jordan, which they might choose for the retiredness and pleasantness of the situation, or because Elijah was taken up to heaven near it, as Abarbinel thinks; from whence it appears that these scholars were far from living an idle life; for they were not only trained up in useful learning, but were employed in trades and manufactures, to which they had been brought up, and knew how to fell timber, and build houses: *and he answered, go ye;* he gave them leave, without which they did not choose to do any thing.

Ver. 3. *And one said, be content, I pray thee, and go with thy servants,* &c.] Or be pleased to go with us; he begged it as a favour, that, being awed by his presence, they might preserve peace and order, and have his advice as to the spot of ground to erect their edifice on, and might be protected by him from hurt and mischief by men or wild beasts: *and he answered, I will go;* he consented to it, knowing perhaps before-hand that he should have an opportunity of working a miracle there, as he did.

Ver. 4. *So he went with them. And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood.*] Trees which grew upon the banks of it, to build their house with, at least for the raftering and flooring of it, supposing the walls to be built of stone.

Ver. 5. *But as one was felling a beam,* &c.] Cutting down a tree, or a branch of it: *the axe-head fell into the water;* into the waters of Jordan; or *the iron*[d], the iron part of it, with which the wood was cut; that flew off from the helve into the water: *and he cried, and said, alas, master! for it was borrowed:* it grieved him to lose his axe, because he could do no more work, and the more because it was not his own, but he had borrowed it of his neighbour; and still more, because, as it seems, he was poor, and not able to pay for it, which, being of an honest disposition, gave him distress.

Ver. 6. *And the man of God said, where fell it?* &c.] For though endowed with a spirit of prophecy, he did not know all things, and at all times; and if he did know where it fell, he might ask this question to lead on to the performance of the miracle: *and he shewed him the place;* the exact place in the river into which it fell: *and he cut down a stick, and cast it in thither;* he did not take the old helve and throw in, but a new stick he cut off of a tree; some think he made of this another helve or handle, of the same size and measure with the other, and that this being cast in was miracu-

[y] Moreh Nevochim, par. 1. c. 39.
[z] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 107. 2.
[a] Antiqu. l. 5. c. 1. sect. 4.
[b] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 82, 83.
[c] Sandys's Travels, l. 3. p. 110.
[d] הברזל ferrum, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

lously directed and fixed in the hole of the iron at the bottom of the water, and brought it up with it; but, as Abarbinel observes, there is no need to suppose this; the wood was cast into the precise place where the iron fell, and was sent as it were to call it up to it: *and the iron did swim*: it came up and appeared, and was bore on the surface of the waters; or, *and made the iron to swim*[e]; which some understand of the wood cast in, as if it had some peculiar virtue in it to draw up the iron; but it was not any particular chosen wood, but what first occurred to the prophet[f]; and the meaning is, that Elisha caused it to swim, contrary to the nature of iron.

Ver. 7. *Therefore said he, take it up to thee*, &c.] This the prophet said to the man that had lost it: *and he put out his hand, and took it*: it being on the top of the water within his reach.

Ver. 8. *Then the king of Syria warred against Israel*, &c.] Proclaimed war against him; on what account, or how long it was after Naaman his general came with a letter of recommendation from him to the king of Israel, and had his cure, is not said: *and took counsel with his servants*; his privy-counsellors, or the general officers of his army: *saying, in such and such a place* shall be *my camp*; in some covered hidden place, as the Targum; where he would lie encamped in ambuscade, to fall upon the king of Israel unawares, as he and his forces should pass that way; the place, no doubt, was named by the king of Syria, though not recorded by the historian; or, as the words may be rendered, *the place of such and such a man*; for, as Ben Melech observes, *peloni almoni* are used of persons whose names are either unknown or concealed.

Ver. 9. *And the man of God sent unto the king of Israel*, &c.] That is, Elisha sent to him: *saying, beware that thou pass not such a place*: not go to it, but avoid it, and pass another way: *for thither the Syrians are come down*: are hidden, as the Targum; lie covered at the bottom of the hill, so as not to be seen.

Ver. 10. *And the king of Israel sent to the place which the man of God told him, and warned him of*, &c.] Sent spies thither to see whether the Syrians were there or not, and whether it was truth the man of God told him; for he had no hearty respect for the prophet, though he had been so serviceable to him: *and saved himself there, not once, nor twice*: escaped the snares the king of Syria laid for him, not once, nor twice only, but many times.

Ver. 11. *Therefore the heart of the king of Syria was sore troubled for this thing*, &c.] There was as it were a storm in his breast, as the word signifies; he was like a troubled sea, tossed with tempests, exceeding uneasy in his mind, fretting at the diappointment he met with time after time: *and he called his servants, and said unto them, will ye not shew me which of us is for the king of Israel?* he suspected that some one of his counsellors was in the interest of the king of Israel, and betrayed his secrets to him, which was the cause of his disappointments.

Ver. 12. *And one of his servants said, none, my lord, O king*, &c.] He believed every one of his counsellors were true and faithful to him: *but Elisha the prophet, that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest in thy bedchamber*; what is said in the most private place, and in the most secret manner: this man had heard much of Elisha, by Naaman, very probably; or perhaps he had attended him in his journey to Israel for a cure, and so might have personal knowledge of Elisha, and be acquainted with the affair of Gehazi; from whence he concluded, that he, who had the thoughts of men revealed to him, had knowledge of their words and counsels, though ever so secret; see Eccl. x. 20.

Ver. 13. *And he said, go, and spy where he is, that I may send and fetch him*, &c.] But how could he expect to take him, who could give the king of Israel such intelligence of his designs against him, that he might escape his snares? *and it was told him, saying, behold*, he is *in Dothan*; a city in the tribe of Manasseh, not far from Shechem; see the note on Gen. xxxvii. 17.

Ver. 14. *Therefore sent he thither horses and chariots, and a great host*, &c.] To terrify the inhabitants from attempting to defend the prophet, but deliver him up at once: *and they came by night*; that they might come upon them unawares, and their design not be discovered, so as to have timely succour from Samaria, which was not far off: *and compassed the city about*; that the prophet might not make his escape out of it.

Ver. 15. *And when the servant of the man of God was risen early, and gone forth*, &c.] Either out of his master's house, or out of the city upon some business to be done betimes; this was not Gehazi, but a new servant: *behold, an host compassed the city, both with horses and chariots*; which he could see at the door of his master's house, the city being built upon an eminence; or which he perceived, as soon as he came out of the gates of the city, or was about so to do: *and his servant said unto him*; Elisha being with him; or else he returned to his master on the sight of such an army, and not being able to go forward: *alas, my master! how shall we do?* to get out of the city, and through this host, and proceed on our intended journey; and if he understood that the intention of this formidable host was to take his master, his concern might be the greater; and the more as he was a new servant, and not so well acquainted with his master's being possessed of a power of doing miracles.

Ver. 16. *And he answered, fear not, for they that be with us* are *more than they that* be *with them*.] Meaning the legions of angels that encamped around them.

Ver. 17. *And Elisha prayed, and said, Lord, I pray thee, open his eyes, that he may see*, &c.] Not the eyes of his body, which were not shut nor blinded, but the eyes of his mind; or, in other words, grant him a vision, represented in so strong a light, as to remove his fears: *and the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw*; he had a vision of angels: *and, behold, the mountain*; on which the city was built, or one near it: was *full of horses and chariots of fire*; angels in this form, as in ch. ii. 11. and these were *round about Elisha*: being round about the city where he was; or rather so in the vision it was represented to the young man, he saw his master surrounded with horses and chariots of fire, in the utmost safety.

[e] ויצף fecit supernatare, Pagninus, Montanus, Vatablus; so Junius & Tremellius, Piscator.

[f] Vid. Friese, Dissert. de Ferro Natante, sect. 7.

Ver. 18. *And when they came down to him*, &c.] The Syrian army, from the hill on which they were first seen, who came down from thence to the bottom of the hill on which the city stood; and whither Elisha came out, in order both to meet them, and proceed on his journey to Samaria: *Elisha prayed unto the Lord, and said, smite this people, I pray thee, with blindness*; or *blindnesses* [z]; with great blindness, such as the men of Sodom were smitten with; the same word is here used as of them, Gen. xix. 11. *and he smote them with blindness, according to the word of Elisha*; not in such manner that they could discern no object, for then they could not have followed Elisha; but their sight was so altered, that they knew not the objects they saw; they appeared quite otherwise to them than they were; they saw the city, but knew it not to be the same, and Elisha, but knew him not to be the man of God, though they might have some in the host that knew him personally.

Ver. 19. *And Elisha said unto them, this is not the way, neither is this the city*, &c.] Which is an answer to some questions of the Syrians; as, whether this was the way to find the prophet Elisha, and this the city in which he was to be found? and he answers most truly, though ambiguously, that the way they were in, and in which should they proceed, was not the way, nor this the city, in which he was to be found, because he was come out of it, and was going to Samaria: *follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom ye seek*; as he did: *but he led them to Samaria*: whither he was going, they being still under that sort of blindness with which they were smitten; otherwise they would have known the country better than to have been led thither.

Ver. 20. *And it came to pass, when they were come into Samaria, that Elisha said, Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see*, &c.] So as to know where they were: *and the Lord opened their eyes, and they saw, and, behold*, they were *in the midst of Samaria*; the gates being thrown open for them, and they led into the very heart of the city; for, no doubt, Elisha sent his servant before, to acquaint the king of Israel with what he was doing; who got a sufficient number of armed men to enclose them, and fall upon them, when put into his hands, as appears by what follows.

Ver. 21. *And the king of Israel said unto Elisha, when he saw them*, &c.] The Syrian army thus in his hands: *my father, shall I smite them? shall I smite them?* he speaks with great reverence and respect to the prophet, whom at other times he neglected and despised; and the repetition of his words shews the eagerness of his mind to fall upon his enemy at this advantage.

Ver. 22. *And he answered, thou shalt not smite them*, &c.] For they were not his, but the prophet's captives, or rather the Lord's: *wouldest thou smite those whom thou hast taken captive with thy sword and with thy bow?* when soldiers are made prisoners of war, it is contrary to humanity, to the laws of nature and nations, to kill them in cold blood, and much more those who were taken not by his sword and bow, but by the power and providence of God: *set bread and water before them, that they may eat and drink, and go to their master*; the king of Syria, and report the miracles wrought, and the good usage they met with, when in the hand of an enemy, fed and let go; which would be more to the glory of the God of Israel, and more agreeable to the character of a king of Israel, reckoned merciful, and more serviceable to the civil good of the land of Israel, as well as more to the honour of the prophet and true religion, see Rom. xii. 20, 21.

Ver. 23. *And he prepared great provision for them*, &c.] Or a great feast, as the Targum; so obedient was he to the prophet's orders: *and when they had eaten and drank*; and refreshed themselves, which they needed, having marched all night and that morning from place to place: *he sent them away*; that is, the king of Israel dismissed them: *and they went to their master*; the king of Syria, but without the prophet Elisha they were sent to fetch: *so the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel*; not as yet, or for some time; or rather the sense is, that the Syrians came not any more in small bodies, as troops of robbers making excursions, and carrying off booty in a private manner, and by surprise; but afterwards came with a large army in an open hostile manner, as follows.

Ver. 24. *And it came to pass after this, that Benhadad king of Syria gathered all his host*, &c.] Still retaining a grudge and enmity against Israel, and not at all softened by the kind and humane treatment his forces had met with, when in the hands of Israel; and finding he could do nothing in a secret way, by ambuscade, mustered all his forces together, to try what he could do by open war: *and went up, and besieged Samaria*; Jehoram king of Israel not being able to stop him till he came to his capital, which he laid close siege to.

Ver. 25. *And there was a great famine in Samaria*, &c.] No care, perhaps, having been taken to lay up stores against a siege: *and, behold, they besieged it until an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver*; shekels, as the Targum explains the word in the next clause, which amounted to about nine or ten pounds of our money; a great price for the head of such a creature, by law unclean, its flesh disagreeable, and of that but very little, as is on an head: *and the fourth part of a cab of doves' dung for five pieces of silver*; some of the Jewish writers say [h], this was bought for fuel, which was scarce: Josephus says [i], for salt, and so Procopius Gazæus, and Theodoret; others, for dunging the lands, which is the use of it in Persia [k] for melons; neither of which are probable; most certainly it was for food; but as doves' dung must not only be very disagreeable, but scarce affording any nourishment, something else must be meant; some have thought that the grains found in their crops, or in their excrements, undigested, and picked out, are meant; and others, their crops or craws themselves, or entrails; but Bochart [l] is of opinion, that a sort of pulse is meant, as lentiles or vetches, much the same with the kali or parched corn used in Israel, see 1 Sam. xvii. 17. 2 Sam. xvii. 28. and a late traveller [m] observes,

[z] בסנורים in cæcitatibus, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.
[h] R. Jonah in Ben Melech, Kimchi & Abarbinel in loc.
[i] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 4. sect. 4.

[k] Universal History, vol. 5. p. 90.
[l] Hierozoic. par. 2. l. 1. c. 7. col. 44, &c.
[m] Shaw's Travels, p. 140.

that the leblebby of the Arabs is very probably the kali, or parched pulse, of the Scriptures, and has been taken for the pigeons' dung mentioned at the siege of Samaria; and indeed as the *cicer* (a sort of peas or pulse) is pointed at one end, and acquires an ash-colour by parching, the first of which circumstances answers to the figure, the other to the usual colour of pigeons' dung, the supposition is by no means to be disregarded: a *cab* was a measure with the Jews, which held the quantity of 24 egg-shells; according to Godwin[n], it answered to our quart, so that a fourth part was half a pint; and half a pint of these lentiles, or vetches, or parched pulse, was sold for eleven or twelve shillings.

Ver. 26. *And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall*, &c. To descry the motion and situation of the enemy, and to give orders for the annoyance of them, and to see that his soldiers did their duty: *there cried a woman to him, saying, help, my lord, O king*; desired his assistance and help in a cause depending between her and another woman.

Ver. 27. *And he said, if the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee?* &c.] Mistaking her meaning, as if she prayed him to relieve her hunger; the margin of our Bible is, *let not the Lord save thee*; and so some understand it as a wish that she might perish; and so Josephus[o], that being wroth, he cursed her in the name of God: *out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press?* when neither of them afforded any thing; no corn was to be had from the one, nor wine from the other, no, not for his own use, and therefore how could he help her out of either?

Ver. 28. *And the king said unto her, what aileth thee?* &c.] His passion subsiding, or pitying her as in distress, and supposing that there might be something particular and pressing in her case: *and she answered, this woman said unto me*; who was now with her, and to whom she pointed: *give thy son, that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow*; and this was agreed to between them, that first one should be eaten, and then the other, and that they should feed upon one as long as it would last, and then on the other; for it is not to be limited precisely to a day and to-morrow.

Ver. 29. *So we boiled my son, and did eat him*, &c.] Thus what was predicted, by way of threatening, began to be accomplished, Deut. xxviii. 53. see the note there; and of which there were other instances of a like kind at the siege of Jerusalem, both by Nebuchadnezzar and Vespasian: *and I said unto her on the next day*: after her child had been wholly ate up: *give thy son, that we may eat him*; according to agreement: *and she hath hid her son*; either to save him alive, or to eat him herself alone.

Ver. 30. *And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes*, &c.] At the horror of the fact reported, and through grief that his people were brought into such distress through famine: *and he passed by upon the wall*; returning to his palace: *and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth upon his flesh*; which, in token of humiliation for averting the calamities he was under, he had put there before, and now was seen through the rending of his clothes.

Ver. 31. *Then he said, God do so and more also to me*, &c.] He swore and made dreadful imprecations: *if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day*; imputing the sore famine to him, because he had foretold it, and did not pray for the removal of it, as he might; and perhaps had advised and encouraged the king to hold out the siege, which had brought them to this extremity, and therefore was enraged at him.

Ver. 32. *And Elisha sat in his house*, &c.] In Samaria: *and the elders sat with him*; not the elders of the city, or the magistrates thereof, but his disciples, as Josephus says[p], the eldest of them, whom he admitted to greater familiarity and converse with him: *and the king sent a man from before him*; to execute what he had sworn should be done that day to the prophet: *but ere the messenger came to him, he said to the elders, see ye how this son of a murderer hath sent to take away mine head?* which he knew by a spirit of prophecy, and spoke of it before the executioner came; he calls Joram the son of a murderer, because of his mother Jezebel, who killed Naboth, and the prophets of the Lord, and to which his father Ahab also consented, and therefore might be so called too; and he intimates hereby that he was of the same temper and disposition, and as the above oath, and his orders, shewed: *look when the messenger cometh, shut the door, and hold him fast at the door*; and not suffer him to come in: *is not the sound of his master's feet behind him?* that is, of Joram king of Israel, who followed the messenger, either to listen and hear what the prophet would say unto him; or repenting of his order, as Josephus[q] thinks, he followed him to prevent the execution.

Ver. 33. *And while he yet talked with them*, &c.] Elisha with the elders: *behold, the messenger came down unto him*; sent by the king: *and he said*; either the messenger in the king's name, or rather the king, who was at his heels, and came to the door before the messenger was let in, who was detained; and therefore it is most probable the king went in first; for that was the intention of Elisha in holding the messenger, not to save his own life, but that the king, who was following, might hear what he had to say; and whom he advised to wait for the Lord, and his appearance, for deliverance: in answer to which he said, *behold, this evil is of the Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?* this calamity is from him, and he is determined upon the ruin of my people, and there is no hope; thus he said as despairing, and so resolving to hold out the siege no longer.

[n] Moses & Aaron, B. 6. c. 9.
[o] Ut supra.
[p] Ut supra.
[q] Ibid.

CHAP. VII.

THIS chapter begins with a prophecy of great plenty in Samaria on the morrow, and of the death of an unbelieving lord, ver. 1, 2. relates the case of four lepers, who that night went into the Syrian camp, which was deserted, occasioned by the noise of chariots, horses, and a host, which they fancied they heard, ver. 3—9. the report which the lepers made to the king's household of this affair, and the method the king's servants took to know the truth of it, ver. 10—15. which, when confirmed, the people went out and spoiled the tents of the Syrians, whereby the prophecy of plenty was fulfilled, ver. 16. and the unbelieving lord having a post at the gate of the city assigned him, was trod to death, and so the prediction concerning him had its accomplishment also, ver. 17—20.

Ver. 1. *Then Elisha said, hear the word of the Lord,* &c.] This he said to the king and those that were with him: *thus saith the Lord, to-morrow, about this time;* which very probably was the forenoon: shall *a measure of fine flour* be sold *for a shekel;* a *seah,* the measure here spoken of, or *satum,* according to some[r], was a gallon and an half; but Bishop Cumberland[s] makes it two wine-gallons and an half; and a shekel, according to his accurate computation, was two shillings and four-pence farthing, and near the 8th part of one[t]: *and two measures of barley for a shekel, in the gate of Samaria:* where the market was kept; the same sort of measure and of money is here used as before; and we learn from hence that a measure of wheat was equal to two of barley.

Ver. 2. *Then a lord, on whose hand the king leaned,* &c.] Not figuratively, in whom the king confided, but literally, on whose hand he rested, and by whom he was supported, being a form and matter of state, whilst he and Elisha were talking together, or on whom he leaned as he came to him: this was a principal lord, the third to the king, as his title seems to denote; the word by which the Septuagint renders it is by Suidas[u] interpreted of such that held three spears in the hand together; and this was an honourable post, for a king to lean on him; such state was used by the king of Syria, ch. v. 18. and by the kings and queens of Persia; so Gorionides[w] says of Esther, that on the third day she put on her beautiful garments and glorious ornaments, and took two of her maidens with her, and put her right hand on one of them, and leaned upon her in a royal manner, or as was the manner of kings: the same *answered the man of God:* the prophet of the Lord, as the Targum: *and said, behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be?* it is impossible it should be, if he was to open the windows of heaven as at the flood, and let down showers of wheat and barley, in like manner as he rained manna in the wilderness: *and he said:* the prophet in reply to him: *behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof:* wheat and barley sold at the above price, but should not taste of it, as a punishment of his unbelief.

Ver. 3. *And there were four leprous men at the entering in of the gate,* &c.] Of the city of Samaria; lepers, according to the law, being obliged to be without the city and camp, Lev. xiii. 46. these might have a dwelling assigned them near the gate; or they might get as near to it as they could, partly to obtain relief from the city, and partly for fear of the Syrians; these, the Jews say[x], were Gehazi and his three sons, see ch. v. 27. *and they said one to another, why sit we here until we die?* being ready to perish with hunger.

Ver. 4. *If we say we will enter into the city,* &c.] Contrary to the law which forbid them: *then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there;* not being able to obtain food to preserve life: *and if we sit here, we die also;* having nothing to eat to support nature: *now therefore let us come, and fall unto the host of the Syrians;* put ourselves into their hands, and lie at their mercy: *if they save us alive, we shall live;* if they don't put us to death, but give us bread to eat, our lives will be preserved: *and if they kill us, we shall but die;* which we must inevitably do, whether we stay here, or go into the city.

Ver. 5. *And they rose up in the twilight, to go unto the camp of the Syrians,* &c.] The dusk of the evening, or the evening twilight, as appears from ver. 9, 12. *and when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria;* not the further part of it, but the edge or border of it nearest to them: *behold, there was no man there;* no sentinel or guard, which they expected, and to whom they would have surrendered themselves.

Ver. 6. *For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host,* &c.] Or of many armies, as the Targum; either in the air by the ministry of angels; or the Lord so wrought upon their imagination, that they fancied they heard such noises; or he caused such noises in their ears: *and they said one to another, lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites;* one of the nations of the Canaanites, and may be here put for the whole of those that remained, and who lived upon the borders of the land of Israel; though Josephus[y] has it, the kings of the isles; that is, of Chittim, see Jer. ii. 10. *and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us;* Egypt being now divided into petty kingdoms; or else the governors of the several nomes or districts of it are here meant: for the king of Israel to hire these kings was very unlikely in his present circumstances; but those unreasonable things, in their panic, their imaginations suggested to them.

Ver. 7. *Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight,* &c.] Or in the dark, as the Targum; when the twi-

[r] Godwin, ut supra.
[s] Of Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 3. p. 86.
[t] Ib. c. 4. p. 104, 105.
[u] In voce Τρισταται.
[w] Heb. Hist. l. 2. c. 4.
[x] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 47. 1. & Sanhedrin, fol. 107. 2.
[y] Ut supra, sect. 2.

light was going off; so that the lepers came very quickly after they were gone, ver. 5. *and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses:* such was their fright, that they could not stay to loose their cattle, with which they might have made greater speed, but ran away on foot: and they left *even the camp as it* was; took nothing away with them, either money or provisions: *and fled for their life;* which they imagined to be in great danger.

Ver. 8. *And when these lepers came to the uttermost part of the camp, they went into one tent,* &c.] The first they came to: *and did eat and drink;* which was the first thing they did, being hungry, and almost starved: *and carried thence silver, and gold, and raiment, and went and hid it:* in a place without the camp, where they thought it would be safe, and where they could come at it again: *and came again and entered into another tent, and carried thence also, and went and hid it;* this, Josephus says [a], they did four times.

Ver. 9. *Then they said one to another, we do not well,* &c.] This is not right, to take this booty to ourselves; it is not doing justice to our brethren, and it may not prove well to ourselves in the issue: *this day is a day of good tidings;* to be delivered from the enemy, and have such plenty of provisions thrown into their hands; it would be joyful tidings to the inhabitants of the city, did they know it: *and we hold our peace;* and don't publish this good tidings, that others may share the benefit of it: *if we tarry till the morning light;* when it will in course be discovered: *some mischief will come upon us;* either from the Syrians, who they might fear would return by that time, or some of them lurking about would fall upon them and destroy them; or the king of Israel, when he came to know it, would be so incensed as to inflict some punishment on them; or they might expect some evil from the immediate hand of God: *now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household;* acquaint some of his servants with what had happened.

Ver. 10. *So they came and called to the porter of the city,* &c.] The chief of those that had the care of the gate of it; for there were more than one, as follows: *and they told them:* the porter, and the watchmen with him: *we came to the camp of the Syrians, and, behold, there was no man there, neither voice of man;* not one to be seen or heard: *but horses tied, and asses tied;* to their mangers; the latter, as well as the former, were used for war, not only to carry burdens, but to fight upon, as Ælianus [a] relates of some people; and especially when there was a want of horses, as Strabo [b]; and both observe that this creature was sacrificed to Mars: *and the tents as they were;* none of them struck, nor any thing taken out of them.

Ver. 11. *And he called the porters,* &c.] The porter of the city called to the porters of the king's palace: *and they told it to the king's house within;* to some of his domestic servants within the palace, and they reported it to the king.

Ver. 12. *And the king arose in the night,* &c.] Upon the report made to him: *and he said unto his servants, I will now shew you what the Syrians have done to us;* taking it to be a stratagem of theirs to decoy them: *they know that we be hungry;* and would be glad to come out of the city to get some food: *therefore are they gone out of the camp to hide themselves in the field;* to make us believe that they have broke up the siege, and have deserted the camp, and are gone, when they only lie in ambuscade: *saying, when they come out of the city;* which they supposed they would do through hunger: *we shall catch them alive;* take them captive at once: *and get into the city;* being open to let them out, and receive them on their return.

Ver. 13. *And one of his servants answered and said, let some take, I pray thee, five of the horses that remain, which are left in the city,* &c.] Not having died through the famine as the rest: *behold, they are as all the multitude of Israel that are left in it; behold,* I say, *they are even as the multitude of Israel that are consumed;* signifying, there was a like consumption among the horses as among the people, and they that remained were starving as they were; so that should those horses, and the men, fall into the hands of the Syrians, and perish, it would be no great matter; the loss would not be much, since they must perish if they continue in the city: according to the Vulgate Latin version, these five horses were all that were left: *and let us send and see;* whether the report of the lepers is true or not.

Ver. 14. *They took therefore two chariot-horses,* &c.] Not five, but two only, and those the best, that drew in the king's chariot perhaps, and so were better fed, and fitter for this expedition: *and the king sent after the host of the Syrians, saying, go and see;* whether they are fled or no.

Ver. 15. *And they went after them unto Jordan,* &c.] Not finding them in the camp, and knowing the rout they would take to their own land, they went as far as Jordan, over which they must pass: *and, lo, all the way was full of garments and vessels which the Syrians had cast away in their haste;* in their fright and flight, such of their clothes as hindered them in running; and their armour, as Josephus [c] seems rightly to understand the word used, these they threw away for quicker dispatch: *and the messengers returned and told the king;* that it was as the lepers said, and what they themselves had seen.

Ver. 16. *And the people went out and spoiled the tents of the Syrians,* &c.] Of their riches, and of their provisions; of which there was such a plenty, not only for present use, but for sale, *so that a measure of fine flour was* sold *for a shekel,* &c. *according to the word of the Lord:* by Elisha, ver. 1.

Ver. 17. *And the king appointed the lord, on whose hand he leaned, to have the charge of the gate,* &c.] Not to keep out the enemy, of which there was no danger; but to prevent disorders and tumults among the people, and that they might go out in an orderly and regular manner: *and the people trod upon him in the gate;* being eager to get out for food; and he endeavouring to keep order among them, they pressed upon him, and threw him down, and trampled him under foot; or he was placed here to regulate the

[a] Ut supra, sect. 5.
[a] De Animal. l. 12. c. 34.

[b] Geograph. l. 15. p. 500.
[c] Ut supra.

market, that every one might be supplied in course, but through the people's pressing to get provisions, he was overborne, and trod upon: *and died, as the man of God had said, who spake when the king came down to him;* so that he saw the plenty, but partook not of it, as he said, see ver. 2.

Ver. 18. *And it came to pass, as the man of God had spoken to the king, saying,* &c.] As in ver. 1. and what he said to the king there, and to the lord, in ver. 2. are repeated in this and the next verse, that it might be observed how exactly the prophecies were fulfilled.

Ver. 19. *And that lord answered the man of God, and said,* &c.] As in ver. 2. *and he said;* that is, Elisha, as in the same place.

Ver. 20. *And so it fell out unto him,* &c.] As the prophet predicted: *for the people trod upon him in the gate, and he died;* see the note on ver. 17.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL THE TANJORE

CHAP. VIII.

THIS chapter gives an account of some advice Elisha had formerly given to the Shunammite woman, and of the success of it, ver. 1—6. and of the sickness of the king of Syria, who sent to Elisha, then being at Damascus, by Hazael, to know whether he should recover; by whom a message was returned, and Hazael was told by the prophet he should be king of Syria, and exercise great cruelty in Israel, ver. 7—15. and of the bad reign of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, over Judah, ver. 16—24. and of the reign of his son Ahaziah, ver. 25—29.

Ver. 1. *Then spake Elisha unto the woman (whose son he had restored to life),* &c.] His hostess at Shunem, ch. iv. 8. *&c.* the following he said to her, not after the famine in Samaria, but before it, as some circumstances shew: *saying, arise, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst sojourn;* with the greatest safety to her person and property, and with the least danger to her moral and religious character: *for the Lord hath called for a famine, and it shall also come upon the land seven years;* which Jarchi says was the famine that was in the days of Joel; it was, undoubtedly, on account of the idolatry of Israel, and was double the time of that in the days of Elijah.

Ver. 2. *And the woman arose, and did after the saying of the man of God,* &c.] Whose words she had reason to believe; she having a son given to her according to his word, and this restored to life, when dead, through his intercession: *and she went with her household, and sojourned in the land of the Philistines:* which was not far from her native place, and where there was plenty of food, and she could have as free an exercise of her religion as in the idolatrous kingdom of Israel.

Ver. 3. *And it came to pass, at the seven years end, that the woman returned out of the land of the Philistines,* &c.] Either hearing that the famine was over, or believing that it was, the time being expired the prophet fixed for it: *and she went forth to cry unto the king for her house, and for her land;* which her nearest relations in her absence had seized upon, as heirs to them; or those in whose hands she had intrusted them refused, upon her return, to deliver them to her; or the king's officers had seized upon them for him, as forfeited to the crown by her going out of the land without leave; and now she needed a friend to speak for her to the king, which, in time past, she had no occasion for, and thought she never should, see ch. iv. 13.

Ver. 4. *And the king talked with Gehazi the servant of the man of God,* &c.] Elisha's servant, just at the same time the woman made her application to him; so that this was before he was dismissed from the service of the prophet, and consequently before the affair of Naaman's cure, and so before the siege of Samaria: *saying, tell me, I pray thee, all the great things that Elisha hath done;* the miracles he wrought, as the dividing of the waters of Jordan, and healing those near Jericho; the affair of procuring water for the armies of the three kings in Edom he needed not to relate, since Jehoram was an eye-witness thereof; the next was the multiplying the widow's cruse of oil, when he in course came to those that were done for the Shunammite woman.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass, as he was telling the king how he had restored a dead body to life,* &c.] Which was the Shunammite's son: *that, behold, the woman whose son he had restored to life cried to the king for her house, and for her land;* came and presented her petition to the king at that very instant: *and Gehazi said, my lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life;* the very person I am speaking of.

Ver. 6. *And when the king asked the woman, she told him,* &c.] The whole affair; how that she had a son according to the word of Elisha, when she had been barren, and her husband old; that this child was struck with sickness, and died; and that the prophet, through his prayers, restored it to life: *so the king appointed unto her a certain officer;* the word signifies an *eunuch;* him he ordered to attend upon her, and assist her, and see to it that she was put into the possession of her house and land: *saying, restore all that was her's, and all the fruits of the field, since the day that she left the land, even till now;* not only her house and land, but all the rent, profits, and dues arising from thence during the time of her absence: the Jews except the rent of her house.

Ver. 7. *And Elisha came to Damascus,* &c.] On what account, and when, is not certain, whether to convert Gehazi, as say the Jews[d]; or to confirm Naaman in the true religion he professed, for which he might be dismissed from his office, since another

[d] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 47. 1.

man was made general of the Syrian army; or on account of the famine; or rather it may be to anoint, or, however, to declare that Hazael would be king of Syria; see 1 Kings xix. 15. *and Benhadad the king of Syria was sick*: at the time he came thither, where his palace was, and now a Mahometan temple; a very extraordinary building, according to Benjamin the Jew[e]: *and it was told him, saying, the man of God is come hither*: the famous prophet in Israel, Elisha, through whom Naaman his general had been cured of his leprosy, of whom he had heard so much.

Ver. 8. *And the king said to Hazael*, &c.] The captain-general of his army: *take a present in thine hand, and go and meet the man of God*; who, perhaps, was not as yet come into the city, only into the region of Damascus: or rather *with thee*; so the Vulgate Latin and Arabic versions; and which Noldius[f] approves of, since a burden of 40 camels, ver. 9. could not be carried in the hand: *and inquire of the Lord by him, saying, shall I recover of this disease?* he did not desire him to pray the Lord that he might recover, only was curious to know whether he should or not, see ch. i. 2.

Ver. 9. *So Hazael went to meet him, and took a present with him*, &c.] As was usual when a prophet or seer was consulted, see 1 Sam. ix. 7. *even of every good thing of Damascus*; which was a very fruitful place, and had abundance of gardens and orchards in it, which yielded excellent fruit, and of such it is probable the present consisted, and which was large: *even 40 camels' burden*; which, as they are strong creatures, will bear a great deal. Abarbinel thinks, bread, flesh, and wine, and fowls, were in the present, but not gold, silver, and raiment, which the prophet had refused to take of Naaman; the Jews have a fable, that there was a precious stone in it, worth all the good things of Damascus: *and came and stood before him, and said, thy son Benhadad, king of Syria, hath sent me to thee, saying, shall I recover of this disease?* he calls him his son, in veneration of the prophet as a father, as such men were called.

Ver. 10. *And Elisha said unto him, go, say unto him, thou mayest certainly recover*, &c.] That is, of the disease; and there was not only a probability that he might recover of it, it not being a mortal one, but a certainty that he should not die of it, as he did not, but die a violent death, which the prophet predicts in the next clause; though some take these words not as a command, what he should say, but as a prediction of what he would say; that he would go and tell him he should certainly recover, because he would not discourage him, though the prophet assures him in the next clause that he should die: there is a various reading of these words; we follow the marginal reading, but the textual reading is, *say, thou shalt not certainly recover*, or *in living live*; which agrees with what follows: *howbeit* or *for the Lord hath shewed me, that he shall surely die*: though not of that sickness, nor a natural death, but a violent one, and that by the hand of this his servant, though he does not express it.

Ver. 11. *And he settled his countenance steadfastly*, &c.] Refrained himself as much as possible, that he might not weep, as some Jewish writers interpret it; or, as others, he turned his face on one side, and covered it with his hands, that Hazael might not see him weep; or rather he set his face on Hazael, and looked at him so wistly: *until he was ashamed*; that is, Hazael; the prophet looked him out of countenance: *and the man of God wept*: at the thought of what calamities the man before him, he looked on, would be the cause of in Israel, as the following words shew.

Ver. 12. *And Hazael said, Why weepeth my lord?* &c.] Imagining it was for the death of Benhadad he had predicted, for which he could see no reason; of the title, *my lord*, see 1 Kings xviii. 7. *and he answered, because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel*; which he foresaw by a spirit of prophecy; and Israel being his own people, he sympathized in their calamities before they came: *their strong holds wilt thou set on fire*; which should be taken by him, see ch. x. 32. *and their young men wilt thou slay with the sword*: in battle: *and wilt dash their children*; against rocks and stones, or stone walls, or upon the ground, floor, or pavement, as was usual in war[g], see Psal. cxxxvii. 9. *and rip up their women with child*; which was the height of barbarity and cruelty. Ben Gersom and Ben Melech interpret this of breaking down the walls of fortified cities, built strong, like hills and mountains; but this is supposed in the first clause.

Ver. 13. *And Hazael said, but what, is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?* &c.] What dost thou take me to be, a vile, impudent, fierce, and cruel creature, as a dog, to be guilty of so great inhumanity and barbarity as this? or what is thy servant? a dog, a mean abject creature, of no power and authority, incapable of doing such great things spoken of? to which sense not only what is predicted of him, said to be great, inclines, but what follows: *and Elisha answered, the Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria*; and that thou shalt have power enough to do this; this declaration, according to Ben Gersom, was the anointing of him, predicted 1 Kings xix. 15.

Ver. 14. *So he departed from Elisha, and came to his master*, &c.] Benhadad king of Syria: *who said to him, what said Elisha to thee?* concerning his recovery, which was the thing uppermost in his mind, and he was eagerly desirous to know how it would be: *and he answered, he told me* that *thou shouldest surely recover*; which was false; for he only said that he *might*, and not that he should; and he concealed what he also declared, that though he might recover of his disease, yet that he should surely die in another way.

Ver. 15. *And it came to pass on the morrow*, &c.] In such haste was Hazael to be king, as the prophet said he would be: *that he took a thick cloth, and dipped it in water, and spread it on his face, so that he died*; not that Benhadad took or ordered such a cloth to be dipped and laid on his own face, to allay the violent heat in him; but Hazael did this, and perhaps under such a pretence; but his real design was to strike in the heat, or suffocate him; for such a thick cloth, one

[e] Itinerar. p. 56.
[f] Ebr. Concord. Part. p. 189. No. 862.

[g] Vid. Homer. Iliad. 22. ver. 63, 64.

of the bed-cloths, made of goats' hair, as is supposed, being dipped in water, would suck in a great deal; and being laid on his face, would press hard, and he not able to throw it off, it would let in much water into his mouth and nostrils, and suffocate him, without leaving any marks of violence, which might render his death suspicious: *and Hazael reigned in his stead*: having an interest in the army, of which he was general, and perhaps had done some exploits which had recommended him to the regard of the people.

Ver. 16. *And in the fifth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel*, &c.] Who began his reign in the 18th year of Jehoshaphat, ch. iii. 1. *Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah*: as he continued to be two years more; for this must be in the 23d year of his reign, and he reigned 25 years, 1 Kings xxii. 42. *Jehoram the son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah began to reign*: according to Dr. Lightfoot[h], there were three beginnings of his reign: *first*, when his father went with Ahab to Ramoth-gilead, when he was left regent, and afterwards his father reassumed the kingdom; the *second* time was, when Jehoshaphat went with the kings of Israel and Edom against Moab; and this is the time here respected, which was in the fifth of Joram king of Israel; and the *third* time was, at the death of his father; but now his father was living.

Ver. 17. *Thirty and two years old was he when he began to reign*, &c.] The second time, in the life-time of his father: *and he reigned eight years in Jerusalem*: which ended in the twelfth year of Joram king of Israel, ver. 25.

Ver. 18. *And he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, as did the house of Ahab*, &c.] Imitated them in idolatry: *for the daughter of Ahab was his wife*: whose name was Athaliah, ver. 26. and by her he was drawn into idolatrous practices; of such bad consequence are marriages with idolaters; it is very much that so good a king as Jehoshaphat his father was should contract such an affinity; he suffered for it in more instances than one: *and he did evil in the sight of the Lord*; was guilty of idolatry, than which nothing was more displeasing to the Lord; for he made high places, and compelled his subjects to commit idolatry, 2 Chron. xxi. 11.

Ver. 19. *Yet the Lord would not destroy Judah for David his servant's sake*, &c.] Not for his merits, but for the mercy he assured him of: *as he promised him to give to him always a light*, and *to his children*; or a kingdom, as the Targum; therefore he would not utterly destroy the tribe, nor suffer the sceptre or government to depart from it till the Messiah came, see Psal. cxxxii. 11. 17.

Ver. 20. *In his days Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah*, &c.] Who had been tributary to Judah ever since the times of David, for the space of 150 years: *and made a king over themselves*; for though they are said to have kings, those were only deputy kings, as in 1 Kings xxii. 47. and now the prediction of Isaac began to be accomplished, Gen. xxvii. 40.

Ver. 21. *So Joram went over to Zair*, &c.] A city in Edom, the same with the Zaara of Ptolemy[i]; some take it to be the same with Seir, the mountain or country of that name: *and all the chariots with him*; all the chariots of war he had: *and he rose by night, and smote the Edomites which compassed him about*; who came out of their cities in great numbers, and surrounded him, he having entered into their country in an hostile way, to subdue them: *and the captains of the chariots*; which belonged to the Edomites; those he smote, 2 Chron. xxi. 9. *and the people fled into their tents*; the army being routed.

Ver. 22. *Yet Edom revolted from under the hand of Judah unto this day*, &c.] Joram not pursuing the enemy, and taking the advantage of the victory, but returning to his own land, the reason of which follows: *then Libnah revolted at the same time*; a considerable city in his own kingdom, a Levitical one; this revolt was occasioned, perhaps, by his idolatrous practices, and which he compelled his subjects to; of this city, see Josh. x. 29, and xxi. 13.

Ver. 23. *And the rest of the acts of Joram, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] Not in the canonical book of Chronicles, though some of his acts are recorded there, see 2 Chron. xxi. but in the annals of the kings of Judah, written by persons appointed for that purpose.

Ver. 24. *And Joram slept with his fathers*, &c.] Died as they did: *and was buried with his fathers in the city of David*; but not in the sepulchres of the kings, and without any funeral pomp, and without any mourning and lamentation for him, he being not beloved, and his life not at all desirable, 2 Chron. xxi. 19, 20. *and Ahaziah his son reigned in his stead*; of whom more is said in the following verses.

Ver. 25. *In the twelfth year of Joram the son of Ahab king of Israel did Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah begin to reign.*] He is called Jehoahaz, and said to be the youngest son of Jehoram, 2 Chron. xxi. 17.

Ver. 26. *Two-and-twenty years old was Ahaziah when he began to reign*, &c.] In 2 Chron. xxii. 2. he is said to be forty-two years of age; the solution of that difficulty is reserved for the note on that place: *and he reigned one year in Jerusalem*; which was the whole of his reign: *and his mother's name was Athaliah the daughter of Omri king of Israel*; that is, his granddaughter; for she was the daughter of Ahab the son of Omri, ver. 18. it was usual for grandchildren to be called children, sons and daughters, and perhaps she might be educated in the family of Omri.

Ver. 27. *And he walked in the way of the house of Ahab, and did evil in the sight of the Lord, as* did *the house of Ahab*, &c.] Worshipping the calves, and Baal also: *for he* was *the son-in-law of the house of Ahab*; he was the son of Jehoram, who was son-in-law to Ahab, having married his daughter, which accounts for his being guilty of the same idolatrous practices.

Ver. 28. *And he went with Joram the son of Ahab*, &c.] His mother's brother, and so his uncle: *to the war against Hazael king of Syria in Ramoth-gilead*; which he went to recover out of the hands of the king of Syria, as his father Ahab had attempted in his time; in which he was assisted by Jehoshaphat, as now Joram was by a grandson of his: *and the Syrians wounded Joram*; as they did his father Ahab at the

[h] Works, vol. 1. p. 84.

[i] Geograph. l. 5. c. 17.

same place, though his wound was not mortal, as his father's was.

Ver. 29. *And King Joram went back*, &c.] From Ramoth, having taken it, and left his army there: *to be healed in Jezreel of the wounds which the Syrians had given him at Ramah*: the same with Ramoth-gilead: *when he fought against Hazael king of Syria*; for Ben-hadad being dead, he was now king in his room, ver. 15. *and Ahaziah the son of Jehoram king of Judah went down to see Joram the son of Ahab in Jezreel, because he was sick*; of the wounds which he had received, which might occasion a feverish disorder; and so it was brought about in Providence that Ahaziah should here meet with the destruction appointed for him, of which in the following chapter. See 2 Chron. xxii. 7.

C H A P. IX.

In this chapter we are told that one of the sons of the prophets was sent by Elisha to anoint Jehu king of Israel, and to order him to smite and destroy the whole house of Ahab, ver. 1—10. which being done unto him, and the order received by Jehu, he acquainted his captains with it, ver. 11—15. who set out with him immediately to Jezreel, ver. 16—21. where he slew Joram king of Israel, ver. 22—26. and Ahaziah king of Judah, ver. 27, 28, 29. and Jezebel, the widow of Ahab, and mother of Joram, ver. 30—37.

Ver. 1. *And Elisha the prophet called one of the children of the prophets*, &c.] Who the Jews generally say [k] was Jonah the son of Amittai: *and said, gird up thy loins*; his loose and long garments about his loins, for quicker dispatch in travelling: *and take this box of oil in thine hand*; for an use after directed to: *and go to Ramoth-gilead*; where Joram had left his army with his captains, to keep the city from the Syrians.

Ver. 2. *And when thou comest thither*, &c.] To Ramoth-gilead; but from whence he went is uncertain, doubtless where there was a school of the prophets, perhaps that which was erected near Jordan, on the other side of which lay Ramoth-gilead, ch. vi. 1, 2. *look out there Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi*; the same that Elijah was ordered to anoint, but it was deferred till now, a reprieve being granted to Ahab upon his humiliation, 1 Kings xix. 16. and xxi. 29. *and go in, and make him arise up from among his brethren*; the captains of the army: *and carry him into an inner chamber*; a chamber within a chamber, as in the original; this he was to do for secrecy, that it might not be seen what he did to Jehu; and lest he should be prevented doing it by the captains, or be exposed to danger for doing it; since that might be deemed treason to do what he was to do, and did, as follows.

Ver. 3. *Then take the box of oil, and pour it on his head*, &c.] When in the chamber together alone: *and say, thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel*; which was done, not with the anointing-oil in the temple, which could not be come at; and with which, as Kimchi from their Rabbins says, only the kings of the house of David were anointed, and they only when there was a division, or the crown was translated to another family, as was the case now; but with common oil, or the oil of balsam, such as the prophet had in his house: *then open the door and flee, and tarry not*; lest he should be examined by the captains, and come into danger; though before he went out he was to say what is recorded in ver. 7, 8, 9, 10.

Ver. 4. *So the young man, even the young man the prophet, went to Ramoth-gilead.*] It is repeated, that it might be observ[ed] that it was a young man that went, who was mo[re fit] for this service than Elisha, partly because of his age, and partly because he would be less known; as also his age is remarked, this being a bold and daring action in a young man to anoint a new king, as well as it was honourable; and moreover, he was not only one of the sons of the prophets, but was a prophet himself, though young, and still a more fit person for such a service; though the Targum is, a young man, a disciple of the prophets.

Ver. 5. *And when he came, behold, the captains of the host were sitting*, &c.] Either at a table, being at dinner, or at a council of war: *and he said, I have an errand unto thee, O captain*; looking and directing his speech to Jehu; or, *I have a word to thee* [l]; something to say to thee, intimating that he desired to speak to him alone: *and Jehu said, unto which of all us?* not perhaps at first thoroughly understanding who he meant; or however was willing to have it repeated and explained, that it might be manifest to the whole company that he was intended: *and he said, to thee, O captain*; and to him only.

Ver. 6. *And he arose, and went into the house*, &c.] Into the inner chamber in it: *and he poured the oil on his head, and said unto him, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel*; for though they were fallen into idolatry, and from the pure worship of God, yet the Lord had still a right unto them, and as yet he had not wrote a *lo-ammi* upon them; and there were many among them which had not bowed the knee to Baal.

Ver. 7. *And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master*, &c.] For Jehu was one of Ahab's captains, as he was now one of his son's, as appears from ver. 25. but this was to be no objection with him to the destroying of his house, as being an act of high treason, since he had an order for it from the King of kings, and Lord of lords; which otherwise would have seemed unlawful and criminal, and what follows will sufficiently vindicate the justice of God in it: *that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of*

[k] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 18. p. 47.

[l] דבר לי אליך verbum mihi ad te, Pagninus. Montanus, Vatablus.

Jezebel: who killed the prophets of the Lord, and caused to be put to death Naboth the servant of the Lord, and now their blood was to be avenged on her and her son Joram, and all her family.

Ver. 8. *For the whole house of Ahab shall perish*, &c.] Be cut off by death, and that in a violent manner, not one should escape: *and I will cut off from Ahab him that pisseth against the wall, and him that is shut up and left in Israel*; of these phrases, see the notes on 1 Kings xiv. 10. and xxi. 21.

Ver. 9. *And I will make the house of Ahab*, &c.] The same is threatened in 1 Kings xxi. 22. see the note there.

Ver. 10. *And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel*, &c.] Or in the field of Jezreel; the Targum is, the inheritance of Jezreel; this is also threatened, 1 Kings xxi. 23. *and* there shall be *none to bury* her; or nothing of her to bury, as Kimchi, all being eaten up but her skull, feet, and the palms of her hands, see ver. 35. *and he opened the door, and fled*: that is, the young man of the sons of the prophets, as soon as he had said the above words, as he was ordered, lest he should be taken up for a traitor.

Ver. 11. *Then Jehu came forth to the servants of his lord*, &c.] The rest of the captains of the army, who served under Joram as he did: *and one said unto him*, is *all well?* one of the captains, the greatest of them, as Kimchi; he inquired whether he brought any ill news, since he came and went in such haste: *wherefore came this mad* fellow *to thee?* so profane men, especially the worshippers of Baal, as those captains might be, were wont to call the prophets of the Lord, because of their habit, their manner of living, and the gestures they sometimes used in prophesying, and especially because of the things they prophesied of; and even prophets were sometimes called so, because, in the time of their prophesying, they appeared as madmen[m], and in a phrensy: *and he said unto them, ye know the man, and his communication*: you saw by his habit of what profession he is, and you may easily guess what he talked of, as such men usually do, about religion, and one whimsical thing or another, reproving men for their sins, and telling them what they ought to do; and such-like things you may well imagine he has been talking of to me; you rightly call him a mad fellow, and you may well suppose his discourse was agreeably to his character, and not worth relating and hearing; this he said, to put them off inquiring any further.

Ver. 12. *And they said*, it is *false, tell us now*, &c.] They did not believe he spoke truth, but concealed from them the real matter; which they concluded to be of some importance, by the hastiness of the messenger, the privacy between them, the countenance of Jehu, which discovered thoughtfulness and concern, and the trifling answer he sought to put them off with; all which increased their curiosity, and made them urgent and importunate to know the truth of the matter: *and he said, thus and thus spake he to me*: such and such words as above: and particularly *saying, thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel*: and no doubt told them that he poured oil on his head, and anointed him, and he might shew them the oil.

Ver. 13. *Then they hasted, and took every man his garment, and put* it *under him on the top of the stairs*, &c.] That is, under Jehu, that he might be raised higher, and put on an eminence above them, agreeably to the high rank and dignity he was raised unto, and which they hereby acknowledged; and that he might be conspicuous to others: and this was done upon the top of the stairs, the first and highest of them, which led up either to an upper room, or to a scaffold erected for this purpose; the Targum is, on the degree of hours, a sun-dial, a stone on which were engraven the twelve hours of the day, and which, by the sun's shadow on it, it might be known what hour it was; and at, or upon this stone, they laid their clothes, for Jehu to sit upon; not their wearing-apparel, but carpets, or pieces of tapestry, or such-like things: *and blew with trumpets, saying, Jehu is king*; and they might come the more easily into such an acknowledgment of him as such, though he was anointed by one whom they had just called a mad fellow; being not so well affected to Ahab's family, and having a great respect for Jehu, the chief commander of the army, and especially being under a particular influence of the divine Providence, which moved them to take such a step.

Ver. 14. *So Jehu the son of Jehoshaphat the son of Nimshi conspired against Joram*, &c.] He and the captains with him entered into a confederacy to depose Joram, and set him up as king: *now Joram had kept Ramoth-gilead, he and all Israel, because of Hazael king of Syria*; having taken it, he left his army in it, under the command of his captains, of which Jehu was the chief, to keep it from the king of Syria; which gave Jehu a fairer opportunity, having the army at his command, and at a distance from Joram, of forming a conspiracy against him.

Ver. 15. *But King Joram was returned to be healed in Jezreel*, &c.] As is recorded, ch. viii. 29. and here repeated for the reason above given: *and Jehu said, if it be your minds*; to engage one and all, and heartily, in this conspiracy, and to make me king: then *let none go forth nor escape out of the city, to go to tell it in Jezreel*; that so Joram might be surprised unawares, and have no opportunity either of fleeing or of preparing for his defence.

Ver. 16. *So Jehu rode in a chariot*, &c.] In great pomp and majesty as a king: *and went to Jezreel*: set forward on a march thither with his captains, and part of his army at least, from Ramoth-gilead; which, according to Bunting[n], was 24 miles: *for Joram lay there*; to be cured of his wounds, as before observed: *and Ahaziah king of Judah was come down to see Joram*; see ch. viii. 29.

Ver. 17. *And there stood a watchman on the tower of Jezreel*, &c.] Who could see afar off when an enemy was coming, and his business was to give notice of it; and especially he was now on his watch-tower, because the king was there, and this was necessary for his safety: *and he spied the company of Jehu as he came, and said, I see a company*: a troop of soldiers, though

[m] David de Pomis, Lexic. p. 204. 2.

[n] Travels, &c. p. 166.

he did not know who they were, and to whom they belonged, whether they were Syrians or Israelites; which was reported to the king: *and Joram said, take an horseman, and send to meet them, and let him say, is it peace?* he might fear some ill had befallen his army at Ramoth-gilead, and the Syrians had got the advantage of them; or they had made an irruption into his country, and were coming to attack him at Jezreel; or there was an insurrection among his own people.

Ver. 18. *So there went one on horseback to meet him, and said, thus saith the king,* is it *peace?* &c.] Are things well in the army, or any disturbance in the kingdom? are you come as friends or enemies? *and Jehu said, what hast thou to do with peace?* or to ask such a question: *turn thee behind me;* which he was obliged to do, Jehu having such a company of soldiers with him; and this he did, that he might carry no tidings to Joram, that he might not know as yet who he and his company were: *and the watchman told, saying, the messenger came to them, but he cometh not again;* of this he sent word to the king what he had observed.

Ver. 19. *Then he sent out a second on horseback, which came to them, and said,* &c.] The same as the first messenger did, and had the same answer, and was bid to do the same as in the preceding verse.

Ver. 20. *And the watchman told, saying, he came even unto them, and cometh not again,* &c.] Was detained, as the other was: *and the driving is like the driving of Jehu the son of Nimshi;* for, coming nearer, the watchman could discern the manner of his driving: *for he driveth furiously;* in great haste, making much speed, being a man of a very warm and active spirit; and now being eager to come up with Joram, and seize him unprepared, and ascend the throne; the Targum is the reverse, "for he driveth quietly or slowly," being desirous of drawing Joram out of the city, and get him into his hands, and slay him, that he might not have the trouble of besieging the place, which was able to hold out some time against him; and besides, he remémbered the prophecy of Elisha, that Naboth's blood would be requited in the field of Jezreel, ver. 26. and therefore was desirous of drawing him out of the city, in order to slay him there.

Ver. 21. *And Joram said, make ready,* &c.] The chariot, put to the horses; bind them, as the word signifies, to the chariot: *and his chariot was made ready;* by his servants immediately: *and Joram king of Israel and Ahaziah king of Judah went out, each in his chariot;* not both in the same chariot, but each in his own, for the sake of greater magnificence: *and they went out against Jehu;* not in an hostile manner, for they had no notion of him as an enemy; though it is much they had no suspicion of him by his detaining the messengers; but Joram perhaps thought he was desirous of delivering his message himself; and in honour to him, and also being eager to know what it was, went out to meet him: *and met him in the portion of Naboth the Jezreelite;* which had been his, and where, or near it, he was stoned, and his blood shed; a very inauspicious place to meet him in.

Ver. 22. *And it came to pass, when Joram saw Jehu, that he said, is it peace, Jehu?* &c.] Have things gone well at Ramoth-gilead? art thou come in triumph from thence? or obliged to fly from the Syrians? or art thou come in a peaceable, or in an hostile manner to me? *and he answered, what peace;* canst thou expect at home or abroad, from me or others: *so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?* which may be understood both literally of corporeal whoredom, and diabolical arts she was addicted to, and figuratively of idolatry, often called whoredom in Scripture, and of the wicked arts and methods she made use of to inveigle and entice persons into it; and both these very often went together; see Nahum iii. 4. and of which Joram was guilty, at least in part; he connived at all in her, and did not attempt to restrain her, and therefore had no claim to peace, protection, and safety.

Ver. 23. *And Joram turned his hand, and fled,* &c.] Taking hold of the horses' reins with it to turn them, or by the motion of it directing the charioteer to turn them back towards Jezreel, whither he fled: *and said to Ahaziah,* there is *treachery, O Ahaziah;* a conspiracy formed, and rebellion raised by the captains, at the head of which he supposed Jehu was.

Ver. 24. *And Jehu drew a bow with his full strength,* &c.] To give the arrow all the force he could; *and smote Jehoram between his arms;* that is, between his shoulders, his back being turned to him, and the chariot an open one: *and the arrow went out at his heart;* quite through him: *and he sunk down in his chariot;* and died immediately.

Ver. 25. *Then said* Jehu *to Bidkar his captain,* &c.] Not Joram's, But Jehu's captain, though he had been the former's, and his father Ahab's also: *take up,* and *cast him in the portion of the field of Naboth the Jezreelite;* near to which they were: *for remember how that, when I and thou rode together after Ahab his father:* either in the same chariot, or on horseback side by side, his guards or retinue following him two and two: *the Lord laid this burden upon him;* this heavy denunciation of vengeance by Elijah the prophet; and they being together, and pretty near, heard it, as he might remember, which follows.

Ver. 26. *Surely I have seen yesterday the blood of Naboth,* &c.] These are the words of the Lord to Elijah the day after Naboth was put to death: *and the blood of his sons, said the Lord;* who were put to death with him, that there might be no heirs to the estate: *and I will requite thee in this place;* take vengeance here, as he now did on his son: *now therefore take* and *cast him into the plat* of ground, *according to the word of the Lord;* whereby it would be fulfilled, see 1 Kings xxi. 19. more is here recited than there, which Jehu well remembered.

Ver. 27. *But when Ahaziah the king of Judah saw this,* &c.] That Joram was slain: *he fled by the way of the garden-house,* which perhaps stood upon the spot where Naboth's vineyard was, turned into a garden by Ahab: *and Jehu followed after him;* as far as Samaria, where he was hid, 2 Chron. xxii. 9. *and said, smite him also in the chariot;* this order he gave to his soldiers, to do to him as he had done to Joram: and they did so, *at the going up to Gur, which is by Ibleam;* a city in the tribe of Manasseh, Josh. xvii. 11. *and he fled to Megiddo;* after he was wounded; another

city in the same tribe, Josh. xvii. 11. *and died there;* at Megiddo; though some think that from thence he was had by his servants to Samaria, and there hid, and, being found, was brought from thence to Jezreel, where he was slain, and died. Jehu was ordered to destroy the whole house of Ahab, and Ahaziah was of that house by his mother's side, and walked in the way of it, and was in conjunction with it, and perished therewith; this, though here recorded, was after the death of Jezebel, and of the 70 sons of Ahab, and of the brethren of Ahaziah.

Ver. 28. *And his servants carried him in a chariot to Jerusalem,* &c.] With the leave of Jehu, because he was the grandson of Jeshoshaphat, a sincere worshipper of God, 2 Chron. xxii. 9. *and buried him in his sepulchre with his fathers in the city of David:* see 1 Kings xxii. 50.

Ver. 29. *And in the eleventh year of Joram the son of Ahab began Ahaziah to reign over Judah.*] In ch. viii. 25. it is said to be in the 12th year of his reign; it was at the close of the 11th, and the beginning of the 12th; or he began to reign with his father in the 11th as here, and in the 12th as there, when his father was dead.

Ver. 30. *And when Jehu was come to Jezreel, Jezebel heard* of it, &c.] And of what he had done to Joram: *and she painted her face:* or put *stibium* on her eyes; a sort of paint, to make them look beautiful; perhaps the same with powder of lead ore, the Moors now use to tinge their eyebrows with, and make them look black, which they reckon graceful, see the note on Ezek. xxiii. 40. this custom now obtains among the white Indians, who, to heighten the lustre of their complexion, and render their eyes more languishing, put a little black about them [a]: *and tired her head:* dressed her head in the most elegant manner; not with a view to tempt Jehu, which she could not expect, being an aged woman; but for grandeur and majesty, and in the pride and haughtiness of her spirit, which she retained to the last, and resolved to keep up and shew in her extremity and calamity: *and looked out at a window:* in a bravado, as fearless of Jehu, and to dash him out of countenance if she could; or she might hope, by such a graceful and majestic appearance she made, that he would be moved to spare her life; though this does not so well agree with what follows as the former.

Ver. 31. *And as Jehu entered in at the gate,* &c.] Either of the city of Jezreel, or of the king's palace: *she said,* had *Zimri peace, who slew his master?* Elah the son of Baasha king of Israel; no, he had not; he reigned but seven days, and, being besieged, burnt the king's house over him, and died, 1 Kings xvi. 10, 18. suggesting that the like would be his fate, who had slain his master Joram; or the words may be rendered, *O Zimri, the slayer of his master;* calling Jehu so, because of his likeness to Zimri.

Ver. 32. *And he lifted up his face to the window,* &c.] On hearing the above words: *and said, who is on my side, who?* and will assist in taking vengeance on this haughty, imperious, and abusive woman: *and there looked out to him two or three eunuchs:* who used to wait on her, as such did on women of quality, and attend them in their bedchambers; these, by their looks, signified they were ready to do any thing Jehu should direct them, Jezebel having been, perhaps, a very cruel mistress to them, and so was hated by them; and they might hope, by pleasing Jehu, to be continued at court in their office.

Ver. 33. *And he said, throw her down,* &c.] Out of the window upon the ground: *so they threw her down;* took her up, and cast her headlong, as they were bid: *and some of her blood was sprinkled on the wall;* of the palace where she was: *and on the horses:* which drew the chariot of Jehu: *and he trod her under foot:* with his horses; according to Kimchi, her sentence, and so her death, was stoning, as a retaliation of Naboth; for stoning was done two ways, both by casting down persons on stones, and by casting stones upon them, see the note on Acts vii. 58.

Ver. 34. *And when he was come in,* &c.] To the palace: *he did eat and drink:* to refresh himself after so long a march, and doing such execution: *and said, go see now this cursed* woman; who had been the means of bringing a curse on Israel through her idolatry, and upon Ahab and his family, and upon herself, body and soul, being cursed of God and of men: *and bury her:* forgetting the prophecy concerning her, though afterwards he remembered it: *for she is a king's daughter:* the daughter of Ethbaal king of the Zidonians, 1 Kings xvi. 31. and therefore, in honour to royal dignity, though a cursed woman, he ordered the interment of her; or *though* she is the daughter of one of the kings of the nations of the world, as Kimchi, yet honour must be given to whom it is due.

Ver. 35. *And they went to bury her,* &c.] The servants of Jehu, according to his orders and instructions; *but they found no more of her than the scull, and the feet, and the palms of her hands:* the flesh, and even all the rest of her bones, being devoured by dogs, so that there was scarce any thing of her to be buried, as in ver. 10. something similar to this happened to Ascletarion, a mathematician, as related by Suetonius [b].

Ver. 36. *Wherefore they came again, and told him,* &c.] How things were, and what only could be found of Jezebel: *and he said, this is the word of the Lord;* or the fulfilment of it: *which he spake by his servant Elijah the Tishbite, saying;* as in 1 Kings xxi. 23.

Ver. 37. *And the carcass of Jezebel shall be as dung upon the face of the field in the portion of Jezreel,* &c.] For upon this spot her carcass fell when thrown out of the window of the king's palace, and here it was left; for the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, which was in the portion of Jezreel, was hard-by the palace, 1 Kings xxi. 1. there seems to be some allusion to her name Jezebel, which signifies *where is dung? so that they shall not say, this* is *Jezebel;* there being nothing left of her to be seen or pointed to, nor any grave nor monument over it on which was such an inscription, here lies Jezebel; or that might lead posterity to say, this is Jezebel's grave. Now though the words of this verse are not recorded elsewhere, as the words of the Lord, by Elijah, yet as Jehu was pre-

[a] Agreement of Customs between East Indians and Jews, art. 15. p. 65.

[b] In Vita Domitian. c. 15.

sent when they were spoken, and within the hearing of them, he now remembered them, and could repeat them, these circumstances bringing them fresh to his mind.

CHAP. X.

THIS chapter gives a further account of the destruction of the house of Ahab by Jehu, or his orders, even of all his sons and relations, ver. 1—11. and also of the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah, ver. 12—14. of his taking up Jehonadab the son of Rechab into his chariot, to be a witness of his zeal for the Lord, ver. 15, 16, 17. and of his gathering together the prophets, priests, and worshippers of Baal, and slaying them, ver. 18—25. and of his extirpation of the idolatry of Baal, ver. 26, 27, 28. nevertheless he continued the worship of the calves, ver. 29, 30, 31. wherefore Israel was distressed by the king of Syria, ver. 32, 33. and the chapter is concluded with the reign and death of Jehu, ver. 34, 35, 36.

Ver. 1. *And Ahab had seventy sons in Samaria*, &c.] These might not be all his immediate sons, but some of them his grandsons, as such are sometimes called in Scripture: *and Jehu wrote letters, and sent to Samaria, unto the rulers of Jezreel;* who fled thither, perhaps on Jehu's coming to Jezreel, having slain Joram, being the metropolis of the kingdom, to consult about a successor, or how to oppose Jehu, and to frustrate his designs: but the Septuagint version is, *to the rulers of Samaria*, which seems most likely to be the true reading: *to the elders;* the civil magistrates of the city of Samaria: *and to them that brought up Ahab's children:* who had the care of their education; who either always dwelt at Samaria, being the royal city, or were sent with their charge thither, when Joram went to Ramoth-gilead, for safety, supposing he should be worsted by the Syrians; or they fled thither with them upon the death of Joram: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 2. *Now as soon as this letter cometh to you, seeing your master's sons are with you*, &c.] Sons of Ahab, and some of Joram, and all either the sons or grandsons of Ahab: *and there are with you chariots and horses:* military ones: *a fenced city also;* as Samaria was, well walled and fortified, and able to hold out a long siege: *and armour;* of all sorts, to arm themselves and people with in their defence.

Ver. 3. *Look even out the best and meetest of your master's sons*, &c.] Most fit for government, whether on account of age or proper qualifications, as wisdom, courage, &c. *and set him on his father's throne;* proclaim him king: *and fight for your master's house;* that the crown may continue in his family; all which he did not desire might be, but in this sarcastic and sneering manner dares them to do it.

Ver. 4. *But they were exceedingly afraid*, &c.] They were intimidated at once; for they saw the purport of those letters, that should they attempt any thing of this kind, he would come upon them with his forces: *and said, behold, two kings stood not before him;* the kings of Israel and Judah, Joram and Ahaziah; but they were unarmed, and therefore how should they stand before an armed body of men Jehu had with him? this shews the pusillanimity of these men to make use of such an argument as this: *how then shall we stand?* that is, before Jehu; but they were in much better circumstances than the two kings, as they are truly represented in ver. 2.

Ver. 5. *And he that was over the house*, &c.] The king's palace in Samaria, who had the custody, care, and government of it: *and he that was over the city;* the commander and governor of it, that had the highest post in it under the king: *the elders also;* all other subordinate officers and magistrates: *and the bringers up* of the children; who had the education of the king's sons committed to them: *sent to Jehu, saying, we are thy servants, and will do all that thou shalt bid us;* they were ready to do homage, and swear allegiance to him as their king, and obey all his commands as faithful subjects: *we will not make any king;* or set up any on the throne, no, not any of the sons or grandsons of Ahab: *do thou* that which is *good in thine eyes;* we will never oppose thee.

Ver. 6. *Then he wrote a letter the second time to them*, &c.] Having gained his point by the former: *saying, if ye be mine;* acknowledge yourselves my subjects and servants; *and if ye will hearken to my voice;* obey my commands: *take ye the heads of the men your master's sons;* that is, take off their heads: *and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time;* meaning with the heads along with them: *(now the king's sons, being seventy persons, were with the great men of the city, which brought them up;)* they were in their houses, and under their tuition, and so had an authority over them, and could dispose of them at pleasure; they were not ordinary persons to whose care they were committed, but the principal men of the city.

Ver. 7. *And it came to pass, when the letter came to them*, &c.] They did not in the least hesitate, but immediately complied with the contents of it: *that they took the king's sons, and slew* 70 *persons;* which was the whole number of them: *and put their heads in baskets, and sent* them *to Jezreel;* as a present to Jehu, just as they carried the first-fruits, as Abarbinel observes.

Ver. 8. *And there came a messenger, and told him, saying, they have brought the heads of the king's sons*, &c.] Perhaps this messenger to Jehu came from the great men of Samaria themselves, to let him know that they had obeyed his orders: *and he said, lay ye them in two heaps at the entering in of the gate until the morning;* very probably it was towards or at the evening they were brought; and he ordered them to be taken out of the baskets, and laid in two heaps at the entering of the gate of the city, that they might be taken notice of, and publicly viewed by the people that passed and repassed the gate; and where they met

in great numbers, either on account of the market there, or court of judicature there held, especially in mornings; and here they were to remain till the morning, though not without a guard, that they might still be more exposed to view; Noldius[r] renders it, *without the door of the gate*, for they were brought at night, when the gate was shut.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass in the morning, that he went out, and stood, and said to all the people*, &c.] Who were gathered together to this shocking sight, or on the above accounts: *ye be righteous*; having had no concern in taking off the heads of those men: *behold, I conspired against my master, and slew him*; I own it, and some may blame me for it, and charge me with treason and murder: *but who slew all these?* not he, but the chief men of Samaria, and therefore must be more guilty than he, having shed the blood of so many persons, who had not offended against God and man to so great a degree as Joram; this he said to lessen his own sin, and wipe off the reproach of it, that his character might appear fairer in the eyes of the people, concealing, at the same time, his orders for the slaying of them.

Ver. 10. *Know now, that there shall fall unto the earth nothing of the word of the Lord, which the Lord spake concerning the house of Ahab*, &c.] He would have them observe, that all this, and what else should follow of the same kind, were and would be brought about by the providence of God, according to divine predictions, and as just punishments on Ahab's family for their sins; and therefore neither he nor others were to be blamed for what was done, since they were only instruments made use of by the Lord, who both foretold all this, and gave orders for the execution of it: *for the Lord hath done* that *which he spake by his servant Elijah*; see 1 Kings xxi. 21, 29.

Ver. 11. *So Jehu slew all that remained of the house of Ahab in Jezreel*, &c.] Which to do, and to justify himself in so doing, was the design of what he said in the preceding verses: *and his great men*; his ministers of state and counsellors, that advised him to, and abetted him in his idolatrous practices, and so justly suffered for the same; and perhaps some of them at least were those very men that cut off the heads of his sons in complaisance to Jehu: *and his kinsfolks*; more distantly related to him, or his acquaintance and familiars, his associates in sin and wickedness: *and his priests*: who officiated for him, and offered his sacrifices to Baal; the priests he kept in his palace, and ate at his table: *until he left him none remaining*; either of his kindred or his priests, that is, that were at Jezreel; for there were others at Samaria, ver. 17, 19.

Ver. 12. *And he arose and departed, and came to Samaria*, &c.] To make a clear riddance there of all that belonged to Ahab, as at Jezreel, and abolish idolatry there: and *as he was at the shearing-house in the way*; or, *the house of the binding of the shepherds*, who, in shearing their sheep, bind their legs together; the Targum is, "the house of the gathering of the shepherds;" where they used to meet and converse together; with some it is the proper name of a place, Betheked, a country-village between Jezreel and Samaria. Jerom speaks[s] of a village of this name, situated in a large plain, about 15 miles from a place called Legion, which village he takes to be this here.

Ver. 13. *Jehu met with the brethren of Ahaziah king of Judah*, &c.] At the above place; these were the sons of his brethren, called his brethren, as Lot was called Abraham's brother, being his brother's son; for as for his brethren, they had been slain by the Arabians before he was made king, 2 Chron. xxii. 1, 8. *and said, who are ye?* though perhaps he knew who they were: *and they answered, we are the brethren of Ahaziah*; the sons of his brethren: *and we go down to salute the children of the king, and the children of the queen*; meaning either the children of Ahab and Jezebel, or of Joram and his queen; for they knew nothing of the death of Joram and Jezebel, and the revolution made in the kingdom, and therefore with great simplicity tell who they were, and where they were going, and on what account.

Ver. 14. *And he said, take them alive*, &c.] Gave orders to his guards to seize them, and make them captives: *and they took them alive, and slew them at the pit of the shearing-house*; where they washed the sheep when they sheered them; even 42 *men, neither left he any of them*; they being, by their grandmother's side, of the house of Ahab, and so within the commission of Jehu to slay them, at least as he thought; though his chief view might be, lest they should make any pretensions to the crown, being descended from that house, or should hereafter attempt to avenge the death of their relations; but by the judgment of God they were cut off as idolaters.

Ver. 15. *And when he was departed thence*, &c.] From Betheked, or the shearing-house: *he lighted on Jehonadab the son of Rechab* coming *to meet him*; a Kenite, a descendant of Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, a wise and good man, as appears by the laws and rules he gave to his posterity, who continued to the times of Jeremiah, and were then observant of them, Jer. xxxv. 6—10. this good man hearing of Jehu's coming to the throne, and of his destruction of the idolatrous family of Ahab, and of his zeal for the worship of God, and against idolatry, came forth from his tent to meet him, and congratulate him upon it: *and he saluted him*; Jonadab saluted Jehu, according to Abarbinel; or *blessed him*[t], wished him all happiness in his kingdom, and success in the reformation of it; though most understand it of Jehu's saluting Jonadab, which seems best to agree with the following: *and said to him, is thy heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?* that is, hast thou the same cordial affection and sincere respect for me as I have for thee? *and Jehonadab answered, it is*; to which some join the next clause, and read, *and it is*; which is doubling the answer, for the confirmation of it, as Kimchi says; though he also observes, that the latter may be interpreted as the answer of Jehu, by way of interrogation, *is it?* then *give* me *thine hand*; and to the same purpose is our version, *if it be, and he gave* him *his hand*; Jonadab

[r] Ebr. Conc. Part. p. 69. No. 340.
[s] De loc. Heb. fol. 89. K.

[t] ויברכהו & benedixit ei. V. L. Montanus.

gave Jehu his hand as a token of sincere friendship[s], and cordial respect, and for the confirmation of the covenant between them, as Ben Melech; who also observes, that Jehu might bid him give him his hand to help him up into the chariot, since it follows, *and he took him up to him into the chariot:* to ride with him to Samaria; the company of such a man, so famous for wisdom and goodness, he knew would give him much countenance among the people, and sanction to what he did.

Ver. 16. *And he said, come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord of hosts,* &c.] In destroying idolaters and idolatry, with an intent to do which he was going to Samaria; this seems to savour very much of vain glory, hypocrisy, and a pharisaical spirit: *so they made him ride in his chariot:* the servants of Jehu by his order opened the chariot-door, and assisted Jonadab in getting into it.

Ver. 17. *And when he came to Samaria, he slew all that remained unto hab Ain Samaria,* &c.] All that were in any connexion with him, as related to his family, or as ministers of his in civil or religious things: *till he had destroyed him:* his whole house, as he was ordered: *according to the word of the Lord, which he spake to Elijah:* which is observed, to shew the exact fulfilment of prophecy, see 1 Kings xxi. 21.

Ver. 18. *And Jehu gathered all the people together,* &c.] The people of Samaria, at least the principal of them: *and said unto them, Ahab served Baal a little, but Jehu shall serve him much:* which some understand as spoken ironically; but the words seem to be spoken with a design to deceive the idolatrous inhabitants of Samaria, making them to believe that he was hearty in the worship of Baal, and should shew a greater respect to it, and more constantly attend it, than Ahab had done; and this he said with a view to draw them to the temple of Baal, and there destroy them, as the sequel shews; and in which he is not to be justified, however good his intention was; for evil is not to be done that good may come.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore call unto me all the prophets of Baal, all his servants, and all his priests, let none be wanting,* &c.] All that were employed in the several parts of religious worship given him, and in performing any rite and ceremony belonging to it; in invocation of him, and singing praises to him, as the prophets; in offering sacrifices to him, as the priests; or in assisting them in their service, who may be meant by his servants or ministers: *for I have a great sacrifice to do to Baal:* by which, though he might mean a sacrifice of his prophets, priests, servants, and worshippers, he would have it otherwise understood, and his design was to deceive, which cannot be justified: *whosoever shall be wanting, he shall not live:* but be put to death; this he said, pretending his great zeal for Baal, when his view was by this threatening to get all his worshippers together to destroy them, that none might escape, as follows: *but Jehu did it in subtlety, to the intent that he might destroy the worshippers of Baal:* the Targum renders it, *with wisdom:* but Jarchi and Ben Gersom much better, in deceit; the word signifies supplantation, such as Esau charged Jacob with.

Ver. 20. *And Jehu said, proclaim a solemn assembly for Baal,* &c.] Such as with the Jews was an holy convocation, when they were forbidden and restrained from doing any work on that day; and such a day Jehu would have appointed and proclaimed for Baal, that the people might be at leisure to attend: *and they proclaimed it:* according to his order, in Samaria.

Ver. 21. *And Jehu sent through all Israel,* &c.] Persons to proclaim this solemn assembly: *and all the worshippers of Baal came, so that there was not a man left that came not:* some no doubt came cheerfully, having no suspicion of him, and the rather, as he might have been a worshipper of Baal in the times of Ahab; and as for what he had done to Baal's priests, they might consider that only as they were in connexion with Ahab's family, whom to destroy was his political interest; and they were glad at heart their new king was so affected to Baal, and fond to see such a grand solemnity as they expected this to be; and others that might be suspicious of him, yet as they must die if they did not appear, and there was a possibility they might live, chose therefore to come: *and they came into the house of Baal:* the temple which Ahab had built for him in Samaria, 1 Kings xvi. 32. *and the house of Baal was full from one end to the other;* not only the body of the temple, but all the outward court, every *mouth,* or corner, as in the original text: and this single house might be sufficient for all in the land; since the number of them might be greatly lessened by the ministry of Elijah and Elisha, as well as by the destruction the former made of the prophets of Baal; and by the schools of the prophets set up in divers places, from whence prophets were sent out to instruct the people; and by Joram's putting away the image of Baal, which no doubt lessened the number of his worshippers.

Ver. 22. *And he said unto him that was over the vestry,* &c.] That had the care of the garments, in which the priests of Baal ministered: *bring forth vestments for all the worshippers of Baal:* not for the priests only, but for all that worshipped; and this he ordered for the greater solemnity of this service, as he would have it thought; but, in truth, that the worshippers of Baal might be separated, and distinguished from the worshippers of the Lord, that not one of them might be among them: *and he brought them forth vestments:* out of the chamber or wardrobe in which they were, and they put them on.

Ver. 23. *And Jehu went, and Jehonadab the son of Rechab, into the house of Baal,* &c.] Who no doubt was led into the secret, and knew the design of Jehu, or he would not have gone into such an idolatrous place: *and said unto the worshippers of Baal, search and look, that there be here with you none of the servants of the Lord, but the worshippers of Baal only:* pretending a great regard to the purity of their worship and sacrifices, that they might not be profaned[t] by the company of such who were not worshippers of Baal, but of Jehovah; whereas his view was to prevent any of the worshippers of God perishing with them, who

[s] Ipse pater dextram Anchises, &c. Virgil. Æneid. l. 2. prope finem. Vid. Servium in ib. Vid. Cornel. Nepot. Vit Themistocl. l. 2. c. 8. & Datam. l. 14. c. 10.

[t] —— procul, o procul este profani. Virgil. Æneid. 6. ver. 258.

might out of curiosity go in among them, to behold the manner of their service.

Ver. 24. *And when they went in to offer sacrifices and burnt-offerings*, &c.] To Baal, all things being ready for them: *Jehu appointed* 80 *men without;* without the temple of Baal, at the several doors and avenues of it: *and said, if any of the men whom I have brought into your hands escape*, he that letteth him go, *his life* shall be *for the life of him;* should be put to death for it in his room; the life of a watchman set to guard should go for the life of one that escaped.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass, as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt-offering*, &c.] The chief of the priests of Baal, whose office it was to do this service: *that Jehu said to the guard, and to the captains, go in* and *slay them, let none come forth;* this he said to the 80 men set to guard the temple, and the officers over them; and perhaps they might also have a reinforcement, since such a number seems scarcely sufficient to destroy so many as were here; though indeed it must be considered they were armed men: *and they smote them with the edge of the sword;* put them all to death: *and the guard and the captains* cast *them out;* those that were slain, as the Targum, their dead bodies; but it can hardly be thought they would be at the trouble of casting them out, when the house was to be pulled down, and made a jakes of, as follows; rather therefore it should be rendered, *they cast* or *flung themselves** with great force, and in great haste, as Kimchi, and rushed out of the temple, being eager to do as follows: *and went to the city of the house of Baal;* to pull it down: to some city near Samaria, where was a temple of Baal; or rather this may design the buildings about the temple of Baal, in which the priests and their families lived, and were so large that they might be called a city of themselves.

Ver. 26. *And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burnt them.*] Lesser images, the images of other deities, or what were placed as decorations of the temple.

Ver. 27. *And they broke down the temple of Baal*, &c.] Which some take to be Belus, others Saturn, others the sun, which seems most probable: *and broke down the house of Baal;* his temple, demolished it: *and made it a draught-house until this day;* a common sewer, a jakes; a fit place for dunghill-gods to be thrown into, and an idol-temple to be turned into.

Ver. 28. *Thus Jehu destroyed Baal out of Israel.*] His images and temples being served thus in all places, throughout the land of Israel, where there were any.

Ver. 29. *Howbeit from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin*, &c.] Which is the common character given of that king, a blot never to be wiped off: *Jehu departed not from after them*, to wit, *the golden calves that* were *in Beth-el, and that* were *in Dan;* he did not abstain from the worship of them, partly because he might not think it idolatry, because God was worshipped in them; hence he calls the worshippers of the calves the servants of the Lord, ver. 23. and partly that he might not displease the princes of the people of Israel, who generally gave in to the worship of them; but chiefly lest the kingdom of Israel should return to the house of David, the worship of the calves being a piece of state-policy, to keep them from going to Jerusalem to worship, lest thereby they should be drawn off from their allegiance to the king of Israel.

Ver. 30. *And the Lord said unto Jehu*, &c.] By a prophet, he not being one himself; and this is generally supposed, by the Jews*, to be Jonah the son of Amittai: *because thou hast done well in executing that which is right in mine eyes;* in rooting out the idolatry of Baal, which was right in the sight of God, and was materially a good work, though it might not be done from a good principle, nor every step taken in doing it justifiable: *and hast done unto the house of Ahab according to all that* was *in mine heart;* that he had decreed within himself should be done, and had foretold by his prophets would be done, the doing of which was acceptable and well-pleasing to him: *thy children of the fourth* generation *shall sit on the throne of Israel;* as they did, namely, Jehoahaz, Joash, Jeroboam, and Zachariah, though the last reigned but six months, just enough to fulfil this promise.

Ver. 31. *But Jehu took no heed to walk in the law of the Lord God of Israel with all his heart*, &c.] As to his moral conversation, he was not careful that it was according to the law of God, and what he did agreeable to it, it was not sincerely, and from the right principle: *for he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, which made Israel to sin;* which he would, if he had had a cordial respect to all the commandments of the law.

Ver. 32. *In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short*, &c.] To bring their dominions into a narrower compass; this was done in the days of Jehu, though he was so active and courageous, wherefore the hand of God was the more seen in it: *and Hazael smote them in all the coasts of Israel;* which bordered on his country, when he did what Elisha foretold he would, ch. viii. 12.

Ver. 33. *From Jordan eastward*, &c.] This was principally the coast on which Hazael smote them, to the east of the land of Canaan: *all the land of Gilead, the Gadites, and the Reubenites, and the Moabites;* the country on the other side Jordan, given to these tribes by Moses, at their request, which were before the kingdoms of Sihon and of Og: *from Aroer, which is by the river Arnon, even Gilead and Bashan;* countries which the Israelites first conquered, and were the first they lost.

Ver. 34. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehu, and all that he did, and all his might, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?*] Of the preceding kings from the times of Jeroboam, in which their several acts were recorded, and his also.

Ver. 35. *And Jehu slept with his fathers*, &c.] Died as they did: *and they buried him in Samaria;* where Omri and Ahab, his predecessors, were buried, 1 Kings xvi. 28. and xxii. 37. *and Jehoahaz his son reigned in his stead;* who reigned seventeen years, chap. xiii. 1.

Ver. 36. *And the time that Jehu reigned* was 28 *years.*] Which was longer than any king of Israel had reigned.

* וישלכו & proripuerunt se, De Dieu.

* Seder Olam Rabba, c. 19.

CHAP. XI.

THIS chapter relates how that Joash the son of Ahaziah, king of Judah, being hid and preserved, when his grandmother murdered all the seed-royal, after six years was produced, ver. 1, 2, 3. when Jehoida the priest set a sufficient guard about him, and the king's house, and anointed him king, ver. 4—12. and Athaliah his grandmother, who had reigned six years, was put to death by the order of the priest, ver. 13—16. and then a covenant was made between the Lord, and the king, and the people, and between the king and the people; and he was placed on the throne to the satisfaction of the people, and the quiet thereof, ver. 17—21.

Ver. 1. *And when Athaliah the mother of Ahaziah saw that her son was dead,* &c.] Who was the daughter of Ahab, and granddaughter of Omri, ch. viii. 18, 26. *she arose, and destroyed all the seed-royal:* that were left, for many had been slain already; the sons of Jehoshaphat, the brothers of Joram, were slain by him, 2 Chron. xxi. 4. and all Joram's sons, excepting Ahaziah, were slain by the Arabians, 2 Chron. xxii. 1. and the sons of the brethren of Ahaziah were slain by Jehu, ver. 8. these therefore seem to be the children of Ahaziah, the grandchildren of this brutish woman, whom she massacred out of her ambition of rule and government, which perhaps she was intrusted with whilst her son went to visit Joram king of Israel; other reasons are by some assigned, but this seems to be the chief. For the same reason Laodice, who had six sons by Ariarathes king of the Cappadocians, poisoned five of them; the youngest escaping her hands, was murdered by the people[x], as this woman also was.

Ver. 2. *But Jehosheba, the daughter of King Joram,* &c.] Not by Athaliah, but another woman; for an high-priest, as her husband was, would not have married the daughter of such an idolatrous woman, nor would she have married her to him: *sister of Ahaziah, took Joash the son of Ahaziah, and stole him from among the king's sons which were slain;* among whom he lay; either being cast there by the murderer, or her associates, supposed to be dead, or by his nurse, that he might be thought to be so, who acquainting his aunt with it, went and privately took him away: *and they hid him,* even *him and his nurse, in the bedchamber from Athaliah, so that he was not slain;* that is, Jehosheba and her husband hid him and his nurse in a bedchamber; or *chamber of beds*[y], in which there were more beds than one; one of the chambers of the priests and Levites in the temple, that is, which were adjoining to it; for into the sanctuary itself it was not usual to bring beds[z]; wherefore *the house of the Lord,* in the next verse, must be understood largely as including all the appendages of it.

Ver. 3. *And he was with her hid in the house of the Lord six years,* &c.] In the temple; not in the holy of holies, as Jarchi, but in a chamber of the priests and Levites, of which there were several in a temple, as Kimchi, and others; and the husband of Jehosheba, being high-priest, had one of them for his own use; and here the child was hid six years, so that he was but a year old when he was first taken and preserved, for he was made king when seven years of age, ver. 21. *and Athaliah did reign over the land;* the only instance we hear of a woman reigning in Israel, and this was not by right, but by usurpation; and so, according to the Jewish canons, a woman might not rule; which thus runs[a], they don't set a woman in the kingdom, as it is said, Deut. xvii. 15. *a king over them,* not a queen; and so, in all places of power and authority in Israel, they put in them none but a man.

Ver. 4. *And the seventh year Jehoiada sent and fetched the rulers over hundreds, with the captains and the guard,* &c.] This was the husband of Jehosheba, who was high-priest, 2 Chron. xxii. 11. these *rulers over hundreds* were not those appointed over the people for civil affairs, as by the advice of Jethro, but over the priests and Levites in their courses; five of whom are mentioned by name, and were employed in gathering together the Levites, and the chief of the fathers, throughout all the cities of Judah, 2 Chron. xxiii. 1, 2. and the *captains* here are the heads of the fathers there, who were the heads of the courses they were sent to gather; and the *guard,* those of the late king, whom Athaliah had turned out of their post, and took in others in their room, unless rather the temple-guard is meant: *and brought them to him into the house of the Lord;* the temple, that part of it where was the court of the priests and Levites: and *made a covenant with them;* to join with him, assist him, and stand by him in the restoration of the king, and the reformation of the kingdom: *and took an oath of them in the house of the Lord;* to keep secrecy, and be faithful to him: *and shewed them the king's son;* for the truth of which he could produce his wife, the sister of the late king, and also the nurse of this child with him.

Ver. 5. *And he commanded them, saying, this is the thing that ye shall do,* &c.] These were the rulers over hundreds among the priests and Levites, and which he, as high-priest, could command, and whom he could convene without suspicion, being such as he had a connexion with, and were unarmed men: and for the better understanding of what follows, it should be observed, that the priests, in the times of David, were divided into 24 courses, which were by turns to serve a week in the temple; the course that came in entered when the sabbath began, and that which went out went out when it ended, and each course consisted of 1,000 men: now with respect to both these courses, both that which went in and that which went out, Jehoida gave them the following charge: *a third part of you that enter in on the sabbath;* on the beginning of it, to do duty in the temple the week following: *shall*

[x] Justin. e Trogo, l. 37. c. 1.

[y] בחדר המטות in cubiculo lectorum, Pagninus, Montanus. So Sept. &c.

[z] T. Bab. Tamid, c. 1. fol. 26. 2.

[a] Maimon. Hilchot Melachim, c. 1. sect. 5.

even be keepers of the watch of the king's house; which, according to some, was that part of the temple where the king was hid and brought up, supposed to be the north part of it: or rather these were set at the north gate of the temple, which led to the royal palace, lest any should rush out of that, and kill the king.

Ver. 6. *And a third part shall be at the gate of Sur*, &c.] Generally thought by the Jews to be the eastern gate, so called, as they say, because such as were defiled were bid to depart, or go back, as this word signifies, and not enter the temple; it is called *the gate of the foundation*, 2 Chron. xxiii. 5. because, according to Ben Gersom, here the foundation of the sanctuary was first laid; it is said[b] to have *five* other names besides these: *and a third part at the gate behind the guard*; the temple-guard, which had a captain of them, Acts iv. 1. this gate is supposed to be the same with *sippim*, or the threshold-gate, 2 Chron. xxiii. 4. and to be the southern one: *so shall ye keep the watch of the house, that it be not broken down*; guard the temple, that none break or rush into it, of Athaliah's party.

Ver. 7. *And two parts of all you that go forth on the sabbath*, &c.] The course that went out of service at the end of the sabbath; these were not suffered, not any of them, to go into the country, but were detained for the present purpose, and divided into two parts: even *they shall keep the watch of the house of the Lord about the king*: these were placed in the temple where the king was, or where he should be brought forth, and be a guard on his right and left; this interpretation seems to be agreeably to the order of the text here, and is the sense of Jarchi; but there is this objection to it, that, by such a distribution of both courses, no provision is made for the services of the temple; wherefore Dr. Lightfoot[c] divides them into six parts, each into three, one third of the course that came in for service, the other to keep the watch at the king's house, and the other third at the gate Sur; and the course that went out, one third of them was placed at the gate behind the guard, and the other two to keep the watch of the house for the king's safety; but according to the account in 2 Chron. xxiii. 4, 5. there were but three ranks or orders of them in all: wherefore the sense of Kimchi, Ben Gersom, and Abarbinel, seems most agreeable, that the first consisted of those that went in on the sabbath, not of all, but half of them, the other half being employed in the service of the sanctuary; and the other two of the course that went out, even all of them, they being entirely at leisure, who were divided into two parts, and disposed of as above.

Ver. 8. *And ye shall compass the king round about, every man with his weapons in his hand*, &c.] Afterwards given them, ver. 10. *and he that cometh within the ranges, let him be slain*: any strange man that was not of them, that came into the ranks in which they were formed, was to be put to death as a spy, who might go and inform the queen what was doing; according to Jarchi, the word for *ranges* signifies the place through which the king went from his own house to the house of God[d]; and here it seems the guards were placed: *and be ye with the king as he goeth out and as he cometh in*: when brought forth to be crowned and anointed, and returned again.

Ver. 9. *And the captains over the hundreds did according to all things that Jehoiada the priest commanded*, &c.] Of whom see ver. 4. *and they took every man his men*; every one his hundred: *that were to come in on the sabbath, with them that should go out on the sabbath*; both the courses, of which see ver. 5, 7. *and came to Jehoiada the priest*; with the said courses, at least as many of them as were to be employed in the present service.

Ver. 10. *And to the captains over hundreds did the priest give King David's spears and shields, that were in the temple of the Lord.*] Such as he had taken in war from his enemies, and had dedicated for the service of the temple, to defend it on occasion, and laid up there; those the priests gave to the captains, to arm their men with, who came unarmed, and so unsuspected, and in this way might be armed without being seen and known.

Ver. 11. *And the guard stood, every man with his weapons in his hand, round about the king*, &c.] As ordered, ver. 8. *from the right corner of the temple to the left corner of the temple*; from the north-east to the south-east: *along by the altar and the temple*: the altar of burnt-offering, which stood in the court.

Ver. 12. *And he brought forth the king's son*, &c.] Out of the apartment in the temple where he had been brought up: *and put the crown upon him*; the crown-royal, which seems to have been kept in the temple: *and gave him the testimony*; the book of the law, which he was to read in all his days, and according to it govern the people; and which was a testimony of the will of God both to him and them: Kimchi and Ben Melech interpret it of royal garments put upon him: *and they made him king, and anointed him*; proclaimed and declared him king, and anointed him, for the confirmation of it, because of the pretension Athaliah made to the kingdom; otherwise, as the Jewish writers say, the son of a king was not anointed; and hence, they say, it was, that Solomon was anointed, because of the claim of Adonijah: *and they clapped their hands*; in token of joy: *and said, God save the king*; or, *let the king live*; or, may he prosper, as the Targum; may health and prosperity attend him in his government. In 2 Chron. xxiii. 11. it is said, *Jehoiada and his sons* anointed him, and said those words; among whom must be Zechariah, whom this king afterwards slew, which was an instance of great ingratitude, 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21, 22.

Ver. 13. *And when Athaliah heard the noise of the guard, and of the people*, &c.] Their acclamations and shouts at the coronation of the king; for by this time the people had got some knowledge of the affair, and ran, and came flocking to see the new king, and express their joy on this occasion, and whom they greatly praised, 2 Chron. xxiii. 12. *she came to the people into the temple of the Lord*; the outward court, where the people were assembled; and she seems to come alone,

[b] T. Hieros. Yoma apud Beckium in Targ. in 2 Chron. xxiii. 5.
[c] Prospect of the Temple, c. 20.

[d] Vid. David. de Pomis Lexic. fol. 205. 3.

unattended, in great surprise and consternation, and was admitted to pass the guards, being the queen, and alone, and perhaps by the particular order of Jehoiada, though contrary to the general orders he gave, ver. 8.

Ver. 14. *And when she looked, behold, the king stood by a pillar, as the manner* was, *&c.*] Of kings, when they came into the temple on any occasion, civil or religious, therefore it is called *his pillar*, 2 Chron. xxiii. 13. see 2 Kings xxiii. 3. 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1. some think this was the brazen scaffold erected by Solomon, 2 Chron. vi. 13. though Vitringa[e] and Bishop Patrick suppose it to be the post of the east gate of the inner court, from Ezek. xlvi. 2. according to Jacob Leo[f], this was the royal throne in the court of the Israelites, near the high or upper gate, on a marble pillar, where the kings of the house of David sat, when they came into the sanctuary to see the Lord in the second temple; this throne was like an high tower, standing upon two pillars, each twenty cubits high, and their circumference twelve; here sat Joash, and Hezekiah, and Josiah; however, Athaliah saw Jehoash with the crown on his head, and in the place where kings used to sit or stand: *and the princes and the trumpeters by the king;* the rulers of the courses of the priests, and the Levites, blowing the trumpets: *and all the people of the land rejoiced, and blew with trumpets;* it is added, in 2 Chron. xxiii. 13. that the singers played also on musical instruments; that were then and there assembled: *and Athaliah rent her clothes;* through grief, and as one almost distracted: *and cried, treason, treason!* to try if she could get any to take her part, and seize on the new king, and those that set him up.

Ver. 15. *But Jehoiada the priest commanded the captains of the hundreds, the officers of the host,* &c.] Of the priests and Levites: *and said unto them, have her forth without the ranges:* the ranks of the guards, which were at the gate leading to the palace, or rather *within* them[g]; the meaning is, that he ordered her to be had out of the court of the temple, and be put within their ranks, and enclosed by them, that her blood might not be shed in the temple, and yet not escape them: *and him that followeth her, kill with the sword;* that takes her part, and offers to help and assist her, passing through the ranks after her, dispatch him at once: *for the priest had said, let her not be slain in the house of the Lord;* that it might not be defiled with her blood; by which it appears that the guards had orders concerning her before, should she come to the temple, see ver. 13.

Ver. 16. *And they laid hands on her,* &c.] Or rather, "set a place for her," as the Targum; so Jarchi and Kimchi; made a space, opened a way for her to come out of the temple into their ranks, that she might be there taken and slain, and not in the temple: *and she went by the way by the which the horses came into the king's house;* either the high road in which the horses and carriages went to the palace, or the way to the king's stables near the palace: *and there was she slain:* they let her go so far, which was far enough from the temple, and then they slew her.

Ver. 17. *And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the king and the people, that they should be the Lord's people,* &c.] Renewed the covenant between the Lord on the one part, and the king and the people on the other; assuring them, that as God had declared that he would be their God, he would yet be their God to bless and protect them, they continuing in obedience to him; and obliging them to promise that they would serve the Lord their God, and him only, and root out all idolatry from the land, and restore, and continue in, the pure worship of God: *between the king also and the people:* he promising, on his part, that he would govern them according to the law of God, and protect them in their rights and properties, privileges and liberties; and they, on their part, that they would honour and obey him, and be his faithful subjects. In 2 Chron. xxiii. 16. Jehoiada is said to make this covenant between him, *&c.* which may be understood of the Lord; or if of himself, the meaning is, that it was made between him, the king and people, and the Lord.

Ver. 18. *And all the people of the land,* &c.] That were at Jerusalem, and the parts adjacent, that came from the country, hearing what was done: *went into the house of Baal;* a temple of his Athaliah had built, either in Jerusalem, or near it; perhaps on the mount of Olives, called the mount of corruption, ch. xxiii. 13. from the idolatry there committed: *and brake it down, his altars and his images brake they in pieces thoroughly;* made an entire destruction of them all, temple, altars, the images of Baal and other deities: *and slew Mattan the priest of Baal before the altar;* either as he was sacrificing, or that he might be a sacrifice, or where he had fled for refuge: *and the priest appointed officers over the house of the Lord;* priests to offer sacrifices, Levites to sing the praises of God, porters at the door of the temple, and watches in it, and restored the courses of the priests, and every thing to its proper order, which had been neglected, or had ceased, during the usurpation of Athaliah; see 2 Chron. xxiii. 18, 19.

Ver. 19. *And he took the rulers over hundreds, and the captains, and the guard,* &c.] Of which see ver. 4. *and all the people of the land;* as many as were assembled together on this occasion: *and they brought down the king from the house of the Lord;* the temple, which was built on an eminence: *and came by the way of the gate to the king's house;* the gate of the royal palace, where the king's guards were placed, and did their duty: *and he sat on the throne of the kings;* where the kings of Judah used to sit, and this finished the formality of his being made king.

Ver. 20. *And all the people of the land rejoiced,* &c.] That one of the house of David was set upon the throne, which they might fear was extinct, as it very near was; the lamp of David was almost quenched, only this single life left, from whom a race of kings proceeded, and the King Messiah; the promise of God cannot fail, see Psal. cxxxii. 11, 17. this occasioned great joy: *and the city was quiet;* was very easy at, yea, pleased with, the dethroning and death of Athaliah; there was no tumult on account thereof, nor such disturbances as she occasioned in her life: *and they slew Athaliah with the sword* beside *the king's house;* as related in ver. 16. where she was buried, or what became

[e] Prolegom. de Synagog. Vet. c. 4. p. 32.
[f] Apud Wagenseil. Sotah, p. 680.

[g] מבית לשדרת intra ordines, Munster, Junius, Tremellius, Piscator, Noldius, p. 79. No. 265. So Jarchi, Kimchi, Ben Gersom, & Ben Melech.

of her carcass, is not said; some have thought she was cast into the brook Kedron, because Josephus says [a] Jehoiada ordered her to be had into that valley, and there slain.

Ver. 21. *Seven years old was Jehoash when he began to reign.*] Being a year old when his father was killed and having been hid six years in the temple.

CHAP. XII.

IN this chapter some account is given of the reign of Jehoash, that it was long, and the beginning of it good, during the life of Jehoiada, ver. 1—3. how urgent he was to have the temple repaired, and what methods were taken for that purpose, ver. 4—16. how meanly, as well as impiously, he behaved, when the king of Syria was about to come up to Jerusalem and besiege it, ver. 17, 18, and the chapter is closed with an account of his death, and the manner of it, ver. 19—21.

Ver. 1. *In the seventh year of Jehu Jehoash began to reign,* &c.] So that he reigned 21 or 22 years cotemporary with Jehu's reign, for Jehu reigned 28 years: *and 40 years reigned he in Jerusalem;* the same number of years David and Solomon reigned: *and his mother's name was Zibiah of Beer-sheba;* a city in the tribe of Simeon, in the extreme part of the land of Canaan southward; her name in the Chaldee dialect is Tabitha, the same with Dorcas in Greek, Acts ix. 36.

Ver. 2. *And Jehoash did that which* was *right in the sight of the Lord all his days,* &c.] Worshipping the only true God, and ruling and walking according to the law of God: *wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him;* and so long as he observed his instructions, and as long as that priest lived, he reigned well; for to that period *all his days* must be limited; for after his death he was seduced by the princes of Judah to idolatry, and lived scandalously, and died ignominiously; see 2 Chron. xxiv. 2, 17, 25.

Ver. 3. *But the high places were not taken away,* &c.] Used before the temple was built, or set up in Rehoboam's time, 1 Kings xiv. 23. contrary to the law of God, which required that sacrifices should only be offered in the place the Lord chose to dwell in, Deut. xii. 5, 6. *the people still sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places;* as they had done in the times of Athaliah, and though the pure worship of God was restored at Jerusalem; and indeed this they did in all preceding reigns; nor was it in the power of the best of kings, at least they did not think it safe to attempt to remove them till Hezekiah's time; so fond were the people of them because of their antiquity and supposed sanctity, and for the sake of ease.

Ver. 4. *And Jehoash said to the priests,* &c.] Being minded or having it in his heart, to repair the temple, as in 2 Chron. xxiv. 4. not only because it was the sanctuary of the Lord, though that chiefly, but because it had been a sanctuary to him, where he was hid and preserved six years: *all the money of the dedicated things that is brought into the house of the Lord:* or rather, *that is to be brought,* as De Dieu, and others render it, the particulars of which follow: even *the money of every one that passeth* the account; or that passeth among them that are numbered, as in Exod. xxx. 13, 14. that were upwards of twenty years of age, and bound to pay the half-shekel for the ransom of their souls; and it is called the collection or burden Moses laid on them in the wilderness, 2 Chron. xxiv. 6, 9. *the money that every man is set at:* the price the priest set upon or estimated a man at, or whomsoever that belonged to him, that he devoted to the Lord, which by the law he was bound to pay for his redemption, and, till that was done, he and they were not his, but the Lord's, of which see Lev. xxvii. 1—8. and here the Targum calls it, the money of the redemption of souls, which is the gift of a man for the redemption of his soul: and *all the money that cometh into any man's heart to bring into the house of the Lord;* vows and free-will offerings made of their own accord.

Ver. 5. *Let the priests take* it *to them, every man of his acquaintance,* &c.] Of those that were most known by them; for the priests had cities assigned them in several parts of the land, and they that dwelt with them in them, or in the parts adjacent to them, were best known by them; and they were sent into all the cities, some to one and some to another, where they were most acquainted, to collect money, both what was due by law, and what the people should freely give, see 2 Chron. xxiv. 5. *and let them repair the breaches of the house, wheresoever any breach shall be found:* that is, of the temple, which, according to the Jewish chronology [1], had been built but 155 years; and being built very strong, would have needed no considerable repairs as yet, but that it had been broken up and misused by Athaliah and her sons, 2 Chron. xxiv. 7.

Ver. 6. *But it was* so, that *in the 23d year of King Jehoash, the priests had not repaired the breaches of the house.*] Either the people being backward to pay in the money, or the priests converted it to their own use: or, however, were negligent of doing the work enjoined them by the king, either in collecting the money, or in using it as they were directed.

Ver. 7. *Then King Jehoash called for Jehoiada the priest, and the other priests,* &c.] The common priests, Jehoiada being high-priest: *and said unto them, why repair ye not the breaches of the house?* in which they appeared to him very dilatory; the reasom might be, the people were not forward to pay in their money, and they might not choose to begin the repairs until they had got it all in, or at least what was sufficient to carry them through them: *now therefore receive no more money of your acquaintance:* suspecting that what they had received they kept for their own use: *but deliver it for the breaches of the house;* into other

[a] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 7. sect. 3.

[1] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 18.

hands for that use, and so dismissed them at once from collecting the money, and being concerned in the repairs of the temple.

Ver. 8. *And the priests consented to receive no* more *money of the people*, &c.] And delivered up what they had: *neither to repair the breaches of the house;* being very willing to be quit of both services, and especially since they seemed to be suspected.

Ver. 9. *But Jehoiada the priest took a chest*, &c.] By the commandment of the king, 2 Chron. xxiv. 8. to put the money collected into, to prevent any fraud, or suspicion of any: *and bored a hole in the lid of it:* to drop the money into, by which means it could not be taken out without taking off the lid: *and set it beside the altar:* the altar of burnt-offering, in the court: *on the right side, as one cometh into the house of the Lord:* that is, on the north; for the entrance into the temple was at the east: in 2 Chron. xxiv. 8. it is said to be *set without at the gate of the house;* which Dr. Lightfoot[a] thinks respects another time, and that either another chest was made, or the same that was first placed by the altar, in the court of the priests, and so in their hands, and the money not coming in apace, was removed without the court at the entrance of it, whither the people brought it readily: *and the priests that kept the door;* the door of the outward court, the Levites, the porters, or rather, as the Targum, the priests, the treasurers, who were appointed to this service in the room of the others dismissed; and so Kimchi and other Jewish commentators interpret this of the keepers of the vessels of the sanctuary, and not of the doors of it: these *put therein all the money* that was *brought into the house of the Lord;* by the people from the several parts of the country, who, by proclamation, were required so to do, and very readily did, 2 Chron. xxiv. 9, 10.

Ver. 10. *And it was* so, *when they saw that* there was *much money in the chest*, &c.] Which might easily be guessed at by the number of the people which contributed: *that the king's scribe and the high-priest came up;* to the temple; the high-priest did not choose to come alone, lest he should be suspected, but to have the king's secretary with him, that the money might be taken out of the chest, and told in the presence of them both: in 2 Chron. xxiv. 11. instead of the *high-priest*, it is the *high-priest's officer*, which the Targum there calls the Sagan of the high-priest, or his deputy, who, perhaps, attended when the high-priest could not: *and they put up in bags, and told the money* that was *found in the house of the Lord:* that is, they poured the money out of the chest, or emptied it, as in 2 Chron. xxiv. 11. and told it, and very likely set down the sum in writing, and put it up in bags, very probably sealed.

Ver. 11. *And they gave the money, being told, into the hands of them that did the work, that had the oversight of the house of the Lord*, &c.] Who were appointed overseers of the workmen employed in the repairs of the temple; which overseers were laymen, and not priests, they being discharged from any concern in the repairs: this money *told*, Kimchi interprets of its being coined; he supposes money coined and uncoined to be brought, which was put in separate bags; and that which was not coined, they coined it before they delivered it to the overseers to pay the workmen with: *and they laid it out to the carpenters and builders that wrought upon the house of the Lord;* paid them with it, some that wrought in cutting the timber, and others in building with it.

Ver. 12. *And to masons, and hewers of stone*, &c.] Which they cut out of the mountain, and the masons repaired the stone walls with: *and to buy timber;* felled in Lebanon: *and hewed stone;* fitted for building with: *to repair the breaches of the house of the Lord;* where both timber and stone were wanting: *and for all that was laid out for the house to repair it;* in whatsoever else it needed, as iron and brass to mend it, 2 Chron. xxiv. 12.

Ver. 13. *Howbeit there were not made for the house of the Lord, bowls of silver*, &c.] Either to hold the blood of the sacrifices, or the drink-offerings of wine: *snuffers;* to trim the lamps; or, as Jarchi and other writers, both Jewish and Christian, musical instruments: *basins;* vessels to sprinkle the blood with, as the word signifies: *trumpets;* silver ones, to call the assembly, blow over the sacrifices, *&c. any vessels of gold, or vessels of silver;* for any other use: these were not made *of the money* that was *brought into the house of the Lord;* yet, in 2 Chron. xxiv. 14. it is said they were, which is to be reconciled thus; they did not make any of those things at first, until the house was repaired, and the charges of it defrayed; and then of what remained they made vessels for the house, which were wanting, that Athaliah had bestowed on Baalim, 2 Chron. xxiv. 7.

Ver. 14. *But they gave that to the workmen, and repaired therewith the house of the Lord.*] They took care that the workmen should first be paid for the repairs of the temple.

Ver. 15. *Moreover, they reckoned not with the men into whose hand they delivered the money to be bestowed on the workmen*, &c.] That is, the king's secretary and the high-priest, or his officer, never called to account the overseers of the workmen, to whom they committed the money to pay them with; never examined how they laid it out, and for what: *for they dealt faithfully;* they saw they acted such an honest and upright part, and such an high opinion had they of them, that they never examined their accounts, or called for their bills.

Ver. 16. *The trespass-money and sin-money was not brought into the house of the Lord*, &c.] Which was the money persons at a distance sent for their trespass and sin offerings instead of cattle, with which the sacrifices were bought; and what remained of the money was not brought into the temple, and made use of in the above manner; *it was the priest's;* the overplus of it, and such of the sacrifices which by the law were appropriated to them.

Ver. 17. *Then Hazael king of Syria went up and fought against Gath, and took it*, &c.] When Jehoiada was dead, and Jehoash was become an apostate, the Lord suffered the king of Syria to be a scourge to him; who first attacked Gath, and took it, which was for-

[a] Prospect of the Temple, ch. 20. p. 2°, 22.

merly one of the principalities of the Philistines, but was subdued by David, and had been in the hands of the Israelites ever since; the king of Syria began with this, as nearest to him, to open the way for what he had further in view: *and Hazael set his face to go up to Jerusalem*: he made such preparations, and took such measures, as plainly indicated what his design was.

Ver. 18. *And Jehoash king of Judah took all the hallowed things that Jehoshaphat, and Jehoram, and Ahaziah, his fathers, kings of Judah, had dedicated*, &c.] To sacred uses, and had laid up in the temple: *and his own hallowed things*: which he had devoted to the same uses: *and all the gold* that was *found in the treasures of the house of the Lord*: which were gifts and presents from divers persons for sacred services: *and sent it to Hazael king of Syria, and he went away from Jerusalem*: to bribe him, that he might desist from his purpose; which shewed a meanness of spirit, and was the effect of his idolatry and apostacy, having forsaken the Lord, and being forsaken by him; in whom should have been his trust and confidence, and then he need not have been afraid to meet the king of Syria.

Ver. 19. *And the rest of the acts of Jehoash, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] In the registers and annals of those princes; some of them are to be met with in 2 Chron. xxiv.

Ver. 20. *And his servants arose*, &c.] This was after he had slain Zechariah the son of Jehoiada, who reproved him for his idolatry; and after a second expedition of the king of Syria, who came to Jerusalem, and spoiled it, and left Jehoash diseased, as is recorded in 2 Chron. xxiv. *and made a conspiracy*: not to get the kingdom into their hands, for his son succeeded him, but to avenge the death of Zechariah: *and slew Jehoash in the house of Millo, which goeth down to Silla*: these are both names of places; perhaps the latter is mentioned, to distinguish this Beth-millo from Millo in Zion; or rather that itself is meant, and described by the descent from it to a causeway, as Silla may signify, which led to the royal palace.

Ver. 21. *For Jozachar the son of Shimeath*, &c.] Said to be an Ammonitess, and this man's name Zabad, 2 Chron. xxiv. 26. *and Jehozabad the son of Shomer, his servants*; who is said in the same place to be the son of Shimrith a Moabitess: these *smote him, and he died*: justly did he fall by the hands of such persons for his idolatry: *and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David*; but not in the sepulchres of the kings, because of his idolatry and murder of a priest of the Lord: *and Amaziah his son reigned in his stead*: the conspirators not seeking the kingdom, but vengeance on him for his sins, which, whether right in them to do, was suffered by the Lord.

CHAP. XIII.

THIS chapter gives an account of the wicked reign of Jehoahaz son of Jehu king of Israel, and of the low estate he was brought into by the Syrians, ver. 1—9. and of the reign of his son Joash, ver. 10—13. and of the sickness and death of Elisha; of the visit Joash made him in his sickness; and of his prediction of the king's success against the Syrians; and of the reviving of a dead man cast into the prophet's sepulchre, ver. 14—21. and of the success of Joash against the Syrians, according to the prediction of the prophet, ver. 22—25.

Ver. 1. *In the 23d year of Joash the son of Ahaziah king of Judah*, &c.] The same year he was so zealous and busy in repairing the temple, ch. xii. 6. *Jehoahaz the son of Jehu began to reign over Israel in Samaria*: whereas Joash began to reign in the seventh year of Jehu, and Jehu reigned but 28 years, ch. x. 36. and xii. 1. this could be but the 21st of Joash: to reconcile which it must be observed, that it was at the beginning of the 7th year of Jehu that Joash began to reign, and at the beginning of the 23d of Joash that Jehoahaz began to reign, as the Jewish commentators observe: and reigned 17 *years*: the two last of which were in common with his son, as Junius, see ver. 10.

Ver. 2. *And he did* that which was *evil in the sight of the Lord*, &c.] Committed idolatry: *and followed the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin*: worshipping the golden calves: *he departed not therefrom*; from the worship of them.

Ver. 3. *And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel*, &c.] They doing as their kings did: *and he delivered them into the hand of Hazael king of Syria, and into the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael, all their days*: the word *their* should not be supplied, since it was not true that Israel was delivered into the hands of both those kings of Syria as long as they lived; for they were delivered out of the hands of Benhadad, ver. 25. but the word *his* should be inserted for it, as to be understood of the days of Jehoahaz, see ver. 22.

Ver. 4. *And Jehoahaz besought the Lord, and the Lord hearkened unto him*, &c.] He did not apply in his distress to the calves he worshipped, but to the Lord; who had a regard to his prayer, not for his sake, or any righteousness of his, or even his repentance and humiliation, which were only external; but for the sake of Israel, and because they were oppressed, who were his people, and he their God, though they had sadly departed from him: *for he saw the oppression of Israel*; not only with his eye of omniscience, but with an eye of mercy and compassion: *because the king of Syria oppressed them*; by his incursions upon them, and wars with them.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord gave Israel a saviour*, &c.] Not an angel sent by him, nor a captain raised up among them, nor the prophet Elisha, who predicted their deliverance, nor Jehoahaz himself, but his son Joash, ver. 25. *so that they went out from under the hand of the Syrians*; were not in subjection to them, nor harassed by them, nor in fear of them: *and the children*

of Israel dwelt in their tents, as before-time; in peace and safety.

Ver. 6. *Nevertheless, they departed not from the sins of the house of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin, but walked therein,* &c.] Continued to worship the calves still, which was an instance of great ingratitude; the Syriac and Arabic versions read, *he departed not:* Jehoahaz the king: *and there remained the grove in Samaria;* which Ahab made there, 1 Kings xvi. 33. neither Jehu nor his son had it cut down, though Baal was destroyed.

Ver. 7. *Neither did he leave of the people to Jehoahaz but 50 horsemen,* &c.] This is to be connected with ver. 4. the verses 5, 6. being to be read in a parenthesis, as in our version, and to be understood of the king of Syria, who left no more to the king of Israel, not of the people of the land, but of his army, than 50 horsemen, all the rest being either taken and carried captive by him, or slain: *and 10 chariots;* military chariots, with the men they carried: *and 10,000 footmen;* foot-soldiers; to so small a number was his army reduced through wars with the Syrians: *for the king of Syria had destroyed them, and had made them like the dust by threshing;* as corn or chaff may be reduced to dust by over-much threshing; or as mire and clay by treading on it.

Ver. 8. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz, and all that he did, and his might,* &c.] Which he exerted against the Syrians, being a man of courage, though not successful, because the Lord was not with him, but against him: are *they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?* where their acts, and the events of their reigns, were recorded.

Ver. 9. *And Jehoahaz slept with his fathers,* &c.] Died, as they did: *and they buried him in Samaria;* where Omri, and all the kings of Israel, that descended from him, were buried: *and Joash his son reigned in his stead;* of whom a short account is given in the following verses.

Ver. 10. *In the 37th year of Joash king of Judah, began Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz to reign over Israel in Samaria,* &c.] But inasmuch as his father began to reign in the 23d of Joash, and reigned 17 years, ver. 1. this king must begin to reign in the 39th or 40th of Joash; for the reconciling of which it may be observed, that two of the years of his reign may be supposed to be imperfect; or rather that his son reigned two or three years in his life-time, being raised up before his father's death to be a saviour of Israel from the Syrians; and so his father lived to see his prayer answered, ver. 4, 5. and reigned 16 years.

Ver. 11. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] As his father did, and his character is described in the same words, see ver. 2, 6.

Ver. 12. *And the rest of the acts of Joash, and all that he did,* &c.] Though none of his acts as yet are recorded, but his sinful ones: *and his might;* or valiant actions in war with the Syrians, ver. 25. and *wherewith he fought against Amaziah king of Judah;* of which there is an account in the following chapter: are *they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?* in the history of the transactions of their reigns.

Ver. 13. *And Joash slept with his fathers,* &c.] Or died: *and Jeroboam sat upon his throne;* who was his son; it is not said that *he began* to sit on it, or to reign, nor to reign in his father's stead; hence it is concluded, as by Kimchi and others, that his father set him on his throne in his life-time; and the Jewish chronology[l] expressly asserts that he reigned with him one year: *and Joash was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel;* see ver. 9. the history of his life and actions does not cease here, but, after an account of the sickness and death of Elisha, it is reassumed, which was necessary to interpose to lead on to it.

Ver. 14. *Now Elisha was fallen sick of his sickness whereof he died,* &c.] The prophets don't live for ever; this sickness was unto death; Elisha died, and was not translated as Elijah was: *and Joash the king came down unto him;* from his palace to the prophet's house, to visit him in his sickness; which was an instance of great condescension and respect, and especially in a wicked prince that could not be reformed by him: *and wept over his face;* held his head over him, and wept, perceiving he was near his end, and sensible that his death would be a public loss; the nation having often reaped the benefit of his prayers, though his counsel and advice were neglected and despised: *and said, O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof;* the same words Elisha said to Elijah, as he went up to heaven, which very probably Joash had heard of; see the note on ch. ii. 12. and here, as there, the Targum is, "my master, my master, who "was better to Israel by his prayers than chariots and "horsemen."

Ver. 15. *And Elisha said unto him, take bow and arrows,* &c.] The usual instruments of war in those days: *and he took unto him bow and arrows;* which though they might not be had in the house of the prophet, he could have some from his guards that attended him.

Ver. 16. *And he said unto the king of Israel, put thine hand upon the bow, and he put his hand* upon it, &c.] His left hand: *and Elisha put his hands upon the king's hands;* on both his hands, which were put, the one on the bow, the other on the arrow[m]; hereby signifying, that though the king would draw the bow in battle, the Lord, whom the prophet represented, would give the success; and that it would be by his help, and through his blessing on his arms, that he would obtain victory over his enemies.

Ver. 17. *And he said, open the window eastward,* &c.] Syria lying east of the land of Israel, as the Jewish commentators in general observe, and for which they quote Isa. ix. 12. but it lay north-east, or rather more to the north; wherefore this may respect the eastward part of the land of Israel, which the Syrians had got possession of, and should be recovered, as this sign shewed, see ch. x. 33. *and he opened it; then Elisha said, shoot, and he shot;* the arrow, out of the window, being opened: *and he said, the arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria;* meaning,

[l] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 19.

[m] See Virgil. Æneid. 11. ver. 831, 860.

that that arrow was a sign of the Lord's deliverance of Israel from the Syrians, by whom they had been sadly oppressed, and reduced very low: *for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek till thou hast consumed them*; not the whole nation, but that army they should bring thither; which was a city in the land of Israel, where the Syrians were routed in Ahab's time; 100,000 were slain near it on one day, and 27,000 by the fall of the wall of it, 1 Kings xx. 26, 29, 30. hence some read the words here, *as in Aphek*.

Ver. 18. *And he said, take the arrows, and he took them, &c.*] The rest of them: *and he said unto the king of Israel, smite upon the ground*; the floor of the room in which the prophet lay: *and he smote thrice, and stayed*; made a stop, ceased smiting; he might think this action trifling, and beneath him, only was willing to please the prophet, but did not do it with a good will, and therefore smote no more; though this was an emblem of his smiting the Syrians, which he might not understand.

Ver. 19. *And the man of God was wroth with him, &c.*] Because he ceased smiting, and smote no oftener; for it was revealed to the prophet, by an impulse upon his mind, that by the number of times he smote on the ground, it would be known how often he should get the victory over his enemies; but this was to be left to the king's own will, how often he would smite, and thereby the prophet would know also with what spirit he would pursue his victories, and the advantages he would gain: *and said, thou shouldest have smitten five or six times, then hadst thou smitten Syria until thou hadst consumed it*; as a nation, as well as routed their several armies: *whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice*; beat them only three times in battle, according to the number of his smitings on the ground.

Ver. 20. *And Elisha died, and they buried him, &c.*] In Samaria. Epiphanius says[w], in Sebastopolis of Samaria, Samaria itself was called Sebaste in after-times; though the Jews say[x] he was buried in Mount Carmel, in the cave of Elijah; according to the Jewish chronology[y], he died in the 10th year of Joash, and he prophesied more than 60 years; 66, as Abarbinel, since he began to prophesy in the 19th year of Jehoshaphat; and, according to Clemens[z] of Alexandria, when he was 40 years of age; but it seems rather, as Kimchi observes, that he died in the beginning of the reign of Joash, and even before his father's death, when he was a partner with him in the throne, and before any salvation or deliverance from the Syrians was wrought: *and the bands of the Moabites invaded the land at the coming in of the year*; at the spring of the year, when there was fruit on the earth, those troops of robbers came to plunder and spoil; several of the Jewish writers observe, that in the word for *coming*, ה is instead of א, and so may be rendered *in that year*, in that self-same year that Elisha died; and so read the Syriac, Arabic, and the Vulgate Latin versions.

Ver. 21. *And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, &c.*] That is, as they were going to bury him; for as yet they were not come to the place they designed to bury him at, as appears by what follows: *that, behold, they spied a band* of men; one of the bands of the Moabites, which came to rob and plunder, and which was about the place where they intended to bury the man; or they supposed would be there by that time they got to it, or at least before they could bury him, and therefore being frightened stopped: *and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha*; that being nearest, they opened it, or rather rolled away the stone from it, and threw the body in in great haste: *and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha*; or *went and touched*[a]; that is, as Kimchi interprets it, being cast in, he rolled till he came to the body of the prophet, and touched it: *he revived, and stood upon his feet*; which might serve to confirm the faith of Joash in the predictions of the prophet concerning his victories; is a proof of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal life, and an emblem of our being quickened through the death of Christ. The Jews say[b] this man was Shallum the son of Tikvah, and husband of Huldah the prophetess, and was a good man, much given to alms, for which he was rewarded; and they further say, he went to his own house, and lived many years, and begat children, and particularly Hananeel, mentioned in Jer. xxxii. 7. which is not likely; though others say[c] he was a wicked man, Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah, 1 Kings xxii. 24. and therefore not suffered to continue in the prophet's grave; but the former is more probable; and, according to Josephus[d], it was the band of robbers that left this man, whom they had murdered, in the grave of Elisha. This grave seems to have been in the field, where the Jews of old, and in later times, buried, as in the field of Hebron, the potter's field, &c. so the Greeks, as Pausanias relates[e], and the Romans also[f], buried by the way-side.

Ver. 22. *But Hazael king of Syria oppressed Israel all the days of Jehoahaz.*] That he reigned alone, at least, before he took his son Joash to reign with him.

Ver. 23. *And the Lord was gracious to them, &c.*] To Israel, notwithstanding their apostacy from him, and the idolatry of the calves they were guilty of: *and had compassion on them*; being in oppression and distress: *and had respect unto them*; looked upon them with an eye of pity and mercy: *because of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; made so long ago he still remembered: *and would not destroy them, neither cast he them from his presence as yet*; or suffered them to be carried captive into another land, as he afterwards did in the times of Hoshea.

Ver. 24. *So Hazael the king of Syria died, and Benhadad his son reigned in his stead.*] This was Benhadad the third; the first of this name was of the Damascene kings; but though the kingdom was now in another family, yet this name, being respectable with the Syrians, was retained in it.

Ver. 25. *And Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz took again out of the hand of Benhadad the son of Hazael the cities*

[w] De Vitis Prophet. c. 6.
[x] Cippi Heb. p. 46.
[y] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 19.
[z] Stromat. l. 1. p. 326.
[a] וילך ויגע abiit et tetigit, Pagninus, Montanus.

[b] Pirke Eliezer, c. 33.
[c] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 47. 1. Shalshalet Hakabala, fol. 11. 2.
[d] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 8. sect. 6.
[e] Corinthiac. sive, l. 2. p. 97.
[f] Vid. Kirchman. Funer. Roman. l. 2. c. 22.

which he had taken out of the hand of Jehoahaz his father by war, &c.] Which were in the countries of Gilead and Bashan, and belonged to the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, ch. x. 33. *three times did Joash beat him:* in so many pitched battles, but where is not said, no doubt one of them was in Aphek, at least, ver. 17. and perhaps the other two on the other side Jordan; this agrees with the three times he smote the ground, significant thereof, ver. 18. *and recovered the cities of Israel:* those before mentioned; otherwise, if those had not been recovered, not ten tribes, only seven and a half, would have been carried captive by the king of Assyria; whereas Josephus[y] says expressly, the ten tribes were carried captive.

CHAP. XIV.

IN this chapter we have the good reign of Amaziah king of Judah, his victories over the Edomites, and war with Jehoash king of Israel, by whom he was taken, who died quickly after, ver. 1—16. but Amaziah lived 15 years afterwards, and was slain by a conspiracy against him, and Azariah his son reigned in his stead, ver. 17—22. and a short account is given of the reign of Jeroboam the second, king of Israel, ver. 23—29.

Ver. 1. *In the second year of Joash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel reigned Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah.*] As Joash king of Israel began to reign in the 37th of Joash king of Judah, ch. xiii. 10. who reigned 40 years, Amaziah must therefore begin his reign in the fourth of Joash king of Israel; this therefore must be understood of his second year after he reigned alone, for he reigned two or three years in his father's life-time.

Ver. 2. *He was 25 years old when he began to reign, and reigned 29 years in Jerusalem*, &c.] Fourteen years cotemporary with Joash king of Israel, who reigned 16 years, ch. xiii. 10. and 15 after him, ver. 17. *and his mother's name* was *Jehoaddan of Jerusalem;* of whom we nowhere else read.

Ver. 3. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord*, &c.] At least externally, and at the beginning of his reign: *yet not like David his father;* not with a perfect heart, with that sincerity and uprightness as he did, see 2 Chron. xxv. 2. *he did according to all things as Joash his father did;* who at first reigned well, and then fell into idolatry, as this his son did.

Ver. 4. *Howbeit the high places were not taken away*, &c.] Though he first did that which was right before God; nor did his father take them away; see ch. xii. 3.

Ver. 5. *And it came to pass, as soon as the kingdom was strengthened in his hand*, &c.] That he was well settled on the throne, and had a share in the affection of the people, and the idolatry and murder his father had committed were worn off of the minds of the people, and the friends of the conspirators against him were become few or none: *that he slew his servants that had slain the king his father:* charged them with the murder in a court of judicature, obtained a sentence against them, and had them executed.

Ver. 6. *But the children of the murderers he slew not*, &c.] Which is an instance of his clemency and goodness, and of his strict regard to justice, and to the law of God; though he might fear, these, being spared, would one time or other revenge their fathers' deaths: *according to that which is written in the book of the law of Moses*, see Deut. xxiv. 16. *wherein the Lord commanded, saying, the fathers shall not be put to death for the children, nor the children*, &c. to which command Amaziah was obedient.

Ver. 7. *He slew of Edom in the valley of Salt ten thousand*, &c.] Of which valley, see the note on 2 Sam. viii. 13. the Edomites having revolted from Judah in the days of Joram, ch. viii. 20, 22. Amaziah undertook to reduce them with an army of 300,000 choice men; and, besides these, hired also of Israel 100,000 valiant men, for 100 talents of silver; but at the instance of a prophet of the Lord he dismissed the latter, and went against Edom only with his men, and slew of the Edomites 10,000, besides other 10,000 he took alive, and cast headlong from a rock, which came into his hands, see 2 Chron. xxv. 5—12. *and took Selah by war;* which signifies a rock, the same with Petra, the metropolis of Arabia Petræa, the country of the Edomites. The city itself was not a rock, nor built on one, but was situated in a plain, surrounded with rocks and mountains, as Strabo[z] and Pliny[a] relate, from whence it seems to have its name; and by the Syrians called Recem, where Rocan a king of Midian reigned[b], called in the Greek version of Numb. xxxi. 8. Recon; though Vitringa[c] is of opinion, that not Petra, the metropolis of Edŏm, is meant, but Maaleh-akrabbim, Josh. xv. 3. Judg. i. 36. which lay on the south border of Judea, near the salt sea: *and called the name of it Joktheel;* which signifies *the obedience of God;* in memory of his obedience to the prophet of the Lord, in consequence of which he obtained this victory: and the name continued *unto this day:* the time of the writing this book.

Ver. 8. *Then Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash the son of Jehoahaz the son of Jehu king of Israel*, &c.] The occasion of it was this, when Amaziah dismissed the hired soldiers of Israel they were displeased, and fell upon the cities of Judea from Samaria to Beth-horon, slew 3,000 men, and took much spoil, 2 Chron. xxv. 13. wherefore, when Amaziah returned from the slaughter of the Edomites, being elated with his victories, he sent the following message to the king of Israel, in order to revenge the injuries his soldiers had done: and perhaps, retaining an old grudge for what Jehu, the grandfather of the king of Israel, had done to his ancestors, and it may be in hope of reducing the ten tribes to obedience to the house of David: *saying, come, let us look one another*

[y] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 1.
[z] Geograph. l. 16. p. 536
[a] Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 28.
[b] Hieron. de loc. Heb. fol. 93. M. & 94. A. Vid. Joseph. Antiqu. l. 4. c. 7. sect. 1.
[c] Comment. in Jesaiam, c. 16. 1.

in the face: that is, in battle, as the Targum adds; it was a challenge to meet him in the field of battle, and fight with him, and try each other's courage, and see who was the best man.

Ver. 9. *And Jehoash the king of Israel sent to Amaziah the king of Judah*, &c.] By the return of his messengers: *saying, the thistle that was in Lebanon sent to the cedar that was in Lebanon*; intending by this proverbial way of speaking to humble the pride of Amaziah; comparing him to a thistle or thorn, a low, mean, abject, weak, prickly, and troublesome shrub, and himself to a cedar, a tree high and lofty, strong, large, and spreading: *saying, give thy daughter to my son to wife*; signifying, that if in a peaceable manner he had desired to contract affinity with him, and so establish mutual friendship, he should have despised him as being as much below him as the thistle is below a cedar; and therefore should still more despise and defy him, who addressed him in an hostile manner, and in such haughty language: *and there passed by a wild beast that was in Lebanon, and trod down the thistle*; and so there was an end put at once to its pride and ambition, and to its treaty with the cedar; intimating hereby, that his soldiers would as easily vanquish and destroy the army of Amaziah as a wild beast can destroy a thistle.

Ver. 10. *Thou hast indeed smitten Edom, and thine heart hath lifted thee up*, &c.] Swelled him with pride and vanity on account of the victory he had obtained over the Edomites; which pride was at the bottom of his message to him, and that goes before a fall: *glory of this, and tarry at home*: be content with the glory of it, and boast of it at home, but don't swagger abroad, and insult thy neighbours: *for why shouldest thou meddle to thy hurt, that thou shouldest fall, even thou, and Judah with thee?* suggesting to him, that he had better be quiet, since it would be to the hurt, if not the ruin, of him and his kingdom.

Ver. 11. *But Amaziah would not hear*, &c.] Being given up to a judicial hardness of heart through pride; for this was of God, and by his overruling providence, that he might be punished for his idolatry, in setting up the gods of Edom to be his gods, and offering to them, 2 Chron. xxv. 14, 20. *therefore Jehoash king of Israel went up*; from Samaria to the land of Judah, which was higher ground: *and he and Amaziah looked one another in the face*: in the field of battle: *at Beth-shemesh, which belongeth to Judah*: which is observed, not merely to distinguish it from another Beth-shemesh in Naphtali, but to observe, that the king of Israel waited not for him to give him the challenge, but met his adversary in his own country, whither he carried the war, not suffering him to come into his.

Ver. 12. *And Judah was put to the worse before Israel*, &c.] Could not face them; but, as Josephus[d] says, a sudden fear and consternation seized them, and before they joined issue with the Israelites, turned their backs: *and they fled every man to their tents*; to their cities, as the Targum, and left their king alone.

Ver. 13. *And Jehoash king of Israel took Amaziah king of Judah, the son of Jehoash the son of Ahaziah, at Beth-shemesh*, &c.] And then they looked one another in the face indeed, but Amaziah must look very sillily: *and came to Jerusalem*: the metropolis of Judah, with his royal prisoner: *and brake down the wall of Jerusalem*; in at the breach of which he went with his chariot, as Josephus says[e], in triumph: *from the gate of Ephraim unto the corner-gate, 400 cubits*: the gate of Ephraim was to the north of the city, towards the tribe of Ephraim, from whence it had its name; and the corner-gate was that which joined the northern and western walls together, or rather the northern and eastern walls; for Rauwolff says[f], there is still the corner-gate in its old place, where the north and east walls meet on large and high rocks, and is still called by some the gate of Naphtali.

Ver. 14. *And he took all the gold and silver, and all the vessels that were found in the house of the Lord*, &c.] In 2 Chron. xxv. 24. it is added, *with Obed-edom*, who, and his family, had the care of them by lot, see 1 Chron. xxvi. 15. *and in the treasures of the king's house*; which were also spoiled and plundered: *and hostages*; either such as the king of Judah had taken from Edom, as pledges of their fidelity, that they might not rebel; or which the king of Israel took of Judah, even sons of the princes, as the Targum, for security, that they would give him no more trouble: *and returned to Samaria*; without attempting to bring the kingdom of Judah into subjection to him, which he might suppose he could not hold, and having enough to do with the Syrians, his avowed enemies.

Ver. 15. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehoash which he did, and his might*, &c.] His valiant and mighty acts which he did in his wars with the Syrians, ch. xiii. 25. *and how he fought with Amaziah king of Judah*; a short account of which is given in the preceding verses: *are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?* a book very often mentioned and referred to, as containing the history of the events and transactions of every reign.

Ver. 16. *And Jehoash slept with his fathers*, &c.] Died as they died: *and was buried in Samaria with the kings of Israel*; where they were: *and Jeroboam his son reigned in his stead*; which was Jeroboam the second.

Ver. 17. *And Amaziah the son of Joash king of Judah lived after the death of Jehoash son of Jehoahaz king of Israel 15 years.*] Which, with the 14 he reigned cotemporary with him, made the 29 years he reigned, ver. 2. The Vulgate Latin version is, 25 years.

Ver. 18. *And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] Not in the canonical book of Chronicles; though there are some things of him recorded there, which are not here; but in the annals of each reign, written by the king's historian appointed for that purpose.

Ver. 19. *Now they made a conspiracy against him in Jerusalem*, &c.] Against Amaziah; the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the principal men of it; perhaps those whose sons the king of Israel had carried away as hostages, which they imputed to the ill conduct of

[d] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 9. sect. 3.
[e] Ibid.

[f] Travels, par. 3. ch. 3. p. 228. by Ray.

Amaziah, as well as the breaking of the wall of Jerusalem, and the pillaging of the temple, and the king's palace: *and he fled to Lachish:* a fortified city in the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 39. *but they sent after him to Lachish, and slew him there;* in a private manner, as Josephus[g] relates.

Ver. 20. *And they brought him on horses*, &c.] That is, in a chariot or hearse drawn by horses; though the Jews[h] suppose he was carried on horses, and that because he worshipped the gods of the Edomites, who were themselves carried on horses; and he was not carried on the shoulders of men, because he neglected to serve the God of Israel, whose mysteries were carried on the shoulders of men: *and he was buried at Jerusalem with his fathers in the city of David:* and very probably in the sepulchre of the kings, though his father was not.

Ver. 21. *And all the people of Judah took Azariah*, &c.] Called Uzziah in the next chapter, and so in the book of Chronicles; both names signifying much the same, the one *the help of the Lord*, the other *the strength of the Lord: (which was 16 years old:)* yet as he began to reign in the 27th of Jeroboam, ch. xv. 1. and Jeroboam began to reign in the 15th of Amaziah, ver. 23. he could be but four years of age, the solution of which is deferred to ch. xv. 1. *and made him king instead of his father Amaziah:* which was after his death, and not when he fled to Lachish, as Kimchi thinks.

Ver. 22. *He built Elath*, &c.] A port which belonged to Edom, Deut. ii. 8. 1 Kings ix. 26. which very probably David took from them when he made them tributary, and which they retook when they revolted, and Amaziah got again when he defeated them; and this his son rebuilt and fortified: *and restored it to Judah:* annexed it to the kingdom of Judah, as in the days of David and Solomon: *after that the king slept with his fathers;* after the death of his father Amaziah.

Ver. 23. *In the 15th year of Amaziah, the son of Joash king of Judah, Jeroboam the son of Joash king of Israel began to reign in Samaria*, &c.] So that he reigned 14 or 15 years cotemporary with him; for Amaziah reigned 29 years: and reigned 41 *years;* Josephus says[i] 40, giving only the round number.

Ver. 24. *And he did* that which was *evil in the sight of the Lord*, &c.] Was guilty of idolatry: *he departed not from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin;* the worship of the calves is especially meant; he was in all respects of the same cast with his ancestor of the same name, from whom he had it, in veneration of him.

Ver. 25. *He restored the coast of Israel*, &c.] The cities upon it, which had been taken away from them by their enemies: *from the entering of Hamath;* which was the northern border of the land of Canaan, the entrance into it from Syria, see Numb. xxxiv. 8. *unto the sea of the plain:* of Jordan, called sometimes the salt sea and the dead sea; the lake Asphaltites, as Josephus[k], where formerly stood Sodom and Gomorrah: *according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah the son of Amittai;* the same with him whose prophecy among the small prophets bears this name; and though his prophecy concerning Jeroboam's success and victories is not there, nor anywhere else, recorded at length, yet needed not to be doubted of; this is the first of the prophets spoken of whose books are extant: *which was of Gath-hepher;* a city in the tribe of Zebulun, Josh. xix. 13. which contradicts a notion of the Jews, that no prophet came out of Galilee, when the very first of those that were the penmen of the books of prophecies was from thence, see John vii. 52.

Ver. 26. *For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel*, that it was *very bitter*, &c.] Being sorely oppressed by their enemies, especially the Syrians; and he was moved to have compassion upon them, and shew mercy to them: *for* there was *not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel;* they were in the most forlorn and helpless condition; see the note on Deut. xxxii. 36.

Ver. 27. *And the Lord said not that he would blot out the name of Israel from under heaven*, &c.] Had not as yet declared it by any of his prophets, that he would do it, as he afterwards did by Hosea, ch. i. 4, 9. and was fulfilled in the reign of Hoshea king of Israel, ch. xvii. *but he saved them by the hand of Jeroboam the son of Joash;* the instrument of their deliverance from the hands of their enemies, and of recovering their borders as afore-time.

Ver. 28. *Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might, how he warred*, &c.] His valiant acts and warlike exploits: *and how he recovered Damascus and Hamath*, which belonged *to Judah, for Israel;* which cities, in the times of David and Solomon, were tributary to Judah, but afterwards fell into the hands of the Syrians, from whom Jeroboam recovered them, and annexed them to the kingdom of Israel; or, as Kimchi, though Jeroboam was king of Israel, yet, having taken them, he restored them to the king of Judah, to whom they belonged: are *they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?* where all events of any moment were registered.

Ver. 29. *And Jeroboam slept with his fathers*, even *with the kings of Israel*, &c.] Died, and was buried with them: *and Zachariah his son reigned in his stead;* who was of the fourth generation from Jehu, as was promised to him, ch. x. 30.

CHAP. XV.

THIS chapter begins with the reign of Azariah king of Judah, ver. 1—7. and then gives a short account of the several kings of Israel, to the last of them; of Zachariah, ver. 8—12. of Shallum, ver. 13, 14, 15. of Menahem, ver. 16—22. of Pekahiah, ver. 23—26. of Pekah, succeeded by Hoshea, the last of them, ver. 27—31.

[g] Ut supra.
[h] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. paralip. fol. 85. L.
[i] Ut supra, c. 10. sect. 1.
[k] Ibid.

and is concluded with the reign of Jotham king of Judah, ver. 32—38.

Ver. 1. *In the 27th year of Jeroboam king of Israel began Azariah the son of Amaziah king of Judah to reign.*] Now Amaziah lived only to the 15th year of Jeroboam, ch. xiv. 2, 17, 23. in which year, and not in his 27th, it might be thought Azariah his son began to reign. There are various ways taken to remove this difficulty, not to take notice of a corruption of numbers, 27 for 17, which some insist on. Ben Gersom and Abarbinel are of opinion, that those 27 years of Jeroboam's reign are not to be understood of what were past, but of what were to come before the family of Jehu was extinct; and that he reigned 26 years, and his son 6 months, which made 27 imperfect years. Others suppose that Jeroboam reigned with his father 11 or 12 years before his death; and, reckoning from the different periods of his reign, this was either the 27th year, or the 15th or 16th: and others, that the reign of Azariah may be differently reckoned, either from the time his father fled to Lachish, where he might remain 11 or 12 years, or from his death, and so may be said to begin to reign either in the 15th or 27th of Jeroboam; or there was an interregnum of 11 or 12 years after the death of his father, he being a minor of about 4 years of age, which was the 15th of Jeroboam, during which time the government was in the hands of the princes and great men of the nation; and it was not till Azariah was 16 years of age, and when it was the 27th of Jeroboam's reign, that the people agreed to make him king, see ch. xiv. 24. and which seems to be the best way of accounting for it.

Ver. 2. *Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign,* &c.] By the consent of the people and princes of Judah, ch. xiv. 21. *and he reigned 52 years in Jerusalem:* exclusive of the 11 or 12 years of his minority, from his father's death: *and his mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem;* of whom there is no further account any where.

Ver. 3. *And he did* that which was *right in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] At the beginning of his reign, and in an external way: *according to all that his father Amaziah had done;* who did not do what he did as David, sincerely and cordially, ch. xiv. 3. 2 Chron. xxv. 2.

Ver. 4. *Save that the high places were not removed,* &c.] That is, he did right, excepting in that instance, and which was the case of his father and other kings before him, and others afterwards, till Hezekiah came: *the people sacrificed and burnt incense still on the high places;* see ch. xii. 3.

Ver. 5. *And the Lord smote the king,* &c.] With leprosy; the reason of it was, because he intruded into the priest's office, and went into the temple to burn incense on the altar of incense, 2 Chron. xxvi. 19, 20. *so that he was a leper unto the day of his death;* but how long it was to it from his being smitten cannot be said with certainty; Dr. Lightfoot [l] thinks he died the same year he was smitten: *and dwelt in a several house:* without Jerusalem, as the Targum; for lepers, according to the law, were to dwell separate without the camp or city, Lev. xiii. 46. the word for *several* signifies *free* [m]; here he lived alone, free from the company and conversation of men, free from the business of government, his son doing that for him, and in the country, where he might freely walk about, as lepers did, and take the air; the Jews say [n], his house was among the graves, where he was free among the dead, as the phrase is, Psal. lxxxviii. 5. but not likely; much better is what Abendana observes from R. Jonah, that the word, in the Arabic [o] language, signifies a little house, and so this might be in which he dwelt out of the city, in comparison of his palace: *and Jotham the king's son was over the house;* had the direction of the palace, and the management of all affairs in it: *judging the people of the land;* administering justice in all cases, for which they came to him, and so filled up his father's place; he did not depose his father, nor take upon him to be king, only did the business of one.

Ver. 6. *And the rest of the acts of Azariah, and all that he did,* are *they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] In the history of the reigns of those kings; some of them are recorded in the canonical book of the Chronicles, 2 Chron. xxvi. and some were written by the prophet Isaiah, 2 Chron. xxvi. 22.

Ver. 7. *So Azariah slept with his fathers,* &c.] Or died, when he had reigned 52 years: *and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David;* but not in the sepulchres of the kings, but in the field of the burial, or the burying-ground which belonged to them, because he was a leper, 2 Chron. xxvi. 23. Benjamin of Tudela [p] places his grave near the pillar of Absalom, and the fountain of Siloah, near the brook Kidron: *and Jotham his son reigned in his stead;* who reigned 16 years; a further account of him, and his reign, we have in the latter part of this chapter, after the reigns of several of the kings of Israel.

Ver. 8. *In the 38th year of Azariah king of Judah did Zachariah the son of Jeroboam reign over Israel in Samaria six months.*] Since Azariah began to reign in the 27th of Jeroboam, ver. 1. and Jeroboam reigned 41 years, ch. xiv. 23. his last year must be the 15th or 16th of Azariah, in which year Zachariah must have begun to reign, had he immediately succeeded his father in the throne; there must be therefore an interregnum of 22 years at least, which might be owing to the dissensions among the princes and people about the succession, and a dislike to Zachariah on some account; however, after all, he must reign, though but six months, to fulfil the word of the Lord, see ver. 12.

Ver. 9. *And he did* that which was *evil in the sight of the Lord, as his fathers had done,* &c.] Even all his predecessors, from the time of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, from whose sin, in worshipping the calves, they departed not.

Ver. 10. *And Shallum the son of Jabesh conspired against him,* &c.] A friend of his, as Josephus [q] calls him, encouraged by the dissatisfaction of the people to him: *and smote him before the people, and slew him;* in

[l] Works, vol. 1. p. 99.
[m] בבית החפשית in domo libera, V. L. Tigurine version, &c.
[n] T. Hieros. apud Jarchium in loc.

[o] حبس in exigua domo resedit assidue, Castel. Lexic. col. 1344.
[p] Itinerar. p. 42.
[q] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 11. sect. 1.

a public manner, the people consenting to it, and approving of it, not liking Zachariah to be their king: *and reigned in his stead:* though but a very short time.

Ver. 11. *And the rest of the acts of Zachariah,* &c.] During his six-months' reign, and what he might do before in the interregnum: *behold, they are written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel:* for be they more or fewer, good or bad, they were all recorded there which were of any moment.

Ver. 12. *This was the word of the Lord which he spake unto Jehu,* &c.] Which was now fulfilled in the short reign of Zachariah: *saying, thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel unto the 4th generation;* see ch. x. 30. *and so it came to pass;* as every word of the Lord does, not one fails; for after Jehu reigned Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam the 2d, and Zachariah, all descendants of Jehu.

Ver. 13. *Shallum the son of Jabesh began to reign in the 39th year of Uzziah king of Judah,* &c.] The same with Azariah: he is sometimes called by one name, and sometimes by the other, see ch. xiii. 21. *and he reigned a full month in Samaria:* and no longer; so soon were the conspiracy against his sovereign, and the murder of him, punished.

Ver. 14. *For Menahem the son of Gadi went up from Tirzah,* &c.] A city in the tribe of Manasseh, the royal city of the kings of Israel before Omri, of which see the note on Josh. xii. 24. whether Menahem was of this city, or was now besieging it with an army he had the command of, as Josephus [r] suggests, is not certain; however, hearing what had befallen Zachariah, he came from hence: *and came to Samaria;* which, according to Bunting [s], was six miles from Tirzah: *and smote Shallum the son of Jabesh in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead:* judging he had as good a right to the throne as Shallum had.

Ver. 15. *And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and his conspiracy which he made, behold,* they are *written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel.*] In which, no doubt, an account of the cause of the conspiracy, and of the persons assisting to him in it, was given, with other things done in his short reign.

Ver. 16. *Then Menahem smote Tiphsah, and all that were therein, and the coasts thereof from Tirzah,* &c.] The Jewish writers commonly take this Tiphsah to be without the land of Israel, the same with that in 1 Kings iv. 24. on the borders of Syria, and near the Euphrates; but it seems to be some place nearer Samaria, and Tirzah; according to Bunting [t], it was but six miles from Samaria: *because they opened not* to him, *therefore he smote* it; they refused to open the gates of their city to him, and receive him, and acknowledge him as their king; therefore he exercised severity on the inhabitants of it, and the parts adjacent, as far as Tirzah, putting them to the sword: and *all the women therein that were with-child he ripped up:* which was a most shocking instance of barbarity, and which he did, to terrify others from following their example. Ben Gersom interprets it of strong towers built on mountains, which he demolished, deriving *haroth,* which we render *women with-child,* from *har,* a mountain.

Ver. 17. *In the 39th year of Azariah king of Judah began Menahem the son of Gadi to reign over Israel,* &c.] Shallum reigning but one month, both their reigns began the same year.

Ver. 18. *And he did that which was evil,* &c.] The same character is given of him as of those before him, ver. 9.

Ver. 19. And *Pul the king of Assyria came against the land,* &c.] The land of Israel, he invaded it; a Jewish chronologer [u] calls him Pul-belicho; and he is generally thought to be the same with Belochus or Belesis, governor of Babylon, who, with Arbaces the Mede, slew Sardanapalus, said to be the last of the Assyrian kings, and translated the empire to the Chaldeans; he ruling over Babylon and Nineveh, and Arbaces over the Medes and Persians; but Pul was not a Babylonian, but an Assyrian [w], and the first king of the Assyrians, at least, the Scriptures speak of: we read no more of him; but one Metasthenes, a Persian historian, feigned and published by Annius, and so named by him instead of Megasthenes, calls him Phulbelochus, and says [x] he reigned 48 years: *and Menahem gave Pul* 1,000 *talents of silver:* and a talent of silver, according to Brerewood [y], was 375 pounds; but Bishop Cumberland [z] calculates it at 353 pounds 11 shillings and 10 pence halfpenny; 1,000 of them made a large sum of money, according to the former 375,000 pounds; and this he gave to him, not only to desist from the invasion of his land, but *that his hand might be with him:* and not against him: and *to confirm the kingdom in his hand;* which being got by usurpation, and supported by cruelty, was but tottering.

Ver. 20. *And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth,* &c.] Who were most able to pay it, by which means he eased the poor, and might thereby attach them to him: *of each man* 50 *shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria;* that is, he required them to pay 50 shekels apiece to make up the above sum as a present to Pul; though the words in the original text lie more naturally thus, *to give to the king of Assyria* 50 *shekels of silver for one man;* that is, for every man in his army; which amounted to about six pounds a man: *so the king of Assyria turned back;* to his own country: *and stayed not there in the land;* in the land of Israel, neither to distress nor to help Menahem, for which he gave him the money.

Ver. 21. *And the rest of the acts of Menahem,* &c.] We are referred to the same book of chronicles for them as for those of the rest of the kings, which seems to be a form the historian uses of them all.

Ver. 22. *And Menahem slept with his fathers,* &c.] Died a natural death, and in peace, though an usurper and a tyrant: *and Pekahiah his son reigned in his stead;* the kingdom he had usurped continued in his family.

Ver. 23. *In the 50th year of Azariah king of Judah, Pekahiah the son of Menahem began to reign over Israel in Samaria,* &c.] As it was in the 39th of Azariah that his father began his reign, and he reigned 10 years,

[r] Ut supra.
[s] Travels, &c. p. 169.
[t] Ibid.
[u] David Ganz. Tzemach David, par. 2. fol. 5. 2.
[w] See the Universal History, vol. 4. B. 1. ch. 8. sect. 5.
[x] De Judicio Temp. & Annal. Pers. fol. 221. 2.
[y] De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4.
[z] Scripture Weights and Measures, c. 4. p. 120.

they must end in the 49th of Azariah, and therefore there must be an interregnum of a year; perhaps the title of Pekahiah might be disputed, and it was a year before he could get settled on the throne: and reigned *two years;* being slain by one of his captains, as after related.

Ver. 24. *And he did* that which was *evil,* &c.] Besides other sins, he cleaved to that of worshipping the calves, a piece of state-policy all the kings of Israel gave into.

Ver. 25. *But Pekah the son of Remaliah, a captain of his,* &c.] The word signifies a *third* man, the third to the king, as some think; Josephus [a] calls him a *chiliarch,* one that had the command of 1,000 men: *conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house:* Josephus [b] says it was at a banquet: *with Argob, and Arieh:* whom, according to Abarbinel, Pekah slew with the king, being mighty men, who were always about him; but they seem rather to be conspirators with Pekah, and assisting to him in smiting the king; the former of these, Ben Gersom thinks, was governor of Argob, a country on the other side Jordan, and the latter had his name from his fortitude, which signifies a lion: *and with him 50 men of the Gileadites;* which may seem to strengthen the above notion concerning Argob, since the Gileadites were of the same side of Jordan, and were near Argob, see Deut. iii. 13. *and he killed him, and reigned in his room,* as his father killed Shallum, and reigned in his stead.

Ver. 26. *And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah,* &c.] The same form of expression is used as before, ver. 21. of all the kings.

Ver. 27. *In the 52d year of Azariah king of Judah Pekah the son of Remaliah began to reign over Israel in Samaria,* &c.] Which was the last year of the reign of Azariah: and reigned 20 *years;* which was a long reign for an usurper and murderer.

Ver. 28. *And he did* that which was *evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] Not only in committing the above crimes of usurpation and murder, but idolatry, and particularly the worshipping of the calves, hinted at in the text.

Ver. 29. *In the days of Pekah king of Israel came Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria,* &c.] Into the land of Israel; he is called by a Jewish chronologer [c], Pul-Asir; so Phul-Assar by Metasthenes [d], who says he reigned 25 years; he very probably was the son of Pul the Assyrian king, mentioned ver. 19. and is thought to be the same that Ælianus [e] calls Tilgamos; some think he had the first part of his name from Diglath, or Diglito, by which the river Tigris is called in Pliny [f], with which Assyria was washed; and that Pil, or Pul, is Baal, Bel, Jupiter, and Azar is Mars [g]; of all which his name is composed: *and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-maachah:* of which see 1 Kings xv. 20. *and Janoah;* a city in the tribe of Ephraim, Josh. xvi. 6. *and Kedesh, and Hazor;* cities in Naphtali: Josh. xix. 36, 37. *and Gilead;* a country beyond Jordan, which belonged to the Reubenites, Gadites, and half-tribe of Manasseh: *and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali;* that is, upper Galilee, which lay in Naphtali: *and carried them captive to Assyria;* which was the first captivity of Israel in which half their tribes were carried away.

Ver. 30. *And Hoshea the son of Elah made a conspiracy against Pekah the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead,* &c.] Did by him as he had done by Pekahiah, ver. 28. this was measure for measure, as the Jews say: and this he did *in the 20th year of Jotham the son of Uzziah;* and yet Jotham is said to reign but 16 years, ver. 33. this must be reckoned therefore either from the time of his being viceroy, and judging Israel in his father's life-time, ver. 5. or this was the 4th year of Ahaz, and the 20th year, reckoning from the time Jotham began to reign, who is the rather mentioned, because as yet the historian had taken no notice of Ahaz.

Ver. 31. *And the rest of the acts of Pekah,* &c.] Not recorded here, were to be read in the book of chronicles of the kings so often referred to.

Ver. 32. *In the 2d year of Pekah, the son of Remaliah king of Israel, began Jotham the son of Uzziah king of Judah to reign.*] Pekah began to reign in the 52d year of Azariah, or Uzziah, which was his last year, ver. 27. and which was the first of Pekah; Uzziah reigned full 52, and then Jotham succeeded, which was the beginning of the 2d of Pekah.

Ver. 33. *Five-and-twenty years old was he when he began to reign,* &c.] Alone, after the death of his father: *and he reigned* 16 *years in Jerusalem;* and his reign, upon the whole, was a good reign: *and his mother's name was Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok;* a person well known in those times; Dr. Lightfoot [h] thinks he was high-priest.

Ver. 34. *And he did* that which was *right in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] Jarchi, in 2 Chron. xxvii. 2. observes, from a writer of theirs, that in all the kings of Judah before him, even in the best, some sins were found; but in Jotham there was nothing scandalous and reproachful; and it is a high character Josephus [i] gives of him, that there was no virtue wanting in him; he was pious towards God, just towards men, and careful of the public good; but the inspired historian chiefly respects matters of religious worship; he did not give into idolatry: *he did according to all that his father Uzziah had done;* that is, according to what was well done by him; he did not imitate him in going into the temple to burn incense, which is particularly excepted, 2 Chron. xxvii. 2.

Ver. 35. *Howbeit the high places were not removed,* &c.] As they were not by his father, and the same is observed of the best of kings before: *the people sacrificed and burnt incense still in the high places;* from which they could not be brought off by prophets or kings: *he built the higher gate of the house of the Lord;* which was between the temple and the king's palace, which led to it; this he repaired and beautified, or added something to it; or otherwise it was built by

[a] Ut supra.
[b] Ibid.
[c] David Ganz. ut supra.
[d] Ut supra.
[e] De Animal. l. 12. c. 21.
[f] Nat. Hist. l. 6. c. 27.
[g] Hyde Hist. Relig. Pers. p. 65, 66.
[h] Works, vol. 1. p. 100.
[i] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 11. sect. 2.

Solomon, and therefore called the new gate, Jer. xxvi. 10. and xxxvi. 10. it is the same that was afterwards called the gate of Nicanor; the east gate, as say the Jewish writers[k].

Ver. 36. *Now the rest of the acts of Jotham, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] Of which mention is often made by the inspired historians; some of Jotham's other acts are recorded in the canonical book of Chronicles, 2 Chron. xxvii.

Ver. 37. *In those days, &c.*] At the end of the days of Jotham, or after his death, things might be in design, and preparations made before, but nothing of what follows came to pass in his life, but in the times of his son: *the Lord began to send against Judah Rezin the king of Syria, and Pekah the son of Remaliah;* to make war with them as a scourge to Ahaz for his sins; of which in the following chapter.

Ver. 38. *And Jotham slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David his father, &c.*] Died, and was buried with the kings of Judah in their sepulchres: *and Ahaz his son reigned in his stead;* an account of whose reign we have in the next chapter.

CHAP. XVI.

THIS chapter contains the reign of Ahaz only, relates his idolatry, ver. 1—4. his hiring the king of Assyria with the treasure of the temple, and his own, to assist him against the kings of Israel and Syria, who besieged him, ver. 5—9. his seeing the altar of an idol at Damascus, the fashion of which he took, and ordered one like it to be built at Jerusalem, ver. 10—16. his defacing and removing some things in the temple, ver. 17, 18. and the chapter is concluded with his death and burial, ver. 19, 20.

Ver. 1. *In the 17th year of Pekah the son of Remaliah Ahaz the son of Jotham king of Judah began to reign.*] Jotham began to reign in the second of Pekah, and he reigned 16 years, and therefore his last year would fall in the 18th of Pekah; but as his first year might be at the beginning of the second of Pekah, his last was towards the end of the 17th of Pekah's, as here; see ch. xv. 32.

Ver. 2. *Twenty years old* was *Ahaz when he began to reign, and reigned 16 years in Jerusalem, &c.*] The same number of years his father did: *and did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord God, like David his father;* his more remote progenitor, nor even like his more immediate father, from whom he received such good instructions, and of whom he had so good an example; but grace is neither propagated by blood, nor obtained through the force of education.

Ver. 3. *But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, &c.*] Worshipping the calves as they did; which, as it was contrary to the religious sentiments in which he was educated, so against his political interest, which was the only, or at least the principal thing, which swayed with the kings of Israel to continue that idolatry: *yea, and made his son to pass through the fire;* between two fires to Molech, by way of lustration; which might be true of Hezekiah his son, and others of his sons, for he had more he burnt with fire, as appears from 2 Chron. xxviii. 3. both ways were used in that sort of idolatry, see the note on Lev. xviii. 21. *according to the abominations of the Heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel;* the old Canaanites; so the Carthaginians, a colony of the Phœnicians, used in time of calamity to offer human sacrifices, and even their children, to appease their deities[l]. Theodoret says, he had seen in some cities, in his time, piles kindled once a year, over which not only boys, but men, would leap, and infants were carried by their mothers through the flames; which seemed to be an expiation or purgation, and which he takes to be the same with the sin of Ahaz.

Ver. 4. *And he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places, and on the hills, &c.*] Which none of the kings of Judah before him ever did; for though they connived at this practice in the people, they never encouraged it by their own example; and very probably he offered sacrifices there to idols, see 2 Chron. xxviii. 25. whereas the people sacrificed to the true God, though at a wrong place: *and under every green tree;* and which is never said of the people, and seems to confirm it, that Ahaz sacrificed to other gods, since the Heathens used to place idols under green trees, and worship them, whom the Jews imitated, Jer. ii. 2. and iii. 6.

Ver. 5. *Then Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah son of Remaliah king of Israel, came up to Jerusalem to war, &c.*] To fight with Ahaz, moved to it by the Lord, to chastise Ahaz for his idolatry, ch. xv. 37. 2 Chron. xxviii. 5. *but could not overcome* him; so as to take Jerusalem, and set up another king there, as their scheme was, Isa. vii. 5, 6. though they had both at other times got great advantages over him, and slew many of his people, and carried them captive, see 2 Chron. xxviii. 5—8.

Ver. 6. *At that time Rezin king of Syria recovered Elath to Syria, &c.*] A port on the Red sea, that formerly belonged to Edom, taken from them by David, retaken by them when they revolted in Joram's time, and perhaps taken by Amaziah again, since his son Azariah rebuilt it, and restored it to Judah, ch. xiv. 22. and it seems by this that it had been in the hands of the Syrians, who now recovered it; unless instead of Aram, rendered Syrians, we could substitute Edom, which Le Clerc has ventured to do without any authority: *and drave the Jews from Elath;* who were in possession of it. This is the first time that the inhabitants of the kingdom of Judah are called Jews, from the name of their original patriarch, and principal

[k] T. Bab. Sotah, fol. 7. 1. Gloss. in ib. Maimon. Cele Hamikdash, c. 7. sect. 6.

[l] Justin. e Trogo, Hist. l. 18. c. 6. Curt. Hist. l. 4. c. 3. Pescennius Festus apud Lactant. de fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 21.

tribe; though some think [m] they had this name from the time this tribe went up first against the Canaanites, Judg. i. 1, 2. however, it is a mistake of R. Elias Levita [n], that it is never found in the Bible they were called Jews, but from the time the ten tribes were carried captive, and not before; and a greater mistake still it is of Tacitus [o], that they were called Jews or Judæans, as if they were Idæans from Mount Ida in Crete, from whence he supposes they came: *and the Syrians came to Elath, and dwelt there unto this day*: the marginal reading is Edomites; and so read the Septuagint and Vulgate Latin versions; and Kimchi observes that it is written *Aramim*, Syrians, because the king of Syria took it, and by his means the Edomites returned to it, but is read *Edomim*, Edomites, because it belonged to the children of Edom; and it is certain the Edomites had come and smitten Judah, 2 Chron. xxviii. 17.

Ver. 7. *So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria*, &c.] Of whom see ch. xiv. 29. *saying, I am thy servant, and thy son*: signifying, that he would be his vassal, and become tributary to him, and serve him as a servant his master, or a son his father, on condition he would come to his assistance, and so he became his servant; hence his son Hezekiah is said to rebel against the king of Assyria, ch. xviii. 7. *come up and save me out of the hand of the king of Syria, and out of the hand of the king of Israel, which rise up against me*: which assistance he had no reason to call in, since the Lord had promised him deliverance from both those kings, and gave him a sign of it, Isa. vii. 4—16.

Ver. 8. *And Ahaz took the silver and gold that was found in the house of the Lord*, &c.] Which Uzziah and Jotham had put there; for all that was found there in the times of Amaziah was taken away by Jehoash king of Israel, ch. xiv. 14. *and in the treasures of the king's house*: whatever gold and silver he had of his own: *and sent* it for *a present to the king of Assyria*: to obtain his help and assistance.

Ver. 9. *And the king of Assyria hearkened unto him*, &c.] Complied with his request: *for the king of Assyria went up against Damascus, and took it*: the metropolis of the kingdom of Syria, and so made a powerful diversion in favour of the king of Judah: *and carried* the people of it *captive to Kir*: not Cyrene, as the Vulgate Latin version, a country belonging to Egypt, which the king of Assyria had no power over; but a place in upper Media, as Josephus [p] relates, which belonged to the Assyrian king; see Isa. xxii. 6. compared with xxi. 2. of this captivity Amos had prophesied some time before, Amos i. 5. *and slew Rezin*: the king of Syria, which also was foretold in the same prophecy.

Ver. 10. *And King Ahaz went to Damascus to meet Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria*, &c.] When he heard he was come thither, and had taken it, to congratulate him on the victory, and to give him thanks for his assistance; which place from Jerusalem was 160 miles, according to Bunting [q]: *and saw an altar that was at Damascus*: where, in all probability, he attended at the sacrifice on it along with the king of Assyria: *and King Ahaz sent to Urijah the priest the fashion of the altar, and the pattern of it, according to all the workmanship thereof*: not only the size and form of it, but all the decorations and figures on it, with which it was wrought. This Urijah was very probably the high-priest, for it can scarcely be thought that Ahaz would write to any other, or that any other priest would or could have complied with his request; and he seems to be the same Isaiah took to be a witness in a certain affair, though he now degenerated from the character he gives of him, Isa. viii. 2.

Ver. 11. *And Urijah the priest built an altar according to all that King Ahaz had sent from Damascus*, &c.] Exactly according to the size, form, figure, and carved work of it, though expressly contrary to the command of God; which fixed both the form and matter of the altar of God, with every thing appertaining to it, which he, being high-priest, could not be ignorant of, Exod. xxvii. 1. &c. but he was a time-server, and sought to curry favour with his prince: *so Urijah the priest made it against King Ahaz came from Damascus*; both king and priest were in haste to have this altar made. Ahaz could not stay till he came home, but sent directions about it from Damascus, and the priest was so expeditious in observing his commands, that he got it done before he came thence to Jerusalem.

Ver. 12. *And when the king was come from Damascus, the king saw the altar*, &c.] Looked at it, and liked it, being exactly according to the pattern he had sent: *and the king approached the altar, and offered thereon*; either by a priest, or it may be in his own person, having no regard to the laws and appointments of God, and especially as his sacrifices were not offered to him, but to the gods of Damascus and Syria, 2 Chron. xxviii. 23.

Ver. 13. *And he burnt his burnt-offering, and his meat-offering*, &c.] Which went together according to the law of God, and was imitated by the Heathens: *and poured his drink-offering*; a libation of wine, as probably it was, like what they used according to the Levitical law: *and sprinkled the blood of his peace-offerings upon the altar*; as used according to the same law; for all sorts of sacrifices were offered by idolaters, as by the people of God, in imitation of them.

Ver. 14. *And he brought also the brasen altar which was before the Lord*, &c.] That which Solomon made, 2 Chron. iv. 1. which stood in the court by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord, Lev. i. 5. *from the fore-front of the house*; the frontispiece of the temple, which was at the eastern gate of it: *from between the altar and the house of the Lord*; for it seems Urijah had placed the new altar behind the old one, more out of sight; the brasen altar standing between that and the eastern gate, or entrance into the temple; wherefore he removed the brasen altar, and put his new one in the room of it: *and put it*; that is, the brasen altar of Solomon: *on the north side*

[m] Polydor. Virgil. de Invent. l. 4. c. 1.
[n] Tishbi, p. 142. So David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 83. 4.
[o] Hist. l. 5. sect. 2.
[p] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 12. sect. 3.
[q] Travels, &c. p. 185.

of the altar: of the new altar, at the right hand as they went into the temple; where it was as in a corner, in greater obscurity, and the new altar more in view as they came into the temple.

Ver. 15. *And King Ahaz commanded Urijah the priest, saying, &c.*] Who was not to be commanded by the king in matters of worship, but to attend to the laws and institutions of God: *saying, upon the great altar*: meaning the new one, which either was of a larger size than the altar of God, or was greater in the esteem of Ahaz: *burn the morning burnt-offering, and the evening meat-offering*: the daily sacrifice, morning and evening: *and the king's burnt-sacrifice, and his meat-offering, with the burnt-offering of all the people of the land, and their meat-offering, and their drink-offerings*: such as were offered up at any time on the account of the rulers of the land in particular, or of the whole congregation of Israel, see Lev. iv. *and sprinkle upon it all the blood of the burnt-offering, and all the blood of the sacrifice*; as it used to be sprinkled upon the altar of the Lord: *and the brasen altar shall be for me to inquire* by; to search, inquire, and consider what was to be done with it; for altars were never inquired by as oracles; the meaning is, that it was never to be made use of but by him, and when he pleased.

Ver. 16. *Thus did Urijah the priest, according to all that King Ahaz commanded.*] Not only concerning the structure of the altar, but the sacrifices to be offered on it; like king like priest, both apostates and idolaters.

Ver. 17. *And King Ahaz cut off the borders of the bases, and removed the laver from off them, &c.*] In the temple there were ten lavers for the priests to wash in, which are here meant, the singular being put for the plural; and these had bases of brass, on which they were set; and about these bases were borders, which had on them figures of various creatures, lions, oxen, and cherubim; and these Ahaz cut off, either to deface them, in contempt of them, or to convert the brass to other uses, as he might also the bases themselves, since he removed the lavers from off of them, see 1 Kings vii. 27—30. *and took down the sea from off the brasen oxen* that were *under it*: the molten sea Solomon made, which he set upon 12 oxen made of brass; this Ahaz took down from thence, either to abate its magnificence, and render it despicable, or for the sake of the brass, of which the oxen were made, see 1 Kings vii. 23—26. *and put it upon a pavement of stones*; not upon the floor of the temple, for that was of wood, fir, or cedar, but on rows of stones, placed instead of bases for it to stand upon.

Ver. 18. *And the covert for the sabbath that they had built in the house, &c.*] Used on the sabbath-day, either for the people to sit under to hear the law explained by the priests; or for the course of the priests to be in, that went out that day, to give way to the course that entered, which yet did not depart from the temple till evening; or rather for the king himself to sit under, whilst attending the temple-service of that day, and might be the cover of the scaffold, 2 Chron. vi. 13. and be very rich cloth of gold; and therefore he took it away for the king of Assyria, or to signify that he should not frequent the place any more: and hence it follows, *and the king's entry without, turned he from the house of the Lord*; the way which led from the king's palace to it, he turned it a round-about way, that it might not be discerned there was a way from the one to the other: and this he did *for the king of Assyria*; to gratify him, that he might from hence conclude that he had wholly relinquished the worship of God in the temple, and should cleave to the gods of Damascus and Syria; or for fear of him, that he might not see the way into the temple, and take away the vessels; or find him, should he be obliged to hide himself there, when in danger by him.

Ver. 19. *Now the rest of the acts of Ahaz which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] Some others are written in the canonical book of Chronicles, 2 Chron. xxviii. and were, it is highly probable, in the annals of the kings of Judah, now lost.

Ver. 20. *And Ahaz slept with his fathers, and was buried with his fathers in the city of David, &c.*] But not in the sepulchres of the kings of Israel, as David and Solomon, he being such a wicked prince, 2 Chron. xxviii. 27. *and Hezekiah his son reigned in his stead*: of whom much is said in the following part of this history.

CHAP. XVII.

THIS chapter relates the captivity of the ten tribes of Israel, and how it came about, ver. 1—6. the cause of it, their idolatry, which they persisted in, notwithstanding the remonstrances made against it, ver. 7—23. in whose stead were placed people from different parts, who exercised a mixed religion, partly Heathenish, and partly Israelitish, ver. 24.

Ver. 1. *In the 12th year of Ahaz king of Judah began Hoshea the son of Elah to reign in Samaria over Israel nine years.*] In this account there is some difficulty, since it was in the 20th of Jotham, that is, the fourth of Ahaz, that Hoshea conspired against Pekah king of Israel, and slew him, when it might be reasonably thought he began his reign: now either there was an interregnum until the 12th of Ahaz, or Hoshea however was not generally received and acknowledged as king till then, as others think; he being a tributary to the king of Assyria, and a kind of viceroy, is not said to reign until he rebelled against him; after which he reigned nine years, four in the times of Ahaz, and five in the reign of Hezekiah, ch. xviii. 9, 10. in this way the author of the Jewish chronology goes [r], in which he is followed by other Jewish writers; and this bids as fair as any to remove the difficulty, unless these nine years

[r] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 22.

refer to the time of his reign before the 12th of Ahaz; and the sense be, that in the 12th of Ahaz he had reigned nine years; but it is said he *began* to reign then.

Ver. 2. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him.*] He did not worship Baal, as some of them had done; and he could not worship the calves, as all of them had, for they were carried away by the Assyrians in the former captivities, as the Jews[s] say; and who also observe[t], that he removed the garrisons set on the borders of the land to watch the Israelites, that they might not go up to Jerusalem; and this being done on the 15th of Ab, that day was afterwards observed as a festival on that account; and they further remark[u], that the captivity of the ten tribes was in the reign of this king, who was better than the rest, to shew that it was not barely the sins of the kings on whom the Israelites would cast the blame, that they were carried captives, but their own, according to Hos. v. 3.

Ver. 3. *Against him came up Shalmaneser king of Assyria*, &c.] Which some take to be the same with Tiglath-pileser, see 1 Chron. v. 26. but he rather seems to be his son; his name was to be found, as Josephus[w] relates, in the archives of the Tyrians, against whom he had an expedition; his name is Salmanassar in Metasthenes[x], who says he reigned 17 years: *and Hoshea became his servant, and gave him presents*: to depart from him; he became tributary to him, and agreed to pay him a yearly tax.

Ver. 4. *And the king of Assyria found conspiracy in Hoshea*, &c.] That he was forming a scheme to rebel against him, and cast off his yoke; of this he had intelligence by spies he sent, and placed to observe him very probably: *for he had sent messengers to So king of Egypt*: to treat with him, and enter into alliance with him, to help him against, and free him from, the king of Assyria. This king of Egypt is supposed to be Sabacon the Ethiopian, who reigned in Egypt ninety years; of whom Herodotus[y] and Diodorus Siculus[z] make mention; by Theodoret he is called Adramelech the Ethiopian, who dwelt in Egypt: *and brought no presents to the king of Assyria, as* he had done *year by year*; did not pay him his yearly tribute: *therefore the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison*; that is, after he took Samaria, the siege of which is next related; unless it can be thought that he met with him somewhere out of the capital, and seized him, and made him his prisoner, and after that besieged his city; which is not so likely.

Ver. 5. *Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land*, &c.] Of Israel, there being none to oppose his march; Hoshea not daring to come out, and meet him and fight him: *and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years*: so long the city held out against him, see ch. xviii. 9, 10.

Ver. 6. *In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria*, &c.] Which was the last year of his reign, and to be reckoned either from the time of his reigning in full power and authority, or from his first casting off the Assyrian yoke; see the note on ver. 1. *and carried Israel away into Assyria*: not only the inhabitants of Samaria, but all the ten tribes inhabiting the several parts of the kingdom, for which Josephus is express[a]: *and placed them in Halah, and in Habor, by the river of Gozan*; some of them he placed here, which were in Assyria. Halah is the Calachena of Ptolemy, at the north of Assyria, and Habor is the mount Chobaras of the same; from which mountain, as you go to the Caspian sea, about midway, is the city Gauzania, the same with Gozan, which might give name to this river[b]. The Jews say[c], this is the river Sambation, which runs so swiftly, that there is no passing except on the sabbath-day, and which then the Jews cannot pass because of the profanation of the sabbath; and is the reason they give why the 10 tribes are there detained; and Manasseh ben Israel[d] fancies Habor to be Tabor, a province in Tartary, where some Jews are: *and in the cities of the Medes*; others of them he placed there, under his jurisdiction, the same with Hara, 1 Chron. v. 26. which with the Greeks is called Aria; and Herodotus says[e], these Medes formerly were called by all Arii. It appears from hence that the kingdom of Media was now subject to the king of Assyria: some[f] take Halach to be Colchi, and Habor to be Iberia, and Hara to be Armenia, and Gauzani to be Media, which all bounded the north of Assyria.

Ver. 7. *For so it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord their God*, &c.] By committing idolatry, which is the sin enlarged upon in the following discourse, as the cause of their being carried captive: *which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt*; which is observed to shew their ingratitude, and to aggravate their sin of idolatry: *and had feared other gods*; which could do them neither good nor hurt, wherefore it must be great stupidity to fear them.

Ver. 8. *And walked in the statutes of the Heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel*, &c.] Meaning the Canaanites, in whose idolatrous ways they walked, and whom they imitated; though their ejection out of the land should have been a warning to them, and they were the more inexcusable, as they were particularly cautioned against walking in them, Lev. xviii. 3. *and of the kings of Israel, which they had made*; their laws and statutes, to worship the golden calves, and not go up to Jerusalem to worship.

Ver. 9. *And the children of Israel did secretly those things that were not right against the Lord their God*, &c.] As being partly conscious to themselves that they were not right, and ashamed to commit them openly; and partly as foolishly imagining, that, being

[s] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 22.
[t] T. Bab. Gittin, fol. 88. Kimchi in loc.
[u] Seder Olam Rabba, ut supra.
[w] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 2.
[x] De Judicio Temp. fol. 221. 2.
[y] Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 137.
[z] Bibliothec. l. 1. p. 59.

[a] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 10. sect. 1.
[b] Vid. Witsium de 10 Trib. Israel. c. 4. sect. 2.
[c] Rambam apud Eliam in Tishbi, p. 134.
[d] Spes Israelis, sect. 17. p. 55.
[e] Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 60. So Pausanias Corinthiac. sive, l. 2. p. 91. Vid. Vossium in Melam, de Situ Orbis, l. 1. c. 2. p. 13.
[f] See Brerewood's Inquiries, p. 104.

done privately, they were not seen and observed of God, having imbibed some atheistical notions of him, that he was not omniscient, or saw not, and had forsaken the earth; or they *covered*[g] these actions of theirs under feigned and plausible pretences, that what they did they were obliged to by their kings, and with political views, and that they worshipped the true God in the calves; but these were coverings too thin not to be seen through: *and they built them high places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city;* not content with those built in former times, they built new ones; and these not in their metropolis only, but in all the cities of the kingdom; and not in large cities only, but in every town and village between one fortified city and another; even wherever there was a watch-tower erected, either for shepherds to watch their flocks, or for keepers of gardens, orchards, and vineyards, to watch the fruits of them, that they were not taken away.

Ver. 10. *And they set them up images and groves in every high hill, and under every green tree.*] That is, statues and idols; for groves of trees could not be set under green trees; but they placed idols of stone, and of wood, as the latter were, in such places as Heathens were wont to do; see Jer. iii. 6. and the note on 1 Kings xiv. 23. so the Indians to this day have idols dispersed here and there in the fields, placed in little groves, or at the foot of some hill that casts a shadow[h].

Ver. 11. *And there they burnt incense in all the high places,* &c.] As even the tribe of Judah did, which is observed in all the preceding reigns: *as did the Heathen whom the Lord carried away before them:* the Canaanites, and therefore they might justly expect to be carried captive also: *and wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger:* by their several immoralities, but especially their idolatries.

Ver. 12. *For they served idols,* &c.] Baalim, as the Targum; dunghill-gods, as the word signifies, as they are often called in Scripture; and Sterculius was one of the names of Saturn, an Heathen deity, which he had, as is supposed, by his finding out the method of making land fruitful with dung[i]: *whereof the Lord said unto them, ye shall not do this thing;* see Exod. xx. 3, 4, 5, 23.

Ver. 13. *Yet the Lord testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets,* and by *all the seers,* &c.] Against their sins, reproving them for them, dehorting them from them, exhorting them to repent and leave them; as in all preceding reigns, by Ahijah the Shilonite, by Elijah and Elisha, by Hosea, Amos, and Micah, and others: *saying, turn ye from your evil ways;* repent of them, and reform from them, the worship of the calves particularly: *and keep my commandments,* and *my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers;* which was given them and enjoined them at Mount Sinai: *and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets;* by whom he put them in mind of them, explained them, and urged obedience to them.

Ver. 14. *Notwithstanding, they would not hear,* &c.] Their instructions, advice, and admonitions, and obey them: *but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God;* as Terah and Nahor, who were idolaters; or rather, their fathers in the wilderness, that made and served the golden calf, and those that rebelled against Moses and Aaron; it is a metaphor taken from oxen, that will not submit their necks to the yoke, but draw back from it, or cast it off, see Acts vii. 51.

Ver. 15. *And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers,* &c.] At Sinai and Horeb, see Exod. xxiv. 8. Deut. xxix. 1. *and his testimonies which he testified against them;* calling heaven and earth to witness what he would do to them if they broke his laws, Deut. iv. 26. and xxx. 19, and xxxii. 1. and which were so many testifications of his mind and will what they should do, or otherwise what should be done to them; Ben Gersom also interprets this of the feasts of the passover and tabernacles, which were witnesses of Israel's coming out of Egypt, and of the sanctification and redemption of the first-born, a testimony of the slaying the first-born in Egypt: *and they followed vanity;* idols, which are vain things for help, can neither hear, see, speak, &c. *and became vain;* as sottish and stupid as the idols they worshipped; which is the usual fruit and effect of idolatry, see Rom. i. 21—28. *and went after the Heathen that were round about them;* imitated them in their idolatrous practices, as the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, &c. concerning *whom the Lord had charged them, that they should not do like them;* of this charge see Deut. vi. 13, 14.

Ver. 16. *And they left all the commandments of the Lord their God,* &c.] Which their idolatry led them to; and indeed he that offends in one point is guilty of them all, James ii. 10. *and made them molten images,* even *two calves;* which they set up at Dan and Beth-el, in the times of their first king Jeroboam, 1 Kings xiii. 28, 29. *and made a grove;* as Ahab, another of their kings, did, 1 Kings xvi. 33. *and worshipped all the host of heaven;* not the angels, sometimes so called, but, besides the sun and moon, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, Venus: *and served Baal;* which was service to the sun, as Abarbinel interprets it; this was the god of the Zidonians Ahab worshipped, having married a princess of that people, 1 Kings xvi. 31, 32.

Ver. 17. *And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire,* &c.] To Baal or Moloch, which were the same, and represented the sun, which, as the above writer observes, presides in the element of fire; this was done either by way of lustration, or so as to be burnt, see ch. xvi. 3. *and used divination and enchantments;* to get knowledge of what was to be done at present, or of things to come, neglecting the word of God and his prophets, and acting against the express law of God, Deut. xviii. 10, 11, 12. *and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger;* as Ahab their king did, see 1 Kings xxi. 20, 25. they were as much the servants of sin as if they had sold themselves to be slaves to it.

Ver. 18. *Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel,* &c.] Nothing being more provoking to him

[g] ויחפאו occultaverunt, Montanus, Vatablus, Grotius; palliaverunt, Piscator.

[h] Agreement of Customs between the East Indians and Jews, art. 5. p. 84.

[i] Vid. Macrob. l. 1. c. 7. Lactant. de fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 20.

than idolatry: *and removed them out of his sight*; not out of the reach of his all-seeing eye, but from all tokens of his favour, from the good land he had given them, and all the benefits and privileges of it: *there was none left but the tribe of Judah only*; and part of Benjamin, which was annexed to it, and incorporated in it, and made one kingdom, and maintained the same worship; and there was the lot of Simeon, which was within the tribe of Judah; and the priests and the Levites, and various individuals of the several tribes, that came and settled among them for the sake of worship; but no perfect, distinct, tribe besides.

Ver. 19. *Also Judah kept not the commandments of the Lord their God*, &c.] But were infected with the idolatry of the ten tribes, and drawn into it by their example, and persisted therein, notwithstanding what befell the ten tribes; which are aggravations of the sins of them both, see Jer. iii. 7—10. *but walked in the statutes of Israel which they made*; worshipping the calves as they did, particularly in the times of Ahaz, he setting the example, see ch. xvi. 3.

Ver. 20. *And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel*, &c.] The ten tribes, with loathing and contempt, and wrote a *lo-ammi* on them, rejected them from being his people, gave them a bill of divorce, and declared them no more under his care and patronage: *and afflicted them*; as he did before he utterly cast them off, as by famine, drought, and pestilence, Amos iv. 6—11. *and delivered them into the hands of spoilers*; as, first, into the hands of Hazael and Benhadad, kings of Syria, and then of Tiglath-pileser king of Assyria, ch. xiii. 3, 22. and xv. 24. *until he had cast them out of his sight*; by suffering them, as now, to be carried captive by Salmaneser, ver. 6.

Ver. 21. *For he rent Israel from the house of David*, &c.] In the times of Rehoboam the son of Solomon, when ten tribes revolted from him, signified by the rending of a garment in twelve pieces, ten of which were given to Jeroboam; and it is here ascribed to the Lord, being according to his purpose and decree, and which was brought about by his providence, agreeably to a prophecy of his, see 1 Kings xi. 30, 31. *and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king*; of themselves, without consulting the Lord and his prophets; and which was resented by him, though it was his will, and he had foretold it, that Jeroboam should be king, see Hos. viii. 4. *and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the Lord*; forbidding them to go up to Jerusalem to worship; the Targum is, "made them to err:" *and made them sin a great sin*; obliging them to worship the calves he set up.

Ver. 22. *For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did*, &c.] They observed his injunction, not to go to Jerusalem to worship, and they worshipped the calves he did: *they departed not from them*; in all succeeding reigns, until the time of their captivity.

Ver. 23. *Until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight*, &c.] Suffered them to be carried captive into the land of Assyria: *as he had said by all his servants the prophets*; by Hosea, Amos, Micah, and others; see their prophecies, and also 1 Kings xiii. 32. and xiv. 15, 16. *so was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria, unto this day*; the time of the writing this book; nor have they returned unto our days, near 2,500 years ago.

Ver. 24. *And the king of Assyria brought* men *from Babylon*, &c.] Which was at this time under the dominion of the king of Assyria; though in a little time after this it revolted, and had a king of its own, ch. xx. 12. this king of Assyria was either Salmaneser, who carried Israel captive, or it may be rather his son Esar-haddon, see Ezra iv. 2. *and from Cuthah*; which, according to Josephus [k], was a city in Persia, where was a river of the same name; but it was rather a place in Erach, in the country of Babylon, see the note on Gen. x. 6. *and from Ava*; the same with Ivah, Isa. xxxiii. 13. where perhaps a colony of the Avim had settled, Deut. ii. 23. *and from Hamath*; a city of Syria, which lay on the northern borders of the land of Canaan, Numb. xxxiv. 8. *and from Sepharvaim*; thought by some to be the Sippara of Ptolemy, or the Sippareni of Abydenus, in Mesopotamia; though Vitringa takes it to be a city in Syro-Phœnicia, see the note on Isa. xxxvi. 19. *and placed them in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel*; not in Samaria, which was now destroyed, according to the prophecy in Mic. i. 6. as Abarbinel and other Jewish writers note: *and they possessed Samaria*; as an inheritance; sowed it with corn, and planted vineyards there: *and dwelt in the cities thereof*; in the several parts of the kingdom.

Ver. 25. *And so it was at the beginning of their dwelling there*, that *they feared not the Lord*, &c.] Did not serve him in any manner, but their idols only, which they brought with them; whereas it was usual with Heathens to serve the gods of the country, as they reputed them, where they came, along with their own; but even this those men did not do: *therefore the Lord sent lions among them*; even into their cities, into which lions sometimes came [l], especially when old, out of the thickets of Jordan and other places where they haunted, see Jer. xlix. 19. *which slew some of them*; this the Lord did to assert his sovereignty, authority, and mighty power, and to let them know that he could as easily clear the land of them, as they, by his permission, had cleared the land of the Israelites, Josephus [m] calls this a plague that was sent among them.

Ver. 26. *Wherefore they spake to the king of Assyria*, &c.] In letters, or by messengers they sent unto him: *saying, the nations which thou hast removed*; from different places before mentioned: *and placed in the cities of Samaria, know not the manner of the God of the land*; taking Jehovah the God of Israel to be a topical deity, limited peculiarly to the land of Israel, whereas he was the God of the whole earth; a like notion obtained among the Syrians, see 1 Kings xx. 28. now they say they know not his *manner* or *judgment* [n], the laws, statutes, ordinances, and judgments, according to which he was worshipped by the people of Israel: *therefore he hath sent lions among them, and, behold, they slay them*; they perceived it was not a common case, nor

[k] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 1.
[l] Aristot. Hist. Animal. l. 9. c. 44. Plin. Nat. Hist. l. 8. c. 16.

[m] Ut supra.
[n] משפט judicium, Pagninus, Montanus, &c.

could they impute it to any second cause, as want of food with the lions, *&c.* but the hand of a superior Being was in it: and they could think of no other reason, but *because they know not the manner of the God of the land;* how he was to be worshipped; and because they did not worship him, and knew not how to do it, it was resented in this manner by him.

Ver. 27. *Then the king of Assyria commanded, saying,* &c.] Gave the following orders and directions: *carry thither one of the priests whom ye brought from thence;* for they carried away all the people of every class, civil and religious: *and let him go and dwell there, and let him teach them the manner of the God of the land;* it is in the plural number, *let them go,* &c. [o]; there might be more priests than one ordered, or, however, others, to attend and assist him in his work; the Jews say [p], two were sent to circumcise them, and teach them the book of the law; and they give their names, Dosthai, or Dositheus, and Zachariah; and Josephus [q] says, the people desired that priests might be sent to them of the captives.

Ver. 28. *Then one of the priests whom they had carried away from Samaria came and dwelt in Beth-el,* &c.] According to an Arabic writer [r], his name was Uzziah; but Epiphanius [s] says his name was Esdras; but he wrongly makes him to be sent by Nebuchadnezzar, 30 years after the captivity of the Jews in Babylon: this priest was, doubtless, one of the priests of the calves; for there were none else in the kingdom of Israel carried captive, and as seems also by his choosing to dwell in Beth-el, where probably he formerly dwelt, and officiated in the service of the calf there, and by teaching to make priests of the lowest order of the people, as Jeroboam's priests were, ver. 32. *and taught them how they should fear the Lord;* serve and worship him; he might not teach them the worship of the calves, that being a political business, and now no end to be answered by it; and besides, they were now carried out of the land. This priest taught, no doubt, according to the law of Moses, but was not the author of the Pentateuch; which ridiculous conceit of Le Clerc is sufficiently exposed by Witsius [t].

Ver. 29. *Howbeit, every nation made gods of their own,* &c.] Served and worshipped those they brought with them, and which were the work of their own hands, even the nations, or those out of the nations, mentioned ver. 24. these, notwithstanding the instructions they had about the worship of the God of Israel, retained and served their own deities: *and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt;* as the Israelites had built high places everywhere for idolatry, and put images in them, ver. 9, 10, 11. these Heathens placed their gods there in the room of them, which were as follow.

Ver. 30. *And the men of Babylon made Succoth-benoth,* &c.] That is, those that came from Babylon made and served an idol of this name, which, according to the Jewish writers [u], were the figures of an hen and chickens; but others suppose them to be the Pleiades, or seven stars, the stars being had in great veneration by the Babylonians; though others rather think those Succoth-benoth, *tabernacles,* or *booths of the daughters,* as the words may be rendered, have respect to the apartments in the temple of Venus, or Mylitta with the Babylonians and Assyrians, in which women once in their lives prostituted themselves to whomsoever asked them, in honour of Venus; of which filthy practice of theirs Herodotus [w] makes mention; and Valerius Maximus speaks [x] of a temple of Sicca Venus, which is near in sound to this, where the like impurities were committed: *and the men of Cuth made Nergal;* which, according to the Jews, was in the likeness of a cock; but others, because the first part of the word signifies a lamp, suppose fire is meant, worshipped by the Persians, from whom it is thought these men came; but rather the word signifies, as Hillerus [y] observes, the fountain of light, and denotes the sun, worshipped by the Babylonians, Cuth being a province of theirs; from hence one of the princes of Babylon had part of his name, Jer. xxxix. 3. *and the men of Hamath made Ashima;* which, the Jews say, was in the form of a goat, without any wool on it, or an ape [z]; but according to Hillerus [a], with the Arabs, Ashima is the name of a lion, a symbol of the sun, under which form it might be worshipped; unless Ashima is the same with Shamaim, the heavens, worshipped by the Heathens; we read of the Ashemath of Samaria, by which they swore, Amos viii. 14. though that was before these men came thither.

Ver. 31. *And the Avites made Nibhaz and Tartak,* &c.] The former of which is represented by the Jews in the shape of a dog, deriving the word from *nabach,* to bark, as if it was the same with the Anubis Latrator of Virgil [b], an Egyptian deity; though that is said [c] to have its name from *NOYB,* which in the Egyptian language signifies *gold,* the statutes of it being made of gold; and the latter in the form of an ass, for what reason I cannot say; but the first word, according to Hillerus [d], signifies, *the remote one seeth,* that is, the sun, which beholds all things; and Tartak is a chain, and may denote the fixed stars, chained as it were in their places; or the satellites of the planets, chained to their orbs: *and the Sepharvites burnt their children in fire to Adrammelech and to Anammelech the gods of Sepharvaim;* which were the same with Moloch: which may be concluded, partly from the worship paid them, and partly from the signification of their names; both end with *melech,* king, which Moloch also signifies; the first may be interpreted the mighty king, and the latter the king that answers in an oracular way; from the first, one of the sons of Sennacherib king of Assyria had his name, Isa. xxxvii. 38. though the Jews, according to their fancy, represent

[o] ילכו וישבו, eant & sedeant, Montanus.
[p] Pirke Eliezer, c. 38.
[q] Antiqu. l. 9. c. 14. sect. 3.
[r] Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 65.
[s] Contr. Haeres. l. 1. Haer. 8.
[t] Miscellan. tom. 1. l. 1. c. 14. sect. 7. 29.
[u] T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 63. 2.
[w] Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 199.

[x] L. 2. c. 6. sect. 15.
[y] Onomastic. Sacr. p. 601.
[z] David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 17. 2.
[a] Onomast. Sacr. p. 609.
[b] Æneid. l. 6. So Ovid. Metamorph. l. 9. Fab. 12. ver. 689.
[c] Jablonski apud Michael. Obs. Sacr. Exercit. 4. p. 66, 67.
[d] Ut supra, p. 606.

the one in the likeness of a mule, and the other in the likeness of a horse; and some make the one to be a peacock, and the other a pheasant[*]; the Sepuagint version puts the article before them in the feminine gender, excepting the two last, taking them for she-deities, or leaving the word εικονα, *images*, to be understood.

Ver. 32. *So they feared the Lord*, &c.] Worshipped the God of Israel in the manner they were taught: *and made unto themselves of the lowest of them priests of the high places, which sacrificed for them in the houses of the high places*; these were made after the manner of Jeroboam's priests, 1 Kings xi. 31. and were to sacrifice to the God of Israel in the high places, and temples built there; for otherwise they had, no doubt, priests of their own to sacrifice to their gods, and which they brought with them.

Ver. 33. *They feared the Lord, and served their own gods*, &c.] Worshipped both: *after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence*; the Israelites, whom they had carried captive from Samaria; they worshipped the Lord in their idols, as they did, who pretended to worship God in the calves; so they worshipped the supreme God in and by their idols, and made use of them as mediators with him.

Ver. 34. *Unto this day they do after the former manners*, &c.] Which may be understood either of the new colonies in Samaria doing after the former customs in their own land, or after the customs of the idolatrous Israelites; or of the Israelites in captivity continuing in their idolatry, not being in the least reformed by their troubles; or of such of them as were left in the land, who repented not of their idolatries, nor reformed from them: *they fear not the Lord*; did not worship him, at least not alone, and much less in a spiritual manner, with reverence and godly fear: *neither do they after their statutes, or after their ordinances, or after the law and commandment which the Lord commanded the children of Jacob, whom he named Israel*; that is, they did not observe the statutes and ordinances of the law given on Mount Sinai respecting religious worship, to act according to them.

Ver. 35. *With whom the Lord had made a covenant*, &c.] As he did at Sinai, ver. 15. *and charged them, saying, ye shall not fear other gods, nor bow yourselves to them, nor serve them, nor sacrifice to them*; all which is contained in the first and second commandments of the law.

Ver. 36. *But the Lord, which brought you up out of the land of Egypt, with a great power, and a stretched-out arm*, &c.] Which is observed, to shew the obligations they lay under, in point of gratitude, to serve the Lord: *him shall ye fear, and him shall ye worship, and to him shall ye do sacrifice*: and him only, and not other gods; none but he being the object of religious fear and divine worship, and to whom sacrifices should be offered.

Ver. 37. *And the statutes, and the ordinances, and the law, and the commandment which he wrote for you*, &c.] On the two tables of stone: *ye shall observe to do for evermore*; those commands relating to religious worship, especially the object of it, and to moral duties, being of eternal obligation; and all other statutes and ordinances of a ceremonial kind he ordered to be written for them, being such that they were to regard until the Messiah came, and a new world began: *an dye shall not fear other gods*; which is repeated, that it might be observed, as it also afterwards is.

Ver. 38. *And the covenant that I have made with you, ye shall not forget*, &c.] The law given at Mount Sinai; the first table of which chiefly concerned the worship of the one true and living God, and forbid the worship of any other, as follows: *neither shall ye fear other gods*; or make them the object of worship.

Ver. 39. *But the Lord your God ye shall fear*, &c.] Or worship him, both internally and externally, according to his revealed will; for the fear of God includes both internal and external worship: *and he shall deliver you out of the hand of all your enemies*; that is, provided they feared and served him as he required, and it became them to do.

Ver. 40. *Howbeit, they did not hearken, but did after their former manner*.] They did not repent of their idolatries, but persisted in them, and even when they were in captivity in Assyria, or such of them as were left in the land.

Ver. 41. *So these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images*, &c.] Just in like manner as the Israelites had done, who served the Lord and the calves, and worshipped God and Baal: *both their children, and their children's children*: that is, the children and children's children of the Samaritans: *as did their fathers, so do they unto this day*: to the writing of this book, which some ascribe to Jeremiah, to whose times, and even longer, they continued this mixed and mongrel worship, for the space of 300 years, to the times of Alexander the great, of whom Sanballat, governor of Samaria, got leave to build a temple, on Gerizzim, for his son-in-law Manasseh, of which he became priest; and the Samaritans were prevailed upon to relinquish their idolatry, and to worship only the God of Israel; and yet it seems but ignorantly, and not without superstition, to the times of Christ, John iv. 22.

CHAP. XVIII.

THIS chapter begins with the good reign of Hezekiah king of Judah, the reformation he made in the kingdom, and the prosperity that attended him when Israel was carried captive, ver. 1—12. and gives an account of the siege of Jerusalem by the king of Assyria, and of the distress Hezekiah was in, and the hard measures he was obliged to submit unto, ver. 13—18. and of the reviling and blasphemous speech of Rabshakeh,

* Vid. Kimchium in loc.

one of the generals of the king of Assyria, urging the Jews to a revolt from their king, ver. 19—37.

Ver. 1. *Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel*, &c.] That is, in the third year of his rebelling against the king of Assyria, when he shook off his yoke, and refused to be tributary to him any longer, see ch. xvii. 1. that *Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign*: having finished the account of the kingdom of Israel, and the captivity of the people, the historian returns to the kingdom of Judah, and the things of it.

Ver. 2. *Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign*, &c.] Now as Ahaz his father began to reign at 20, and reigned 16, he must die at 36; so that this son of his must be born to him when at 11 years of age, for only so many years there be between 25 and 36, which may seem wonderful; but, as Grotius observes, Hezekiah had now entered into the 25th year, and he might be just turned of 24, and so his father might be 12 years of age at his birth: besides, as it is usual for the divine historian to take away or add the incomplete years of kings, Ahaz might be near 21 when he began to reign, and might reign almost 17, which makes the age of Ahaz to be about 38; and Hezekiah being but little more than 24, at his death there were 13 or near 14 years difference in their age, and which was an age that need not be thought incredible for begetting of children. Bochart [f] and others [g] have given many instances of children begotten by persons under that age, even at 10 years of age [h]: four years after his birth, the famous city of Rome began to be founded [i], A. M. 3256, and before Christ 748, as commonly received, though it is highly probable it was of a more early date; according to Dionysius Halicarnassensis, it was founded in the first year of the 7th Olympaid, in the times of Ahaz, A. M. 3118 [k]: *and he reigned 29 years in Jerusalem*; so that he reigned 23 years or more after the captivity of the 10 tribes: *his mother's name also was Abi the daughter of Zachariah*: perhaps the daughter of the same that was taken by Isaiah for a witness, Isa. viii. 3. who very probably was a very good woman, and took care to give her son a religious education, though he had so wicked a father.

Ver. 3. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that David his father did.*] Some of the kings of Judah, that were better than some others, are said to do that which was right, but not like David; or they did as he did, but not according to *all* that he did, as is here said of Hezekiah.

Ver. 4. *He removed the high places*, &c.] Which the best of the kings of Judah never attempted, and which is observed of them to their discredit: *and brake the images, and cut down the groves*; the idols his father set up and served, ch. xvi. 4. 2 Chron. xxviii. 24, 26. groves and idols in them, were early instances of idolatry; see Judg. iii. 7. and the note there; and their use for temples are still continued, not only among some Indian nations [l], but among some Christians in the northern parts of Europe [m]; *and brake in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made*: which he made in the wilderness, and which was brought by the children of Israel with them into the land of Canaan, and was kept as a memorial of the miracle wrought by looking to it, being laid up in some proper place where it had been preserved to this day: *for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it*: not from the time it was brought into Canaan, nor even in later times, in the days of Asa and Jehoshaphat, who would never have suffered it; very probably this piece of idolatry began in the times of Ahaz, who encouraged every thing of that kind: for this serpent they had a great veneration, being made by Moses, and a means in his time of healing the Israelites; and they imagined it might be of some service to them, in a way of mediation to God; and worthy of worship, having some degree of divinity, as Kimchi and Ben Gersom; but Laniado [n] excuses them from all shew of idolatry, and supposes what they did was for the honour of God only; hence sprung the heresy of the Ophites, according to Theodoret: *and he called it Nehushtan*: perceiving they were insnared by it, and drawn into idolatry to it, by way of contempt he called it by this name, which signifies *brass*; suggesting that it was only a mere piece of brass, had no divinity in it, and could be of no service to them in divine things; and, that it might no longer be a snare to them, he broke it into pieces; and, as the Jews [o] say, ground it to powder, and scattered it to every wind, that there might be no remains of it.

Ver. 5. *He trusted in the Lord God of Israel*, &c.] To be his protector and defender, and had no dependence on idols as an arm of flesh; the Targum is, he trusted in the Word of the Lord God; not in Nehushtan, but in him the brasen serpent was a type of, even in the Word and Son of God, his alone Saviour and Redeemer: *so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah*; for though Josiah was like him in some things, yet not in all: *nor any that were before him*; from the times of the division of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah; and Ben Gersom and Abarbinel think that David and Solomon are not to be excepted; David sinning in the case of Uriah, and Solomon falling into idolatry, crimes that Hezekiah was not guilty of.

Ver. 6. *For he clave to the Lord*, &c.] To his worship and service; to the fear of the Lord, as the Targum: and *departed not from following him*; from his worship, as the same paraphrase: *but kept his commandments, which the Lord commanded Moses*; both moral, ceremonial, and judicial.

Ver. 7. *And the Lord was with him*, &c.] The Word of the Lord was for his help, as the Targum: *and he prospered whithersoever he went forth*; that is, to war: *and he rebelled against the king of Assyria*; which is explained in the next clause: *and served him not*; he refused to be his servant, as his father Ahaz had been, ch. xvi. 7. to which he was not obliged by any agreement of his; and, if it was in his power, might lawfully shake off his yoke, which is all that is meant

[f] Ep. Carbonell. tom. 1. oper. p. 920.
[g] Vid. Hieronymi Opera, tom. 3. Ep. Vital. fol. 25. C.
[h] T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 44. 1.
[i] Usser. Annal. p. 66, 67.
[k] Vid. Breithaupt. Not. in Hist. Gorion. Heb. l. 5. c. 1.

[l] See Dampier's Voyage, vol. 1. p. 411.
[m] Vid. Fabritii Bibliograph. Antiqu. c. 9. sect. 11.
[n] Cli Yaker, fol. 338. 2.
[o] T. Bab. Avodah Zarah, fol. 44. 1.

by rebelling against him; he refused to be tributary to him.

Ver. 8. *He smote the Philistines even unto Gaza, and the borders thereof*, &c.] Who in his father's time had invaded Judah, and taken many cities and towns in it, which Hezekiah now recovered, and drove them to their own territories, of which Gaza was one; see 2 Chron. xxviii. 18. *from the tower of the watchmen to the fenced city*: that is, places both great and small, cities, towns, and villages; of this phrase, see ch. xvii. 9.

Ver. 9. *And it came to pass in the fourth year of King Hezekiah*, &c.] In the beginning of it: *which was the seventh year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel*: the beginning of his seventh: *that Shalmaneser king of Assyria came up against Samaria, and besieged it*; see ch. xvii. 5.

Ver. 10. *And at the end of three years they took it*, &c.] That is, at the first end of them, at the beginning, in which sense the phrase is taken in Deut. xv. 1. Jer. xxxiv. 14. even *in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is, the ninth year of Hoshea king of Israel, Samaria was taken*: see ch. xvii. 6.

Ver. 11. *And the king of Assyria did carry away Israel unto Assyria*, &c.] Of the places he disposed of them in, after mentioned, see the note on ch. xvii. 6.

Ver. 12. *Because they obeyed not the voice of the Lord*, &c.] In his law, and by his prophets: *but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded*; which evils are at large insisted on in the preceding chapter as the cause of their captivity: *and would not hear* them, *nor do* them; contrary to the agreement of their fathers at Sinai, who promised to do both, Exod. xxiv. 3, 7.

Ver. 13. *Now in the 14th year of King Hezekiah*, &c.] Eight years after the captivity of Israel: *did Sennacherib king of Assyria come up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them*: many of them, the frontier towns, and proceeded as far as Lachish; ambitious of enlarging his dominions, his father having subdued the kingdom of Israel, and being also provoked by Hezekiah's refusing to pay him tribute. Mention is made of this king by name, by Herodotus and other Heathen writers, see the note on Isa. xxxvi. 1. in Tobit i. 15. he is called Sennacherib, and is said to be son of Enemassar, that is, Shalmaneser; however, he succeeded him in his kingdom; though some [o] take him to be the same with Shalmaneser: he is said by Metasthenes [p] to reign seven years, and was succeeded by Assaradon, who, according to him, reigned ten years.

Ver. 14. *And Hezekiah king of Judah sent to the king of Assyria to Lachish*, &c.] A city in the tribe of Judah, about 20 miles from Jerusalem, towards the south-west [q]; which the king of Assyria was now besieging, 2 Chron. xxxii. 9. at first Hezekiah made provision to defend himself, and encouraged his people not to be afraid of the king of Assyria, 2 Chron. xxxii. 1—8. but understanding he had taken his fortified cities, and made such progress with his arms, he was disheartened, and sent an embassy to him to sue for peace; judging it more advisable to buy it than to expose his capital to a siege; in which he betrayed much weakness and distrust of the power and providence of God: *saying, I have offended*; not the Lord, but the king of Assyria by rebelling against him, or refusing to pay the yearly tribute to him; he owned he had acted imprudently, and had given him just occasion to invade his land: *return from me*: from his land, from proceeding to Jerusalem, which he seemed to have a design upon, and go back to his own country with his army, and make no further conquests: *that which thou puttest on me I will bear*; what mulct or fine he should lay upon him, or tribute he should impose upon him, or whatever he should demand of him, he would submit to: *and the king of Assyria appointed unto Hezekiah king of Judah 300 talents of silver, and 30 talents of gold*; to be paid to him directly; which, according to Brerewood [r], amounted to 247,500 pounds.

Ver. 15. *And Hezekiah gave him all the silver that was found in the house of the Lord, and in the treasures of the king's house.*] To make up the 300 talents of silver, for which purpose he exhausted both, which had been done more than once before by the kings of Judah; these were their resources in times of distress; see ch. xii. 18. and xvi. 8.

Ver. 16. *At that time did Hezekiah cut off* the gold from *the doors of the temple of the Lord*, &c.] The plates of gold with which they were covered; or scraped off the gold from them, as the Targum interprets it: *and* from *the pillars which Hezekiah king of Judah had overlaid*: or the posts, as the Targum, the lintel or side-posts of the doors of the temple; which though covered in Solomon's time, the gold was worn off, or had been taken off by Ahaz, but was renewed by Hezekiah; and who, in this time of distress, thought he might take it off again, no doubt with a full purpose to replace it, when he should be able. This is one of the three things the Talmudic writers [s] disapprove of in Hezekiah: *and gave it to the king of Assyria*; to make up the 30 talents of gold he demanded.

Ver. 17. *And the king of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris, and Rabshakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a great host against Jerusalem*, &c.] Notwithstanding he took the above large sum of money of him, so false and deceitful was he: these were three generals of his army, whom he sent to besiege Jerusalem, whilst he continued the siege of Lachish; only Rabshakeh is mentioned in Isa. xxxvi. 2. he being perhaps chief general, and the principal speaker; whose speech, to the end of this chapter, intended to intimidate Hezekiah, and dishearten his people, with some circumstances which attended it, are recorded word for word in Isa. xxxvi. throughout; see the notes on it.

[o] Lud. Vives in Aug. de Civ. Dei, l. 18. c. 24.
[p] De Judicio Temp. fol. 221. 2.
[q] Bunting's Travels, &c. p. 99.
[r] De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 5.
[s] T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 10. 2.

CHAP. XIX.

THIS chapter relates that King Hezekiah, on a report made to him of Rabshakeh's speech, sent a message to the prophet Isaiah to pray for him, who returned him a comfortable and encouraging answer, ver. 1—7. and that upon Rabshakeh's return to the king of Assyria, he sent to Hezekiah a terrifying letter, ver. 8—13. which Hezekiah spread before the Lord, and prayed unto him to save him and his people out of the hands of the king of Assyria, ver. 14—19. to which he had a gracious answer sent him by the prophet Isaiah, promising him deliverance from the Assyrian army, ver. 20—34. which accordingly was destroyed by an angel in one night, and Sennacherib fleeing to Nineveh, was slain by his two sons, ver. 35—37.

Ver. 1. *And it came to pass, when King Hezekiah heard* it, &c.] The report of Rabshakeh's speech, recorded in the preceding chapter, *that he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth;* rent his clothes because of the blasphemy in the speech; and he put on sackcloth, in token of mourning, for the calamities he feared were coming on him and his people: *and he went into the house of the Lord;* the temple, to pray unto him. The message he sent to Isaiah, with his answer, and the threatening letter of the king of Assyria, Hezekiah's prayer upon it, and the encouraging answer he had from the Lord, with the account of the destruction of the Assyrian army, and the death of Sennacherib, are the same *verbatim* as in Isa. xxxvii. throughout; and therefore the reader is referred thither for the exposition of them; only would add what Rauwolff[t] observes, that still to this day (1575) there are two great holes to be seen, wherein they flung the dead bodies (of the Assyrian army), one whereof is hard-by the road towards Beth-lehem, the other towards the right hand against old Beth-el.

CHAP. XX.

IN this chapter is an account of Hezekiah's sickness, and of the means of his recovery, and of the sign given of it, ver. 1—11. of the king of Babylon's congratulatory letter to him upon it, when he shewed to the messengers that brought it his treasures, in the pride and vanity of his heart, ver. 12, 13. for which he was reproved by the prophet Isaiah, and was humbled, and submitted to the sentence pronounced on his house, ver. 14—19. and the chapter is concluded with his reign and death, ver. 20, 21.

Ver. 1, 2, 3. *In these days was Hezekiah sick unto death,* &c.] Of this sickness of Hezekiah, the message of the prophet Isaiah to him, and his prayer upon it, see the notes on Isa. xxxviii. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 4. *And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court,* &c.] Of the king's palace, which is called the other court within the porch, 1 Kings vii. 8. so it is according to the marginal reading, which we follow; but the textual reading is, *the middle city;* Jerusalem was divided into three parts, and this was the middle part Isaiah was entering into: but before he did, so it was, that *the word of the Lord came to him, saying;* as follows.

Ver. 5. *Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people,* &c.] The king of them, as the Targum: *thus saith the Lord God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears;* see the note on Isa. xxxviii. 5. *behold, I will heal thee;* instantly, miraculously; and none but God could heal him, his disease being in its kind mortal, and he had been told from the Lord that he should die: *on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord;* the temple, to give thanks for his recovery; and this he should do on the third day from thence; so soon should he be well, which would shew the cure to be miraculous.

Ver. 6. *And I will add unto thy days* 15 *years,* &c.] See the note on Isa. xxxviii. 5. and *I will deliver thee, and this city, out of the hand of the king of Assyria:* by which it appears that this sickness and recovery were before the destruction of the Assyrian army: *and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake;* for the sake of his honour and glory in the temple, and the service of it, that were in Jerusalem, and for the sake of his promise to David and his seed.

Ver. 7. *And Isaiah said, take a lump of figs,* &c.] Not moist figs, but a cake of dried figs, as the word used signifies, and so the less likely to have any effect in curing the boil: *and they took, and laid it on the boil, and he recovered;* made a plaster of it, and laid it on the ulcer, and it was healed. Physicians observe[u], that as such-like inflammations consist in a painful extension of the fibres by the hinderance of the circulation of the blood, through the extreme little arteries, which may be mitigated, or dissipated, or ripened, by such things as are emollient and loosening, so consequently by figs; and, in a time of pestilence, figs beaten together with butter and treacle have been applied to plague-boils with great success; yet these figs being only a cake of dry figs, and the boil not only malignant, but deadly, and the cure so suddenly performed, shew that this was done not in a natural, but in a supernatural way, though means were directed to be made use of.

Ver. 8. *And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah,* &c.] Or

[t] Travels, par. 2. ch. 22. p. 317.

[u] Scheuchzer. Physic. Sacr. vol. 3. p. 620. Vid. Levin. Lemnii Herb. Bibl. Explicat. c. 19. p. 60.

had said [w], before the plaster of figs was directed to, or, however, laid on, and as soon as he was told he should be healed: *what* shall be *the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day?* not that he disbelieved the promise of God, or doubted of a cure, but this he requested for the confirmation of his faith; which good men sometimes asked, when they doubted not, as Gideon; and Ahaz, Hezekiah's father, was bid to ask a sign for the like purpose, and it was resented in him that he did not; see Judg. vi. 17, 36. Isa. vii. 11, 12, 13.

Ver. 9. *And Isaiah said, this sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken,* &c.] Cure him of his disorder, so that he should be able to go to the temple on the third day: *shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees?* that is, the shadow of the sun on a dial-plate; it was left to his option to choose which he would, as the confirming sign of his recovery.

Ver. 10. *And Hezekiah answered, it is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees,* &c.] That is, it was comparatively so, otherwise to go down ten degrees at once would be extraordinary and miraculous; but that was more agreeable to the nature and course of it to go forward, and so the miracle would be less apparent: *nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees;* which was directly contrary to its natural order and course, whereby the miracle would appear more clear and manifest: these degrees are by some said [x] to be half-hours, and not full ones, since it is observed the sun shines not twenty full hours on any dial, unless under the pole; the sun is supposed to have been now at the fifth full hour; the sun was brought back five whole hours, then came forward five, then came forward two degrees, or one hour, to the sixth hour, which made sixteen; then it was six hours to sun-set; so that day was prolonged twenty-two hours: the Chinese [y] relate, that, in the time of Kingcungus, the planet Mars, for sake of the king, went back three degrees.

Ver. 11. *And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord,* &c.] Or prayed, as the Targum; and was very earnest in prayer, that what Hekekiah had desired might be granted: *and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz:* Ben Gersom understands it not of the sun itself, but of the shadow of it only; see the note on Isa. xxxviii. 8.

Ver. 12. *At that time Berodach-baladan,* &c.] He is called Merodach-baladan, Isa. xxxix. 1. so here in the Septuagint, Syriac, and Arabic versions; see the note there; and by Metasthenes [z] his father is called Merodach, and he Ben Merodach, who reigned twenty-one years, and his father fifty-two; from hence to the end of ver. 19. the same account is given in the same words as in Isa. xxxix. throughout, except in ver. 13. where it is, *hearkened unto them,* and there, *glad of them;* heard the letter the ambassadors brought with pleasure; see the notes there.

Ver. 20. *And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah, and all his might,* &c.] Which he exerted in his wars with his enemies, and in the reformation of religion, and abolition of idolatry: *and how he made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city;* at the same time that he cut it off from the enemy without, see 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4, 30. *are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?* a book often referred to in this history, but since lost; many of his acts are recorded in the canonical book of Chronicles, 2 Chron. xxix. xxx. xxxi. xxxii.

Ver. 21. *And Hekekiah slept with his fathers,* &c.] Died, as they did; no mention is here made of the place of his burial, but there is in 2 Chron. xxxii. 33. where he is said to be buried in the principal part of the sepulchres of the sons of David, and to have honour done him at his death by the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem, by the vast concourse of people attending his interment, and by burning spices for him, and making a public mourning on his account a certain stated time: *and Manasseh his son reigned in his stead;* of whose wicked reign an account is given in the next chapter.

CHAP. XXI.

IN this chapter a short history is given of the two wicked reigns of Manasseh and Amon; Manasseh is charged with great idolatry, with enchantments and withcrafts, and seducing the children of Israel, ver. 1—9. and a prophecy is given out of the destruction of Jerusalem for his sins, ver. 10—16. and an account is given of his death and burial, ver. 17, 18. and of his son and successor Amon, and the evils committed by him, ver. 19—22. and of the conspiracy against his life, which succeeded, and Josiah his son reigned in his stead, ver. 23—26.

Ver. 1. *Manasseh was twelve years old when he began to reign,* &c.] So that he was born three years after Hezekiah's recovery from his sickness, and in the 17th year of his reign: *and reigned 55 years in Jerusalem;* among which must be reckoned the time of his captivity in Babylon; his reign was the longest of any of the kings of Judah: *and his mother's name was Hephzibah;* the name the church goes by, and signifies "my "delight or pleasure is in her," Isa. lxii. 4. no doubt she was a good woman, or Hezekiah would not have made choice of her for a wife; it is a tradition of the Jews [a], that she was the daughter of Isaiah, whose name, they say, is not mentioned, because so wicked a king was unworthy of such a grandfather.

Ver. 2. *And he did* that which was *evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] Was guilty of idolatry: *after the abomination of the Heathen, whom the Lord cast out*

[w] ויאמר dixerat autem, V. L. Vatablus.
[x] Weemse's Christ. Synagog. l. 1. c. 6. sect. 6. p. 167. See his Exposition of the Judicial Laws, c. 25. p. 90. &c.
[y] Martin. Sinic. Hist. l. 4. p. 138.
[z] Ut supra.
[a] Hieron. Trad. Heb. in lib. Paralipom. fol. 86. F.

before the children of Israel: the old Canaanites; he committed idolatry in imitation of them, and as the Phœnicians now did.

Ver. 3. *For he built up again the high places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed,* &c.] The temples and altars upon them, see ch. xviii. 4. *and he reared up altars for Baal;* in the high places he rebuilt: *and made a grove, as did Ahab king of Israel;* which was either an idol itself, or a shade of trees where idols were placed; or rather Asherah, rendered *a grove*, is the same with Astarte, the goddess of the Zidonians, the figure of which he made and worshipped; for groves were not so soon and easily planted, raised, and made; so the same in 1 Kings xvi. 33. *and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them:* the sun, moon, and stars, particularly the planets Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus.

Ver. 4. *And he built altars in the house of the Lord,* &c.] In the holy place, as distinct from the courts in the next verse; and these were sacred to the idols of the Gentiles: *of which the Lord said, in Jerusalem will I put my name;* in the temple there, devoted to his service, called by his name, and where his name was called upon, see Deut. xii. 5. and xvi. 6. and to erect altars to idols here must be very abominable to him.

Ver. 5. *And he built altars for all the host of heaven,* &c.] Sun, moon, and stars: *in the two courts of the house of the Lord:* in the court of the priests, and in the court of the people; and all this must be supposed to be done, not as soon as he began to reign, but when he was grown up to man's estate, and had children, as the next verse shews; unless it can be thought that those nobles in Judah, who liked not the reformation made by Hezekiah, took the advantage of his youth, and advised him to these idolatries.

Ver. 6. *And he made his son pass through the fire,* &c.] To Molech, after the manner of the old Canaanites and Phœnicians; his son Amon, that succeeded him, and other children, as appears from 2 Chron. xxxiii. 6. where mention is made of the place where it was done, the valley of the son of Hinnom: *and observed times;* lucky or unlucky, which was judged of by omens, and by the position of the stars: *and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards;* to get knowledge of things to come; all which are forbid and condemned by the law of Moses; see Deut. xviii. 10, 11, 12. *he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the Lord, to provoke* him *to anger;* in all those evils before mentioned, which were very abominable in the sight of God.

Ver. 7. *And he set a graven image of the grove that he had made in the house,* &c.] Which was either an image that had been placed in a grove planted by him, and now removed into the house or temple of the Lord; or, as some think, this was a representation of a grove, a carved grove of gold or silver, in the midst of which an image was placed in the temple; though what Selden observes[b], seems best of all, that this was an image of Asherah, as in the original text; that is, of Astarte or Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians, 1 Kings xi. 5. the same the Phœnicians are said to call Astroarche, and affirm it to be the moon[c]; in 2 Chron. xxxiii. 7. it is called a carved image the idol he had made; and an Arabic writer[d] says, it had four faces, which seems to be a figure of the cherubim; but, according to Suidas[e], it was the statue of Jupiter, who also says it had four faces: *of which the Lord said to David, and to Solomon his son;* that is, of which house or temple: *in this house, and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel, will I put my name for ever;* see 1 Kings viii. 29. and ix. 3. and the note on ver. 4.

Ver. 8. *Neither will I make the feet of Israel move any more out of the land which I gave their fathers,* &c.] Or suffer them to be carried captive into another land, as in the times of the judges; that is, on the following condition: *only if they will observe to do according to all the law that my servant Moses commanded them;* by obedience to which they had the tenure of the land of Canaan, Isa. i. 19.

Ver. 9. *But they hearkened not,* &c.] To the voice of God in his law by Moses, and were not obedient to it: *and Manasseh seduced them to do more evil than did the nations whom the Lord destroyed before the children of Israel;* he set up more idols, and drew the people into more and greater idolatries, than the old Canaanites; and these were the more aggravated by having a law given to them, and prophets sent to instruct them in it, and by the benefits and blessings bestowed upon them by the lawgiver, which laid them under greater obligations to him; see Jer. ii. 11, 28.

Ver. 10. *And the Lord spake by his servants the prophets,* &c.] Who prophesied in the days of Manasseh; and were, according to the Jewish chronology[f], Joel, Nahum, and Habakkuk: *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 11. *Because Manasseh king of Judah hath done these abominations,* &c.] Before named, ver. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. *and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did that* were *before him;* one of the seven nations of Canaan, a principal of them, and which is put for all the rest: *and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols;* the worship of them, as the Targum; which he did both by his edicts, and by his example.

Ver. 12. *Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel,* &c.] Who, though kind and gracious to Israel as their covenant-God, is yet just and righteous, as well as he is a sovereign Being and Lord of all: *behold, I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle:* it will make such a noise in the world, and be so horrible and terrible; and if the report of it would be so dreadful as to make a man's ears tingle, and his heart tremble, what must it be to endure it! Ezek. xxii. 14. see 1 Sam. iii. 11.

Ver. 13. *And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria,* &c.] The Targum is, the line of destruction; and the sense is, that the same measure should be measured to Jerusalem as was to Samaria; that is, the same lot and portion should befall one as the other, that

[b] De Dis Syris, Syntagm. 2. c. 2. p. 230.
[c] Herodian. l. 5. c. 15.
[d] Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 66.

[e] In voce [illegible].
[f] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 20. p. 55.

is, be utterly destroyed: *and the plummet of the house of Ahab;* the Targum is, the weight or plummet of tribulation; signifying, that the same calamities should come upon the families of Jerusalem, and especially on the family of Manasseh as came upon the family of Ahab. It is a metaphor from builders that take down as well as raise up buildings by rule and measure, see 2 Sam. viii. 2. *and I will wipe Jerusalem, as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down:* as when one takes a dish or cup that has broth in it, or any liquid, as oil; and the Septuagint render it alabaster, in which ointment used to be put; and wipes it clean, that nothing may appear in it; and then turns it with its mouth downward, that, if any thing should remain, it might drain out; signifying hereby the emptying of Jerusalem of its palaces and houses, wealth and riches, and of all its inhabitants; and yet the empty dish being preserved, seems to denote the restoration of Jerusalem after the 70-years' captivity. According to the Vulgate Latin version, the metaphor is taken from the blotting out of writing-tables, and turning and rubbing the style upon them till the writing is no more seen.

Ver. 14. *And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance,* &c.] The whole land of Canaan was the Lord's inheritance; 10 tribes in it were already removed, only Judah with Benjamin was left, and the Lord threatens to forsake that remnant: *and deliver them into the hands of their enemies, and they shall become a prey and spoil to all their enemies;* which was fulfilled in their captivity in Babylon.

Ver. 15. *Because they have done that* which was *evil in my sight,* &c.] Committed idolatry: *and have provoked me to anger, since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even to this day;* being always prone to idolatry, so provoking to God, and which they were guilty of quickly after they came out of Egypt, in the worship of the golden calf, and had ever since at times been criminal this way; and now the measure of their iniquity being almost up, would be reckoned for together.

Ver. 16. *Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much,* &c.] Putting to death the prophets that reproved him and his people for their idolatries, and such who would not comply therewith; and it is commonly said, both by Jewish and Christian writers, that Isaiah was slain, and even sawn asunder by him, see the note on Heb. xi. 37. *till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another;* a metaphor taken from filling a vessel brim-full: *beside his sin wherewith he made Judah to sin, in doing that* which was *evil in the sight of the Lord;* the sin of idolatry he drew them into, and even obliged them to commit.

Ver. 17. *Now the rest of the acts of Manasseh, and all that he did,* &c.] Both good and bad, for he repented, and was humbled, and did many good things afterwards, though not recorded in this book: *and his sin that he sinned;* his idolatry: *are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?* in which were recorded the most memorable events of their reigns; and in the canonical book of Chronicles are many things concerning Manasseh, which are not written here; see 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11—16.

Ver. 18. *And Manasseh slept with his fathers,* &c.] Or died, after a reign of 55 years, and a life of 67: *and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza;* whether the burial of him here was his own choice, judging himself unworthy to lie with the kings of Judah, who had been guilty of such great sins, or whether the will of others, on the same account, is not certain; and as much at a loss are we for the reason of this garden being called the garden of Uzza, whether from Uzzah that died for touching the ark, 2 Sam. vi. 6, 7. or from King Uzziah, ch. xv. 7. The Jews buried in gardens in the times of Christ, who himself was buried in one, John xix. 41. The Romans had sometimes sepulchres in their gardens [g], Galba the emperor was buried in his gardens [h]; and so had other nations. Cyrus king of Persia was buried in a garden [i]: *and Amon his son reigned in his stead;* of whom we have the following account.

Ver. 19. *And Amon was 22 years old when he began to reign,* &c.] Being born in the 45th of his father's life, and in the 33d of his reign: *and he reigned two years in Jerusalem;* which, as Abarbinel observes, was the usual time the sons of wicked kings reigned, and instances in the son of Jeroboam, Baasha, and Ahab, 1 Kings xv. 25. and xvi. 8. and xxi. 51. An Arabic writer [k] says, he reigned 12 years, but according to the Jews only two: *and his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah;* there was a place called Jotbath, which was one of the stations of the children of Israel in the wilderness, Numb. xxxiii. 33. Deut. x. 7. but it can scarcely be thought to be the same place.

Ver. 20. *And he did that* which was *evil in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] Committed idolatry: *as his father Manasseh did;* he imitated him in that, but not in his repentance and humiliation, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 23.

Ver. 21. *And he walked in all the ways that his father walked in,* &c.] In his wicked way, his idolatry, witchcraft, and murders; *and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them;* Baal, Ashtoreth, and all the host of heaven, and all the carved images his father made, which it seems he only removed, but did not break in pieces, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 22.

Ver. 22. *And he forsook the Lord God of his fathers,* &c.] Of David, Solomon, &c. *and walked not in the way of the Lord;* prescribed by him in his law for the worship of him.

Ver. 23. *And the servants of Amon conspired against him,* &c.] Some of his domestic servants, and perhaps his courtiers, not on account of his idolatry, but for some ill usage of them: *and slew the king in his own house;* which they had an opportunity to do, being his servants.

Ver. 24. *And the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against King Amon,* &c.] On occasion of his death, there seems to have been an insurrection of the people in a body, to avenge the death of their king, who might be beloved on account of his

[g] Vid. Kirchman. de Funer. Roman. l. 2. c. 22. p. 274.
[h] Eutrop. Hist. Roman. l. 7. Sueton. Vit. Galb. c. 20. Tacit. Hist. l. 1. c. 49.
[i] Strabo. Geograph. l. 15. p. 500.
[k] Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. Dyn. 3. p. 67.

idolatry, so depraved was the nation; or it may be only to avenge his death because he was their king, whose life these men ought not to have taken away: and the rather this may be thought to be the reason by what follows, *and the people of the land made Josiah his son king in his stead;* who had been prophesied of by name above 300 years before, see 1 Kings xiii. 2.

Ver. 25. *Now the rest of the acts of Amon which he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?*] See the note on ver. 17.

Ver. 26. *And he was buried in his sepulchre, in the garden of Uzza,* &c.] Where his father Manasseh was buried, ver. 18. *and Josiah his son reigned in his stead;* of whom many things are said in the two following chapters.

CHAP. XXII.

THIS chapter begins with the age and character of Josiah king of Judah, ver. 1, 2. and relates his orders for repairing the temple, ver. 3—7. his attention to the book of the law, which was found, and read to him, and the effect it had upon him, ver. 8—11. the command he gave to certain persons to inquire of the Lord about it, who applied to Huldah the prophetess, ver. 12—14. who returned an answer by them to the king, foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and giving the reason of it, and at the same time assuring the king it should not be in his days, ver. 15—20.

Ver. 1. *Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign,* &c.] And must be born when his father was but 16, for Amon lived but 24 years, ch. xxi. 19. *and he reigned 31 years in Jerusalem;* and so must die at 39 years of age: *and his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath;* a city of the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 39. see the note there.

Ver. 2. *And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord,* &c.] In the affair of religious worship especially, as well as in other things: *and walked in all the ways of David his father;* in his religious ways, in which he never departed from his God: *and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left;* but kept an even, constant, path of worship and duty, according to the law of God.

Ver. 3. *And it came to pass in the 18th year of King Josiah,* &c.] Not of his age, but of his reign, as appears from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 8. nor is what follows the first remarkable act he did in a religious way; for elsewhere we read of what he did in the 8th and 12th years of his reign, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 3—7. that *the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam the scribe, to the house of the Lord;* the king's secretary; the Septuagint version is, the scribe of the house of the Lord, and so the Vulgate Latin version; that kept the account of the expenses of the temple; with him two others were sent, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 8. *saying;* as follows.

Ver. 4. *Go up to Hilkiah the high-priest,* &c.] Who had an apartment in the temple; there was an Hilkiah, a priest, in those times, who was the father of Jeremiah the prophet, Jer. i. 1, 2. whom an Arabic writer [l] takes to be the same with this; but it is not likely: *that he may sum the silver* which is *brought into the house of the Lord;* which the people voluntarily offered for the repairing of it; this he would have the priest take an account of, that the sum-total might be known; his meaning is, that he should take it out of the chest in which it was put, and count it, that it might be known what it amounted to; see ch. xii. 9, 10. some understand this of melting and coining the silver thus given: *which the keepers of the door have gathered of the people;* who were Levites, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9. either porters of the door, or rather the treasurers, as the Targum; the keepers of the vessels of the sanctuary, that had the care of them, as the Jewish commentators generally interpret it.

Ver. 5. *And let them deliver it into the hand of the doers of the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord,* &c.] That were overseers of the workmen, whose names are mentioned, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 12. into their hands the money was to be delivered by the high-priest, when he had taken the account of it, and perhaps along with the king's scribe, see ch. xii. 10, 11. *and let them give it to the doers of the work, which is in the house of the Lord, to repair the breaches of the house;* as their wages for their work; it seems it had not been repaired from the times of Jehoash, a space of 218 years, according to the Jewish chronology [m]; but Kimchi and Abarbinel make it 224.

Ver. 6. *Unto carpenters, and builders, and masons,* &c.] Who were employed, some in mending the wood-work, and others in repairing the stone walls: *and to buy timber and hewn stone to repair the house;* not only money was to be given them for their workmanship, but to buy timber and stone to work with.

Ver. 7. *Howbeit, there was no reckoning made with them of the money that was delivered into their hand,* &c.] No account was kept between the high-priest, and the king's scribe who delivered the money, and the overseers of the workmen, who received it from them; the latter were not called to any account by the former, nor any audit made of their accounts: *because they dealt faithfully;* they were persons of such known honour and integrity, that their fidelity was not in the least called in question, but were trusted without examining their accounts, and how they disposed of the money committed to them, see ch. xii. 15.

Ver. 8. *And Hilkiah the high-priest said unto Shaphan the scribe,* &c.] Not at the first time of his message to him, but afterwards that he attended on him upon the same business; after the high-priest had examined the temple to know what repairs it wanted, and where: *I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord;* some think this was only the book of Deuteronomy, and some only some part of that; rather the whole

[l] Abulpharag. Hist. Dynast. p. 66.

[m] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 24. p. 67.

Pentateuch, and that not a copy of it, but the very autograph of Moses, written with his own hand, as it seems from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 14. Some say he found it in the holy of holies, on the side of the ark; there it was put originally; but, indeed, had it been there, he might have found it before, and must have seen it, since, as high-priest, he entered there once every year; more probably some pious predecessor of his had taken it from thence in a time of general corruption, as in the reign of Manasseh, and hid it in some private place, under a lay of stones, as Jarchi, in some hole in the wall, which upon search about repairs was found there: *and Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it*; and though there might be some copies of it in private hands, yet scarce; and perhaps Shaphan had never seen one, at least a perfect one, or however had never read it through, as now he did.

Ver. 9. *And Shaphan the scribe came to the king, and brought the king word again*, &c.] Of the delivery of his message to the high-priest, and of what had been done upon it: *and said, thy servants have gathered the money that was found in the house*; meaning Hilkiah and himself, who had examined the chest in the temple, into which the money was put for the repairs of it, and had taken it out, and told it: *and have delivered it into the hand of them that do the work, that have the oversight of the house of the Lord*; according to the king's orders.

Ver. 10. *And Shaphan shewed the king*, &c.] Further related to him what follows: *saying, Hilkiah the high-priest hath delivered me a book*; but did not say what book it was: *and Shaphan read it before the king*: part of it; and it is thought by Kimchi and Ben Gersom that he particularly read the reproofs and threatenings in the book of Deuteronomy; they suppose that Hilkiah read those to Shaphan, and directed him to read them to the king, that he might take into consideration a further reformation.

Ver. 11. *And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the book of the law*, &c.] From whence it appears that he had never wrote out a copy of it, as the kings of Israel were ordered to do, when they came to the throne, Deut. xvii. 18, 19. nor had read it, at least not the whole of it; and yet it seems strange that he should be 26 years of age, as he now was, and had proceeded far in the reformation of worship, and yet be without the book of the law, and the high-priest also; it looks as if it was, as some have thought, that they had till now only some abstracts of the law, and not the whole: and perhaps the reformation hitherto carried on chiefly lay in abolishing idolatry, and not so much in restoring the ordinances of worship to their purity; for it was after this that the ordinance of the passover was ordered to be kept; and when the king observed, on hearing the law read, that it had not been kept as it should, that such severe threatenings were denounced against the transgressors of it: *that he rent his clothes*; as expressive of the rending of his heart, and of his humiliation and sorrow for the sins he and his people were guilty of.

Ver. 12. *And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest*, &c.] The high-priest, as he is called, ver. 4, 8. *and Ahikam the son of Shaphan*; whether the same with Shaphan the scribe, before mentioned, or another of the same name, is not certain: *and Achbor the son of Michaiah*; who is called Abdon, the son of Micah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 20. *and Shaphan the scribe*; who brought and read the book to the king: *and Asahiah, a servant of the king's*; that waited on him constantly: *saying*; as follows.

Ver. 13. *Go ye, inquire of the Lord*, &c.] Of some of his prophets, as Jeremiah, who began to prophesy in the 13th year of Josiah's reign, and had been a prophet five years, Jer. i. 1, 2. *for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found*; for he observed that this book threatened and foretold not only the captivity of the ten tribes, but of Judah, and of their king; and Jarchi thinks, he had a particular respect to that passage, *the Lord shall bring thee and thy king*, &c. Deut. xxviii. 36. and therefore was desirous of knowing what he and his people must do to avert those judgments: *for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us*; which he concluded from the threatenings denounced: *because that our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according to all which is written concerning us*; he clearly saw that his ancestors more remote and immediate had been very deficient in observing the laws, commands, and ordinances enjoined them in that book; and therefore feared that what was threatened would fall upon him and his people, who, he was sensible, came short of doing their duty.

Ver. 14. *So Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor, and Shaphan, and Asahiah, went down to Huldah the prophetess*, &c.] Such as were Miriam and Deborah; in imitation of those Satan had very early his women-prophetesses, the Sibyls, so called from their being the council and oracle of God, and consulted as such on occasion, as Huldah now was; and the first of the Sibyls, according to Suidas[s], was a Chaldean or a Persian; and some say an Hebrew; and Pausanias expressly says[t], that with the Hebrews above Palestine was a woman-prophetess, whose name was Sabba, whom some called the Babylonian, others the Egyptian Sibyl. Ælian relates[u] that one of them was a Jewess: *the wife of Shallum, the son of Tikvah, the son of Hirhas, keeper of the wardrobe*; but whether the king's wardrobe in the palace, or the priest's in the temple, is not certain; he is called Hasrah, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 22. who is here called Hirhas: *now she dwelt in Jerusalem in the college*; in the college of the prophets; in the house of instruction, as the Targum; the school where the young prophets were instructed and trained up; though Jarchi observes, that some interpret this *within the two walls*; Jerusalem it seems had three walls, and within the second this woman lived; there were gates in the temple, as he also observes, called the gates of Huldah[w], but whether from her cannot be said: this place of her dwelling seems to be mentioned as a reason why these messengers went to her, because she was near,

[s] In voce Σίβυλλα.
[t] Phocica, sive, l. 10. p. 631.
[u] Var. Hist. l. 12. c. 35.
[w] Misn. Middot, c. 1. sect. 3.

as well as well known for her prophetic spirit, prudence, and faithfulness, and not to Jeremiah, who in all probability was at Anathoth; and so also is the reason why they went not to Zephaniah, if he as yet had begun to prophesy, because he might be at a distance also: *and they communed with her;* upon the subject the king sent them about.

Ver. 15. *And she said unto them,* &c.] The king's messengers: *thus saith the Lord God of Israel;* being immediately inspired by him, she spake in his name, as prophets did: *tell the man that sent you to me;* which may seem somewhat rude and unmannerly to say of a king; but when it is considered she spake not of herself, but personating the King of kings and Lord of lords, it will be seen and judged of in another light.

Ver. 16. *Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants of it,* &c.] Destruction to the place, and captivity to the inhabitants of it: even *all the words of the book which the king of Judah hath read;* particularly what is contained in the 26th of Leviticus and 28th of Deuteronomy, even all the curses in it, as in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 24.

Ver. 17. *Because they have forsaken me,* &c.] My worship, as the Targum; his word and ordinances: *and have burnt incense unto other gods;* to Baal, to the host of heaven, and other Heathen deities: *that they might provoke me to anger with all the works of their hands;* their idols of wood, stone, gold, and silver, which their hands had made, to worship; than which nothing was more provoking to God: *therefore my wrath shall be kindled against this place, and shall not be quenched;* the decree for the destruction of Jerusalem was gone forth, and not to be called back; the execution of it could not be stopped or hindered by cries, prayers, entreaties, or otherwise; this wrath of God was an emblem of the unquenchable fire of hell, Matt. iii. 12. Mark ix. 44.

Ver. 18. *But to the king of Judah, which sent you to inquire of the Lord,* &c.] That is, with respect to him, or what may concern him: *thus shall ye say unto him;* carry back this message to him as from the Lord he desired to inquire of: *thus saith the Lord God of Israel,* as touching *the words which thou hast heard;* read out of the law, concerning the destruction of the land, and its inhabitants therein threatened.

Ver. 19. *Because thine heart was tender,* &c.] Soft like wax, and susceptible of impressions; or was *moved,* or *trembled,* as the Targum; for God has respect to such as are of contrite hearts, and tremble at his word, Isa. lxvi. 2. *and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord;* external humiliation, such as in Ahab, was regarded by the Lord, much more internal and cordial humiliation is regarded by him, see 1 Kings xxi. 29. *when thou heardest what I spake against this place, and against the inhabitants thereof, that they should become a desolation and a curse;* as in Lev. xxvi. and Deut. xxviii. *and hast rent thy clothes, and wept before me;* as expressive of the inward contrition, sorrow, and grief of his heart: *I also have heard* thee, *saith the Lord;* his cries and prayers.

Ver. 20. *Behold therefore, I will gather thee unto thy fathers,* &c.] To his godly ancestors, to share with them in eternal life and happiness; otherwise it could be no peculiar favour to die in common, as his fathers did, and be buried in their sepulchres: *and thou shalt be gathered into thy grave in peace;* in a time of public peace and tranquillity; for though he was slain in battle with the king of Egypt, yet it was what he was personally concerned in, and it was not a public war between the two kingdoms, and his body was carried off by his servants, and was peaceably interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors, ch. xxiii. 29, 30. as well as he died in spiritual peace, and entered into eternal peace, which is the end of the perfect and upright man, as he was, Psal. xxxvii. 37. but this chiefly regards his not living to be distressed with the calamities of his nation and people, as follows: *and thine eyes shall not see all the evil which I will bring upon this place;* he being removed first, though it came upon it in the days of his sons: *and they brought the king word again;* of what Huldah the prophetess had said unto them.

CHAP. XXIII.

THIS chapter treats of Josiah's reading the book of the law, and of him and the people renewing the covenant with God, ver. 1, 2, 3. and of his removing idols and idolatry in every shape, and witchcraft, out of the land, which he did in the sincerity of his heart, ver. 4—25. yet the wrath of God was still determined upon the land, ver. 26, 27, 28. and Josiah was taken away by an untimely death, ver. 29, 30. and was succeeded by two sons of his, one after another, whose reigns were wicked, ver. 31—37.

Ver. 1. *And the king sent, and they gathered unto him all the elders of Judah and of Jerusalem.*] Josiah sent messengers throughout the land, and convened all the principal men in it at Jerusalem.

Ver. 2. *And the king went up into the house of the Lord,* &c.] To the temple, from his palace: *and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem with him;* they met him there: *and the priests, and the prophets;* the prophets Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Uriah, who, though they might not be at Jerusalem when the book of the law was found, yet, upon this message of the king's, might come up thither from the countries where they were; the Targum interprets the word *scribes;* and some take them to be the sons of the prophets, their disciples; in 2 Chron. xxxiv. 30. they are called Levites: *and all the people, both small and great;* a very numerous assembly: *and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant* which was *found in the house of the Lord;* that is, he caused it to be read by others, and perhaps by more than one, the congregation being so large.

Ver. 3. *And the king stood by a pillar,* &c.] As the manner of kings was, ch. xi. 14. and is thought to be

the brasen scaffold erected by Solomon, on which he stood at the dedication of the temple, and now Josiah at the reading of the law, 2 Chron. vi. 13. it is said to be his place, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 31. see the note on ch. xi. 14. *and made a covenant before the Lord*: agreed and promised in the presence of God, both he and his people: *to walk after the Lord*: the worship of the Lord, as the Targum; closely to attend to that: *and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes*: all the laws of God, moral, civil, and ceremonial: *with all* their *heart, and all* their *soul*: cordially and sincerely: *to perform the words of the covenant* that were *written in this book*: lately found, and now read unto them: *and all the people stood to the covenant*: agreed to it, and promised to keep it; so the Targum, "all the people took upon them the covenant," engaged to observe it.

Ver. 4. *And the king commanded Hilkiah the high-priest, and the priests of the second order*, &c.] Or the second course of the priests; the course of Jedaiah, 1 Chron. xxiv. 7. as some think; or rather, the two chief priests next to the high-priest, who were of the line both of Eleazer and Ithamar; though the Targum interprets it of the Sagan of the priests, a deputy of the high-priest, such as in after-times the high-priest had always appointed for him on the day of atonement [s]: *and the keepers of the door*: the porters at the door and gates of the temple; or rather the treasurers, as the Targum; such as were appointed over the vessels of the sanctuary, as the Jewish writers generally interpret it, and which best agrees with what follows: *to bring forth out of the temple of the Lord all the vessels* that were *made for Baal*: used in burning incense, or offering sacrifices to him: *and for the grove*: the idol of the grove, or Asherah, that is, Ashtoreth, or Astarte, the same with Venus, or the moon, as Baal was the sun, the one the husband, and the other the wife, according to the Jews [t]: *and for all the host of heaven*: the stars: *and he burnt them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron*; or plain of Kidron, as the Targum; through which the brook Kidron ran: *and carried the ashes of them unto Beth-el*: where one of Jeroboam's calves was set, and was the source of idolatry; and this he did in contempt of that place; and, to shew his detestation of the idolatry there, he made it a dunghill of ashes of things used in idolatrous service; this he could do, that place being in the hands of the kings of Judah from the times of Abijah, 2 Chron. xiii. 19.

Ver. 5. *And he put down the idolatrous priests*, &c.] The Cemarim, so called, because they wore black clothes, as Kimchi and others, whereas the priests of the Lord were clothed in white linen, see the note on Zeph. i. 4. *whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places, in the cities of Judah, and in the places round about Jerusalem*: for though those high places were destroyed by Hezekiah, they were rebuilt by Manasseh his son, and priests put in them to officiate there, whom Josiah now deposed, ch. xxi. 3. *them also that burnt incense unto Baal*; in the same high places; these were the priests, and the others in the preceding clause are thought to be ministers unto them: *to the sun, and to the moon, and to the planets*: the five planets besides the sun and moon, as Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Mercury, and Venus; or to the twelve celestial signs in the firmament, as some [u]; though Theodoret takes it to be a single star, the evening-star: *and to all the host of heaven*; or even to the host of heaven, all the stars thereof: this part of worship, *burning incense*, which was peculiar to the most high God, yet was frequently made by idolaters to their deities; and from the word [v] by which it is here and elsewhere expressed may *nectar* be derived, so much spoken of by the Heathen poets as of a sweet smell [w], and as delicious to their gods; and so Porphyry [x] represents the gods as living on smoke, vapours, and perfumes; and frankincense is said, by Diodorus Siculus [y], to be most grateful to them, and beloved by them; this therefore is a much better derivation of the word *nectar* than what Suidas [z] gives, that is, as if it was *neoctar*, because it makes those young that drink it; or than the account Athenæus [a] gives of it, that it is a wine in Babylon so called.

Ver. 6. *And he brought out the grove from the house of the Lord*, &c.] Not a real grove of trees, but a carved one, as some think; or rather the image of the grove, ch. xxi. 7. that is, the idol Ashtoreth, or Astarte, which was set up there; so Theodoret says; some interpreters call it Astoreth, the name of Venus, whom they call Astarte: this Josiah ordered to be brought *without Jerusalem, unto the brook Kidron, and burnt it at the brook Kidron*; the black brook, where the filth of the sacrifices was carried: *and stamped it small to powder*; as Moses did the golden calf: *and cast the powder thereof upon the graves of the children of the people*: the common people, see Jer. xxvi. 23. or rather on the graves of the worshippers of idols, as it seems from 2 Chron. xxxiv. 4. the Targum is, "on the graves of the children of Galia," which, Kimchi says, is the name of an idol; this was done partly in contempt of the idol, groves being, according to law, impure; and partly to the reproach of the deceased, and the memory of them, for their idolatry, and to deter from it those that survived them.

Ver. 7. *And he brake down the houses of the Sodomites that* were *by the house of the Lord*, &c.] Near the temple were apartments, in which men, the worshippers of idols, prostituted their bodies to each other; committing that unnatural sin with one another, which has its name from Sodom, and from which those are so called, and which sin they committed in honour of the idols they worshipped; to such vile affections were they, in a judicial manner, delivered up, because of their idolatry; see Rom. i. 27, 28. the word signifies *holy ones*, they being called so by an antiphrasis; though Abarbinel thinks these were the idolatrous priests, whom the worshippers of idols reckoned *holy*, and so built houses for them near the temple to lodge

[s] Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1.
[t] Zohar in Gen. fol. 34. 2.
[u] David de Pomis Lexic. fol. 77. 2.
[v] קטר suffitum fecit. Et diis acceptus — Nidor. Ovid. Metamorph. l. 12, fab. 4.
[w] Theocrit. Idyll. xvii. ver. 29.
[x] De Abstinentia, l. 2. c. 42. Celsus apud Origen. l. 8. p. 417.
[y] Biblioth. l. 2. p. 132.
[z] In voce Νεκταρ.
[a] Deipnosophist. l. 1.

in; the Targum is, "and broke down the houses of "things consecrated to idols," where they were put; and Theodoret on the place observes, that by an homonymy, they called the demons or idols themselves *holy ones;* and it is not likely, indeed, that the Sodomites should be *where the women wove hangings for the grove;* that is, for Astarte, as the same writer observes: or *curtains,* as the Jewish writers generally interpret it, in which either the idol was enclosed, or these made apartments for the idolaters to commit their abominable wickedness privately; though the Syriac and Arabic versions are, "they wove garments "for the idols that were there;" and so the Septuagint version, of the Complutensian edition; that is, they wove garments for the goddess Astarte, which they dressed her with: the word signifies *houses,* and may mean the shrines of the idol made of woven work.

Ver. 8. *And he brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah,* &c.] Who were of the sons of Aaron, and had served in the high places there: *and defiled the high places where the priests had burnt incense;* by casting dead carcasses, or the bones of dead men, or dung, or any thing that was unclean, into them, by way of contempt: *from Geba to Beer-sheba;* which were the northern and southern boundaries of the land of Judah: *and brake down the high places of the gates;* of the cities where some think tutelar gods were placed to be worshipped by persons as they went in or out of them: and particularly that *which* were *in the entering in of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which* were *on a man's left hand at the gate of the city;* of the city of Jerusalem, where this Joshua was chief magistrate under the king; at whose door stood an high place, which, Kimchi thinks, might be greater than the rest, and therefore mentioned alone, yet was not spared on account of its greatness, or of the person to whom it belonged.

Ver. 9. *Nevertheless, the priests of the high places came not up to the altar of the Lord at Jerusalem,* &c.] To sacrifice there, as the Targum; though they were removed from the high places, they were not admitted to officiate at the altar of the Lord, having offered in forbidden places: *but they did eat of the unleavened bread with their brethren;* the priests that were pure, as the sons of Zadok; though they might not offer sacrifices, they were allowed to partake of the holy things with the priests, as the meat-offerings made of flour unleavened, Lev. ii. 4, 5. which are here meant, and put for all the rest on which the priests lived, see Ezek. xliv. 10—15.

Ver. 10. *And he defiled Topheth,* &c.] A place so called, as is generally thought, from the beating of drums or timbrels in it, that the shrieks of the infants sacrificed here to Molech might not be heard by their parents, and they repent of delivering them to him, and take them away. So the Indians now, at the burning of wives with their deceased husbands, attend them with drums and trumpets; and at such time as the fire is put to the wood, the drums and trumpets make a terrible noise for fear their cries should be heard [b]; see the notes on Isa. xxx. 33. Jer. vii. 31. this he defiled by casting any sort of filth or unclean thing into it, in contempt of the idolatry there committed, and to alienate the minds of men from it: *which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom;* a valley that belonged to the posterity of a man of this name, near to Jerusalem, see Josh. xv. 8. hence the Greek word *geenna* for hell, in the New Testament: *that no man might make his son or his daughter pass through the fire to Molech;* which piece of idolatry used to be committed in this place.

Ver. 11. *And he took away the horses that the kings of Judah had given to the sun,* &c.] Consecrated to it; these were not images of horses, as some have thought, but real living ones; and the kings that gave them for the service of the sun, and for sacrifice to it, very probably were Manasseh and Amon: that horses were sacred to the sun with many Heathen nations, as the Massagetæ, a people in Scythia, and the Persians, and Babylonians, and Ethiopians, is affirmed by various writers [c]: and from them the Jews received this notion. According to the Jewish commentators, these were horses provided for the worshippers of the sun to ride upon, and meet the sun in the morning at its rising, and pay their homage to it; but certain it is that the Heathen nations before mentioned slew the horses, and sacrificed them as burnt-offerings to the sun, as is asserted by Herodotus [d], Xenophon [e], Strabo [f], Pausanias [g], Philostratus [h], and other writers [i]; and so the Indians [k] sacrificed them to Apollo, the same with the sun; these being the swiftest of creatures, they offered them to the swiftest of their gods, as Herodotus and Heliodorus observe, in the places before referred to. The stables in which these horses were kept were *at the entering of the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the suburbs;* so that they reached from the temple to the suburbs of Jerusalem, to that part of them where this officer had a chamber, or lodgings, being in some place of power and authority there; though, according to L'Empereur [l], it is the same with Parbar, 1 Chron. xxvi. 18. and should not be rendered *suburbs,* it being between the compass or wall of the temple, and the court: *and burnt the chariots of the sun with fire;* these were either chariots, in which the king and his nobles rode, when they went to meet and worship the rising sun; or rather such as were sacred to the sun, as well as the horses, or Josiah would not have burnt them; they seem to be such in which the images of the sun were carried. Herodotus [m] makes mention as of sacred horses, so of a sacred chariot. Xenophon [n] speaks of the chariot of the sun as being of a white colour, and drawn in procession at the worship of the sun; as does also Pausanias [o] of a chariot, in which

[b] Agreement of Customs between the East Indians and Jews, art. 25. p. 85, 86.
[c] Justin e Trogo, l. 1. c. 10. Curt. Hist. l. 3. c. 3. Ovid. Fast. l. 1. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. l. 6. c. 26. Heliodor. Ethiop. l. 10. c. 6. 28.
[d] Clio, sive, l. 1. c. 216.
[e] Cyropæd. l. 8. c. 23, 24.
[f] Geograph. l. 11. p. 353.
[g] Laconica, sive, l. 3. p. 201.
[h] Vit. Apollon. l. 1. c. 20.
[i] Vid. Lactant. de fals. Relig. l. 1. c. 21.
[k] Laon. Chalcondyl. de Rebus Turc. l. 3. p. 108.
[l] Not. in Misn. Middot, c. 2. sect. 2. No. 2. So Bochart. Hierozoic. par. 1. l. 2. c. 10. col. 177.
[m] Polymnia, sive, l. 7. c. 55.
[n] Ut supra, c. 23.
[o] Eliac. 1. sive, l. 5. p. 307.

were the sun, Jupiter, and Juno, and near them other deities; which notion of sacred chariots the Heathens might take from the chariot of the cherubim Jehovah sate and rode in, 1 Chron. xxviii. 18.

Ver. 12. *And the altars that were on the top of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made*, &c.] Which were on the roof of the royal palace; the roofs of houses in Judah being flat, Deut. xxi. 8. altars might be built upon them; so, in Arabia, altars were built on the tops of houses to offer incense thereon daily to the sun[p]; as here by Manasseh and Amon very probably, which might be chosen because nearer the heavens; for which reason the Heathens made use of high places to worship in, see Jer. xix. 13. and xxxii. 29. Zeph. i. 5. *and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord*; ch. xxi. 5. *did the king beat down*; ordered to be demolished: *and brake them down from thence, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron*; that there might be no remains of them to be put to any superstitious use.

Ver. 13. *And the high places that were before Jerusalem*, &c.] Not only that were within the city, and at the gates of it, but what were without it: *which were on the right hand of the mount of corruption*: the mount of Olives, so called from the idolatry and corrupt worship performed in it, by way of reproach, with a small alteration of the letters of the word משחית for משחה; at the right hand, or south of this mountain, as the Targum; though others say[q], on the north side of the mount of Olives, four furlongs from Jerusalem, were high places: *which Solomon king of Israel had builded for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Zidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the children of Ammon*: of which see the notes on 1 Kings xi. 5, 7. *did the king defile*: by casting unclean things into them. Rauwolff[r] says, "before Mount Zion toward "the south, at the other side of the rivulet Kidron, "lies the mount of transgression, called Mashith, 2 "Kings xxiii. 13. this is higher and steeper than any "hereabout; there you still see some old walls of habitations, wherein the concubines of Solomon did "live;" and Mr. Maundrell[s] observes, that below the hill stands now a village called Siloe, where it is said he kept them.

Ver. 14. *And he brake in pieces the images*, &c.] Of Ashtoreth, Chemosh, and Milcom, in the above high places; which as these high places had been rebuilt by Manasseh or Amon, so new images of these deities were placed there: *and cut down the groves*; in which they were set: *and filled their places with the bones of men*; of idolatrous priests and worshippers, buried in parts adjacent; these he dug up and scattered in the high places and groves to defile them, bones of the dead being by law unclean, Numb. xix. 16.

Ver. 15. *Moreover, the altar that* was *at Beth-el, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made*.] For the worship of the calf there: *both that altar, and the high place, he brake down*; according to an ancient prophecy of the man of God, 1 Kings xiii. 3. and of Amos in later times, ch. ix. 1. *and burnt the high place, and stamped it small to powder*; that there might be no remains of it: *and burnt the grove*; either the grove of trees on it, or the idol that was in it.

Ver. 16. *And as Josiah turned himself*, &c.] From the high place, and the altar at Beth-el; for he not only gave orders for the destroying of idolatrous places and idols, but he saw them executed himself: *he spied the sepulchres that* were *there in the mount*: the graves of idolatrous priests and worshippers, who chose to be buried near those places of idolatry; nor was it unusual for persons to be buried on hills and mountains, see Josh. xxiv. 30, 33. and this was a custom in other nations formerly[t], particularly among the Indians[u] now, who in many things agree with the Jews: *and sent and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burnt* them *upon the altar*; where they had sacrificed to idols: *and polluted it*; with their bones, which, according to the law, were defiling, and which was done in contempt of their idolatrous worship there: *according to the word of the Lord which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words*; or things; foretold that such a king by name would arise, and burn men's bones upon the altar, and which had been foretold more than 350 years before this time.

Ver. 17. *Then he said, what title* is *that that I see?* &c.] A high and large monument over a grave, with an inscription on it, more remarkable than any of the rest, which made Josiah take notice of it; and the Jews have a tradition, as Kimchi observes, that on one side of the grave grew nettles and thistles, and on the other side odoriferous herbs; which is not to be depended on; but what he further observes may be right, that the old prophet, as he gave orders to his sons to lay his body in the same grave with the man of God, believing his words would be fulfilled, so he likewise gave orders to have a distinguished monument or pillar erected over the grave; and which people in after-times took care to support, in memory of the man of God, that thereby it might be known; by which means not only the bones of the man of God were preserved from being burnt, but those of the old prophet also, buried with him: *and the men of the city told him, it* is *the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Beth-el*; see 1 Kings xiii. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 18. *And he said, let him alone, let no man move his bones*, &c.] Not take them out of the grave, as they had done the rest: *so they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria*; the old prophet, whereby his end was answered in being buried with him, 1 Kings xiii. 31, 32.

Ver. 19. *And all the houses also of the high places*, &c.] The temples of the idols there, and the houses for the priests to dwell in: *that* were *in the cities of Samaria, which the kings of Israel had made to provoke* the Lord *to anger, Josiah took away*; particularly in the cities of Manassah, Ephraim, and Simeon, unto Naphtali, 2

[p] Strabo, Geograph. l. 16. p. 539.
[q] Vid. Adrichom. Theatrum T. S. p. 171.
[r] Travels, par. 3. c. 4. p. 233.
[s] Journey from Aleppo, &c. p. 102.
[t] Vid. Servium in Virgil. Æneid. 11. ver. 849. —fuit ingens monte sub alto.
[u] Manasseh ben Israel Spes Israelis. sect. 6. p. 29.

Chron. xxxiv. 6. the Israelites that remained there acknowledging Josiah as their king; and perhaps, after the defeat of Sennacherib, many of the cities of Israel might put themselves under the protection of Hezekiah, and especially upon the destruction of the Assyrian empire; and Manasseh, with his liberty, might have his kingdom enlarged by the king of Babylon; and which being continued and increased in the times of Josiah, might be the reason of his opposing the king of Egypt in favour of the king of Babylon: *and did to them according to all the acts that he had done in Beth-el*: defiled them, and broke down the altars in them.

Ver. 20. *And he slew all the priests of the high places that were there*, &c.] The idolatrous priests who sacrificed to Baal, and other Heathen deities; for as for others that burnt incense in high places, yet to the true God, those he spared, though they were not suffered to officiate at the altar of God: the others he slew *upon the altars*: where they sacrificed: *and burnt men's bones upon them*: the bones of the priests, and worshippers of idols, as he had done at Beth-el: *and returned to Jerusalem*; after he had gone through the land, both of Judah and Israel, and abolished idolatrous worship everywhere.

Ver. 21. *And the king commanded all the people*, &c.] Not at Jerusalem only, but throughout the whole kingdom: saying, *keep the passover unto the Lord your God, as it is written in this book of the covenant*; which had been lately found and read, and they had agreed to observe, and in which this ordinance was strictly enjoined, and was a commemoration of their deliverance out of Egypt, and a direction of their faith to the Messiah, the antitype of the passover.

Ver. 22. *Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel*, &c.] As the king commanded; the people obeyed and kept the passover, according to the law of the Lord; the manner of its being kept is not here recorded, but is at large in 2 Chron. xxxv. where it is observed there had not been such an one from the days of Samuel, the last of the judges; so that the days of the judges here mean the last days of them: *nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah*: since the division of the kingdoms; for as for the kings of Israel, they kept it not; and though it was observed in the times of Hezekiah king of Judah, yet not universally, and by some in their uncleanness; for it is a mistake of Clemens of Alexandria*, that it was not kept in the times between Samuel and Josiah; in the days of David and Solomon it might be kept by greater numbers, but not with such purity, and with such cheerfulness and joy of heart, or with so many other sacrifices attending it, or so exactly agreeable to the law of God, and with such munificence and liberality; the king, and the chief of the priests and Levites, providing out of their own substance for the people and their brethren.

Ver. 23. *But in the 18th year of king Josiah, wherein this passover was holden to the Lord in Jerusalem.*] This shews that Josiah must begin the reformation very early that year, since he did all that is before recorded in this and the preceding chapter by the 14th of Nisan, the day on which the passover was kept, which month answers to part of our March and part of April, see ch. xxii. 3. and was the same year the repairs of the temple were finished.

Ver. 24. *Moreover, the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards*, &c.] Who were not to be suffered among the Israelites, Deut. xviii. 11. *and the images*; or teraphim: *and the idols, and all the abominations*; which were worshipped by the Heathens, and introduced among the Jews, and forbidden by the word of God: *that were spied in the land of Judah, and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away*; for which, it seems, diligent search was made, and wherever they were discovered were removed: *that he might perform the words of the law*, which were *written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord*; both with respect to witchcraft and idolatry, see Lev. xx. 27. Exod. xx. 4, 5. and xxiii. 24.

Ver. 25. *And like unto him was there no king before him*, &c.] The same is said of Hezekiah, ch. xviii. 5. Hezekiah might excel him in some things, as Josiah might excel Hezekiah in others: *that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might*; with such sincerity, heartiness, zeal, and constancy: *according to all the law of Moses*; having respect to every commandment, especially relative to worship, with the greatest precision and exactness: *neither after him arose there* any *like him*; for all to the captivity were wicked princes.

Ver. 26. *Notwithstanding, the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled against Judah*, &c.] Notwithstanding the great reformation wrought among them; for though Josiah was a sincere reformer, and did what he did heartily, as to the Lord, according to his will, and for his glory; yet the people were not sincere in their compliance, they turned to the Lord not with their whole heart, but feignedly, Jer. iii. 10. *because of all the provocations that Manasseh had provoked him withal*; by shedding innocent blood and committing idolatry, which the people consented to and approved of, and even now privately committed idolatry, as the prophecies of Jeremiah and Zephaniah shew; and it may easily be concluded that their hearts were after their idols, by their openly returning to them in the days of the sons of Josiah.

Ver. 27. *And the Lord said, I will remove Judah also out of my sight, as I have removed Israel.*] Not from his all-seeing eye, but from being the object of his special care and protection; the meaning is, that he would suffer them to be carried out of their land into captivity as Israel was; this he had said in his heart, was determined upon; the decree was gone forth, and it was irrevocable: *and will cast off this city Jerusalem which I have chosen*; for the place of his worship, the people having forsaken his worship there, and followed after idols: *and the house of which I said, my name shall be there*; the temple, called after his name, and where his name was to be, and had been, called upon.

Ver. 28. *Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did*, &c.] For abolishing idolatry, and restoring the true worship of God: are *they not written in the*

* Stromat. l. 1. p. 320.

book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? and also of Israel, in which an account was kept of the transactions of their reign; many other of the acts of Josiah are recorded in the canonical book of Chronicles, 2 Chron. xxxiv. xxxv.

Ver. 29. *In his days Pharaoh-nechoh king of Egypt, &c.*] Who is called in the Targum Pharaoh the lame, because he was lame in his feet, perhaps gouty; Herodotus[x] also calls him Necos the son of Psammiticus; now it was in the last days of Josiah this king reigned in Egypt, or however that the following event was: that *he went up against the king of Assyria to the river Euphrates;* to Carchemish, a city situated upon it; see 2 Chron. xxxv. 26. Jer. xlvi. 2. the king he went against was the king of Babylon, who had conquered the Assyrian monarchy, and therefore called king of it; some take him to be Nabopolassar; according to Marsham[y], he was Chyniladanus: *and King Josiah went against him;* to stop him, that he might not pass through his country, and attack the king of Babylon, whose ally, perhaps, Josiah was; or, however, thought himself obliged to him by the privileges, power, and authority he allowed him to exercise in the land of Israel: *and he slew him at Megiddo, when he had seen him;* as soon as they came face to face, and engaged in battle, see ch. xiv. 8. 11. that is Pharaoh slew Josiah at the first onset. Megiddo was a city in the tribe of Manasseh, Josh. xvii. 11. Herodotus[z] calls it Magdolus, which seems to be a city on the borders of Egypt, the same with Migdol, Jer. xliv. 1. where he says Nechoh conquered the Syrians; in Josephus[a] it is called Mendes very wrongly. Josiah seems to have engaged in this action without consulting the Lord and his prophets.

Ver. 30. *And his servants carried him in a chariot dead from Megiddo, &c.*] They took him out of the chariot in which he was wounded, and put him into another, where he died of his wounds by the way; being mortally wounded, he is said to be dead, or a dead man, see 2 Chron. xxxv. 34. *and brought him to Jerusalem;* which, according to Bunting[b], was 44 miles from Megiddo: *and buried him in his own sepulchre;* which either he had provided for himself in his life-time, or which in common belonged to the kings of Judah, see 2 Chron. xxxv. 24. *and the people of the land took Jehoahaz the son of Josiah, and anointed him, and made him king in his father's stead;* though he was not the eldest son, Jehoiakim, who was afterwards placed in his room, being two years older, as appears from ver. 31, 36. and this is the reason, as the Jewish commentators in general agree, that he was anointed; which they say was never done to the son of a king, unless there was a competitor, or some objection to, or dispute about, the succession, as in the case of Solomon and others.

Ver. 31. *Jehoahaz was 23 years old when he began to reign, &c.*] Who seems to be the same with Shallum, Jer. xxii. 11. *and he reigned three months in Jerusalem;* a short reign, being deposed by the king of Egypt, as after related: *and his mother's name was Hamutal, the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah;* a city in the tribe of Judah, Josh. x. 29. and xv. 42.

Ver. 32. *And he did* that which was *evil in the sight of the Lord, &c.*] Committed idolatry: *according to all that his fathers had done;* his grand father and great-grandfather, Amon and Manasseh; so soon after Josiah's death was the revolt to idolatry.

Ver. 33. *And Pharaoh-nechoh put him in bands at Riblah in the land of Hamath, &c.*] Places in Syria; Hamath was formerly a kingdom in Syria, and Riblah is said by Jerom[c] to be Antioch of Syria, near to which was the fountain of Daphne; and in the Targums of Jonathan and Jerusalem on Numb. xxxiv. 11. Daphne is put for Riblah; and Josephus[d] says Antioch was by Daphne of Syria; and in 2 Maccab. iv. 33. Daphne is said to be by Antioch; with which place Pompey was greatly delighted, because of the pleasantness of it, and the abundance of waters about it[e]: hither, it is probable, Jehoahaz went with an army to avenge his father's death on the king of Egypt, or to assist the king of Babylon, or both; and here Pharaoh met with him, and took him, and bound him; he seems to be of a martial spirit, from Ezek. xix. 3. *that he might not reign in Jerusalem;* whither afterwards the king of Egypt came, and took it; and so Herodotus[f] says, that after he had conquered the Syrians at Migdol, he took Cadytis, a great city of Syria, which seems to be Jerusalem, the holy city. *and put the land to a tribute of* 100 *talents of silver, and a talent of gold;* the land of Judah; and 100 talents, according to Bunting[g], amounted to 37,500 pounds of our money; and a talent of gold, according to Brerewood[h], was 4,500 pounds; but Bishop Cumberland[i] makes it 5,067 pounds, 3 shillings, and 10 pence; a talent of gold could not be so large in Homer's time, since he speaks of seven of them given at once in a way of hospitality[k].

Ver. 34. *And Pharaoh-nechoh made Eliakim the son of Josiah king in the room of Josiah his father, &c.*] Not in the room of Jehoahaz; for he did not allow him to be a king, and to have any lawful right to the throne; but, deposing him, set up his elder brother: *and turned his name to Jehoiakim;* to shew his subjection to him, and that he held his government by him: *and took Jehoahaz away;* with him, from Jerusalem, when he departed thence: *and he came to Egypt, and died there;* and never returned to Jerusalem, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, Jer. xxii. 11.

Ver. 35. *And Jehoiakim gave the silver and gold to Pharaoh, &c.*] The 100 talents of silver and the talent of gold, which he imposed as a tribute upon the land: *but he taxed the land to give the money according to the commandment of Pharaoh;* he did not take it out of his own treasures nor the treasures of the house of the Lord, which perhaps might be exhausted, but levied it of the people of the land: *he*

[x] Euterpe, sive, l. 2. c. 158.
[y] Chronic. Secul. 18. p. 568.
[z] Ibid. c. 159.
[a] Antiqu. l. 10. c. 5. sect. 1.
[b] Travels, &c. p. 188.
[c] Comment. in Ezekiel. xlvii. fol. 261. C.
[d] Antiqu. l. 17. c. 2. sect. 3.
[e] Ruff. Fest. Breviar. Eutrop. Hist. Rom. l. 6.
[f] Ut supra.
[g] Ut supra, p. 288.
[h] De Ponder. & Pret. Vet. Num. c. 4.
[i] Scripture Weights and Measures, ch. 4. p. 81.
[k] Odyss. 9. ver. 258. & Odyss. 24. ver. 321.

exacted the silver and the gold of the people of the land; required them to pay it in: *of every one according to his taxation, to give it unto Pharaoh-nechoh:* every one was taxed according to his abilities, in proportion to what he was worth, or to the estate he was possessed of.

Ver. 36. *Jehoiakim was 25 years old when he began to reign,* &c.] And therefore must be two years older than his brother Jehoahaz, who was deposed: *and he reigned* 11 *years in Jerusalem;* and therefore must die at the age of 36: *and his mother's name was Zebudah, the daughter of Pedaiah of Rumah;* which Josephus[l] calls Abuma; but he speaks of a village in Galilee called Ruma[m]; but whether the same with this is not certain.

Ver. 37. *And he did* that which was *evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his fathers had done.*] Amon and Manasseh; see ver. 32.

CHAP. XXIV.

THIS chapter relates the rebellion of Jehoiakim against the king of Babylon, which prepared the way for the ruin of the kingdom of Judah, according to the decree of God, and also the death of Jehoiakim, and the conquest the king of Babylon made of part of the land of the king of Egypt, ver. 1—7. and the short and wicked reign of Jehoiachin his son, when he and the royal family, with great numbers of the inhabitants of the land, were carried captive to Babylon, ver. 8—16. and his uncle was made king in his room, ver. 17—20.

Ver. 1. *In his days Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up,* &c.] Against Jerusalem; this was in the latter end of the third, or the beginning of the fourth of Jehoiakim's reign, and the first of Nebuchadnezzar, Jer. xxv. 1. and xlvi. 2. when Jehoiakim was taken, but restored upon promise of subjection and obedience, and hostages given, at which time Daniel and his companions were carried captive, with some of the vessels of the temple: see the notes on Dan. i. 1, 2. *and Jehoiakim became his servant three years:* which were the 5th, 6th, and 7th years of his reign: *then he turned and rebelled against him:* being encouraged by the king of Egypt, who promised to assist him against the king of Babylon: Nebuchadnezzar is the Nabocolasser in Ptolemy's canon; and Berosus[n] testifies, that 70 years before the Persian monarchy he made war against the Phœnicians and Jews, and it is from this time the 70-years' captivity is to be dated.

Ver. 2. *And the Lord sent against him,* &c.] By Nebuchadnezzar, against whom he rebelled: *bands of the Chaldees, and bands of the Syrians, and bands of the Moabites, and bands of the children of Ammon;* who were all subject to the king of Babylon, or were voluntary troops in his service, and bore an hatred to the Jews: according to Eupolemus[o], this army consisted of Medes and Babylonians, and, besides 10,000 chariots, there were in it 180,000 foot, and 120,000 horse: *and sent them against Judah to destroy it;* this was not until the 11th of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar being diverted by the siege of Tyre, or other important business, from chastising the king of Judah until this time: *according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by his servants the prophets:* Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zephaniah, and Huldah the prophetess.

Ver. 3. *Surely at the commandment of the Lord came* this *upon Judah, to remove* them *out of his sight,* &c.] It was the sure and certain decree of God they should be carried captive, and therefore he stirred up the spirit of Nebuchadnezzar, and gave him orders to go against it: *for the sins of Manasseh, according to all that he did;* which were still continued among the Jews, and committed by them, though repented of by Manasseh, and he returned from them.

Ver. 4. *And also for the innocent blood that he shed, for he filled Jeursalem with innocent blood,* &c.] See ch. xxi. 16. which cruel usage of the prophets, and servants of the Lord, was still continued; see Jer. xxvi. 21—24. *which the Lord would not pardon;* he pardoned the sins of Manasseh, who repented, but not the sins of those persons who imitated him, but repented not; or though he personally pardoned the sins of Manasseh, so that he was saved everlastingly, yet the temporal punishment of the nation for those sins, in which they were involved with him, was not averted.

Ver. 5. *Now the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim,* &c.] In 2 Chron. xxxvi. 8. it is added, *his abominations, and that which was found in him;* which besides his rebellion against the king of Babylon, and his shedding innocent blood, is interpreted of marks made in his body for superstitious and idolatrous purposes; so Lyra.

Ver. 6. *So Jehoiakim slept with his fathers,* &c.] He died as they did, but was not buried with them, and indeed had no burial at all, according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, Jer. xxii. 18, 19. for, falling into the hands of the king of Babylon, he was bound in chains, in order to be carried to Babylon, but died as soon as he came out of Jerusalem, at the gates of which he was cast, and had no burial, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. At this time also some of the vessels of the temple were carried away, and put in the idol's temple at Babylon, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 7. Jer. xxvii. 16. and Eupolemus[p] says, that whatever gold, silver, and brass, were in the temple, were carried away: *and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead;* called sometimes Jechoniah, and by contempt Coniah, Jer. xxii. 24, 28.

Ver. 7. *And the king of Egypt came not any more out of his land,* &c.] To receive the tribute he imposed on the land of Judah, or to help the kings there-

[l] Antiqu. l. 10. c. 5. sect. 2.
[m] De Bello Jud. l. 3. c. 6. sect. 21.
[n] Apud Clement. Alex. Stromat. 1. p. 329.
[o] Apud Euseb. Evangel. Præpar. l. 9. c. 39. p. 454.
[p] Ut supra.

of, Jehoiakim and Jehoiachin; not till the times of Zedekiah, and then was obliged to retire, without giving any assistance, Jer. xxxvii. 7. the reason follows, *for the king of Babylon had taken from the river of Egypt unto the river Euphrates, all that pertained to the king of Egypt;* all that lay between the river Nile, or the Rhinocolura, and the river Euphrates so that he could not stir out of his dominions, which lay beyond.

Ver. 8. *Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he began to reign,* &c.] In 2 Chron. xxvi. 9. he is said to be but eight years old; which may be reconciled by observing, that he might be made and declared king by his father, in the first year of his reign, who reigned 11 years, so that he was eight years old when he began to reign with him, and 18 when he began to reign alone [q]. Dr. Lightfoot [r] gives another solution of this difficulty, that properly speaking he was 18 years old when he began to reign, but, in an improper sense, the son of eight years, or the 8th year, as the Hebrew phrase is; that is, he fell in the lot of the 8th year of the captivity of Judah, which was in the latter end of the third, or the beginning of the fourth of his father's reign, and the first of Nebuchadnezzar's, and it was now in the eighth of Nebuchadnezzar that he was king, see ver. 12. but very probably in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9. there is a mistake in the copyist of 8 for 18, since in the Arabic and Syriac versions it is there 18, as here: *he reigned in Jerusalem three months;* the ten days besides are here omitted for shortness, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 9. *and his mother's name was Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan of Jerusalem;* a person no doubt well known in those times.

Ver. 9. *And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father had done.*] Being partner with him in his throne, he was in his sins, and continued therein, see ch. xxiii. 37.

Ver. 10. *At that time,* &c.] When Jehoiachin reigned: *when the year was expired;* so it is in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10. or at the revolution of the year; which some take to be autumn, the beginning of the civil year with the Jews; but rather it was the spring, the time when kings went out to battle, 2 Sam. xi. 1. *the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up against Jerusalem;* that is, his army, under proper generals and officers, and by his orders: *and the city was besieged;* in form by the Chaldean army.

Ver. 11. *And Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came against the city,* &c.] He came in person, following his army: *and his servants did besiege it;* very closely.

Ver. 12. *And Jehoiachin king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon,* &c.] Not to fight with him, but to submit to him, and to surrender the city to him, and be at his mercy: *he and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers;* the royal family, courtiers, and nobles: *and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign;* of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, and which was the eighth of the first captivity, and from whence the 70-years' captivity were reckoned.

Ver. 13. *And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king's house,* &c.] The gates of the city being thrown open to him, he entered and plundered the temple, and the royal palace, and took from thence all the riches thereof: *and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the Lord, as the Lord had said;* ch. xx. 17. and so the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled. No more is said of these vessels in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 10. than that they were brought to Babylon; and so Piscator renders the word here, *took,* or *carried them away;* and certain it is that they were carried whole to Babylon, Dan. v. 2, 3. but as Hezekiah is said to cut off the doors of the temple, that is, strip or scrape off the gold of them, ch. xviii. 16. so Nebuchadnezzar cut off from the temple, or stripped it of the golden vessels in it; of great part of them, the greater part thereof; for that there were some left is plain from Jer. xxvii. 18—22.

Ver. 14. *And he carried away all Jerusalem,* &c.] The inhabitants of it; not every individual of them, but the chief of them, the more honourable, rich, and useful; for the poorer sort were left, as afterwards expressed: *and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour,* even 10,000 *captives;* which was the number of them in the whole; the particulars are after delivered: *and all the craftsmen and smiths;* besides the nobles and the soldiers, he took all the artificers that exercised any handicraft trade or business; carpenters and blacksmiths, as some interpret these two words; so that there were none left to make arms for them; the last word may be rendered *enclosers,* and are by some interpreted of enclosers of jewels in metals, as gold and silver: *none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land;* who were left to till it, and to dress the vines; see ch. xxv. 12.

Ver. 15. *And he carried away Jehoiachin to Babylon,* &c.] Where he continued at least 37 years, ch. xxv. 27. *and the king's mother;* whose name was Nehushta, ver. 8. *and the king's wives;* for though he was so young, it seems he had many wives, as was the custom of those times; or his *women,* who were either his concubines, or servants in his family: *and his officers;* in his court: *and the mighty of the land;* the princes and nobles thereof; or *the fools of the land,* as the word is written; so the people generally were: those *carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon;* which, according to Bunting [s], were 680 miles distant from each other.

Ver. 16. *And all the men of might,* even 7,000, &c.] The particulars of the 10,000 carried captive are here given; 7,000 of which were the principal men of the land: *and craftsmen and smiths* 1,000; which made 8,000: *all* that were *strong,* and *apt for war;* of these consisted the other 2,000; so Abarbinel reckons them; but, according to the Jewish chronologer [t], which Jarchi and other Jewish commentators follow, the 7,000 were out of the tribe of Benjamin and the rest of the tribes, and the 3,000 out of the tribe of Judah, which are supposed to be those Jeremiah speaks of, ch. lii. 28. *even them the king of Babylon brought captive to*

[q] So in Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25.
[r] Works, vol. 1. p. 122.
[s] Travels, &c. p. 198.
[t] Seder Olam Rabba, c. 25.

Babylon: among these were Ezekiel the prophet, and Mordecai, the uncle of Esther.

Ver. 17. *And the king of Babylon made Mattaniah his father's brother king in his stead*, &c.] The third son of Josiah, 1 Chron. iii. 15. *and changed his name to Zedekiah*: for the same reason the king of Egypt changed the name of Eliakim, ch. xxiii. 24. to signify his subjection to him; though some think it was to put him in mind of the justice of God, as the name signifies, that would overtake him, should he be treacherous to him, and rebel against him; so the Jewish Midrash.

Ver. 18, 19, 20. *Zedekiah was 21 years old when he began to reign*, &c.] So that he was but between nine and ten years of age when his father Josiah died; for Jehoahaz reigned three months, Jehoiakim eleven years, and his son three months and ten days: *and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem: and his mother's name was Hamutal the daughter of Jeremiah of Libnah*; by which it appears that he was the brother of Jehoahaz by father and mother's side, ch. xxiii. 31. This and the two following verses are expressed in the same words as in Jer. lii. 1, 2, 3. see the notes there: in 2 Chron. xxxvi. 12, 13. besides what is here said, is written, that he humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet of the Lord, that spoke in his name, but opposed him; and rebelling against the king of Babylon, broke his oath, and hardened his neck and heart against the Lord, and was obstinate, stubborn, and self-willed.

CHAP. XXV.

IN this chapter is an account of the siege, taking, and burning of the city of Jerusalem, and of the carrying captive the king and the inhabitants to Babylon, ver. 1—12. as also of the pillars and vessels of the temple brought thither, ver. 13—17. and of the putting to death several of the principal persons of the land, ver. 18—22, and of the miserable condition of the rest under Gedaliah, whom Ishmael slew, ver. 23—26. and the chapter, and so the history, is concluded with the kindness Jehoiachin met with from the king of Babylon, after 37 years' captivity, ver. 27—30.

Ver. 1—7. *And it came to pass in the 9th year of his reign*, &c.] Of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah. From hence to the end of ver. 7. the account exactly agrees with Jer. lii. 4—11. see the notes there.

Ver. 8—12. *And in the 5th month, on the 7th day of the month*, &c.] In Jer. lii. 12. it is the 10th day of the month; which, how to be reconciled, see the note there: *which is the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar*: who, according to Ptolemy's canon, reigned 43 years; Metasthenes[u] says 45; and from hence, to the end of ver. 12. facts are related as in Jer. lii. 12—16. whither the reader is referred.

Ver. 13—17. *And the pillars of brass that were in the house of the Lord*, &c.] The two pillars in the temple, Jachin and Boaz. Benjamin of Tudela says[w], that in the church of St. Stephen in Rome these pillars now are with the name of Solomon engraved on each; and the Jews at Rome told him, when there, (in the 12th century,) that on the 9th of Ab (the day the temple was destroyed) every year sweat was found upon them like water; the one, I suppose, will equally be believed as the other, since it is here expressly said that the Chaldeans broke them in pieces. From hence, to the end of ver. 17. is the same with Jer. lii. 7—23. where it is rather more largely and fully expressed; only there is this difference here in ver. 17. the height of the chapiter of a pillar is said to be three cubits, there five cubits; for the reconciliation of which, see the note there.

Ver. 18—21. *And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief-priest, and Zephaniah the second priest*, &c.] The *sagan*, or deputy priest, who officiated for the high-priest, when by any means he was rendered unfit and incapable; so Joseph, the son of Ellem, as Josephus[x] relates, officiated for Matthias, when defiled with a nocturnal pollution; and seven days before the day of atonement they always substituted one under the high-priest, lest any thing of this kind should happen to him[y]. From hence, to the end of ver. 21. the account is the same as in Jer. lii. 25—27. only here in ver. 19 it is said, that five men that were in the king's presence were taken, there seven men; to account for which, see the note there.

Ver. 22—24. *And as for the people that remained*, &c.] That were left in the land to be vine-dressers and husbandmen: over these the king of Babylon made Gedaliah governor, to whom the captains, with their scattered troops, came, and submitted for a time; of whom, see the notes on Jer. xl. 7, 8, 9.

Ver. 25. *And it came to pass in the seventh month*, &c.] Not of Gedaliah's government, but of the year, the month Tisri or September, near two months after the destruction of Jerusalem: the Jews say 52 days after it; of the death of Gedaliah, and the man that slew him, as here related, see the notes on Jer. xli. 1, 2, 3.

Ver. 26. *And all the people, both small and great*, &c.] High and low, rich and poor, among whom were the king's daughters, committed to the care of Gedaliah, and also the prophets Jeremiah and Baruch, see Jer. xli. 16. and xliii. 6. *and the captains of the armies rose, and came to Egypt*: contrary to the express command of God: these were Johanan, and the captain of the forces with him, Jer. xliii. 4, 5. *for they were afraid of the Chaldees*: lest they should come and avenge the death of Gedaliah, appointed governor of Judea, see Jer. xli. 17. and xliii. 3.

Ver. 27—30. *And it came to pass in the 37th year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah*, &c.] Who must then be 55 years of age: *in the 12th month, on the 27th day of the month*; in Jer. lii. 31. it is said to be the 25th day; of the reason of which difference, see

[u] De Judicio Temp. & Annal. Pers. fol. 221. 2.

[w] Itinerar. p. 15.

[x] Antiqu. l. 17. c. 6. sect. 4.

[y] Misn. Yoma, c. 1. sect. 1.

the note there: *that Evil-merodach king of Babylon;* who is supposed, by some[a], to be the same with Belshazzar, and his successor Neriglissar, the same with Darius the Mede in Daniel. From hence, to the end of the chapter, the same account is given of the kindness of this king to Jehoiachin, as in Jer. lii. 31—34. see the note there. Metasthenes[a] calls him Amilinus Evil-merodach, and says he reigned 30 years, and makes Belchazzar, or Balt-assar, as he calls him, his third son.

[a] Vid. Lampe, Eccles. Hist. l. 1. c. 7. sect. 14.

[a] Ut supra.

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